



Legislation Text

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Forest Park Discussion (B)

This is information about the athletic field renovations and maintenance of the three (3) soccer fields at Forest Park.

In anticipation for the transition of Forest Park to the City, staff from both the City and the County has been meeting for the past year discussing the capital needs for field improvements to occur this summer before the transfer is to take place. Forest Park contains three (3) full sized soccer fields. The fields are used for practices and league play. They are heavily programmed and therefore show substantial signs of wear and abuse. The fields are in use for three (3) seasons per year in which programmed practices and games take place.

The current maintenance services should include regular mowing, aeration services, top dressing services, and herbicide applications for weed control, pest management and water management practices. The county staff agreed to herbicide, fertilize and aerate the fields as well as address worn turf areas and holes on the fields that posed safety issues and concerns with water retention. These improvements were committed to in meetings, conversations and emails.

As of July 31, 2017 this work had not been completed. The county identified issues with drought, rain, lack of man power and delays in equipment procurement as reasons for a lack of progress. The fields are still overrun with weeds, showing worn out areas where no turf is present, showing many issues with water retention and the holes that are safety concerns are still present.

There is a window of opportunity to manage improvements such as this and that window will be closing soon. The seasonal changes that are coming up in the fall do not offer good opportunity to complete the renovations as the county staff has planned. The city is not budgeted or prepared to renovate the Forest Park fields and cannot maintain them at the level needed to provide quality services to the groups currently using the park.

The city solicited bids for maintenance services on the fields beginning October 1, 2017 and did not receive any bids back. Of the three responses received, one vendor was not prepared to perform this type of work; one stated they did not know the bid due date and the other said they would not submit a bid because the fields were not in maintainable condition.

Should the City accept the current condition of the fields, staff would have to: extensively herbicide to kill weeds; address drainage issues by adjusting the crown of the fields with top dressing and relieving compaction through aeration; then either re-sod or re-sprig all three fields next spring and summer. The approximate cost for these renovations next spring is approximately \$60,000 to \$80,000 for all three fields.

The preferred outcome is to have these functions occur still in August and early September. The issue is that county staff committed to these improvements but not specifically the Board of County Commissioners.

The city has allocated funds in the FY18 budget for maintenance operations of the athletic fields at Forest Park

but did not include any additional funds to renovate the fields. The renovations if not maintained are anticipated to cost \$60,000 to \$80,000.

The City Commission: 1) request that the county staff complete the improvements they committed to within the timeframe they identified and continue with the transfer of Forest Park on October 1, 2017.

Alternative Recommendation

The City Commission do not accept the transfer of Forest Park to the City until October 1, 2018 after renovations occur next spring and summer.