Town of Red Cross Minutes of

 Public Park Workshop

Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at 6:00 PM

Present: Lionel Hahn - Chairman

Members Present: Tina Eudy- Vice Chairman, Andrew Smith- Town Council Liaison, Wendell Copeland, Jennifer D’Amore, Heather Britt – Alternate

Planning and zoning officer: Mike Efird

Clerk: Shannon Alberta

Members Not Present: Kristi Thompson- Secretary, and Thelma Tomberlin

Guests: 10+

Chairman Lionel Hahn opened the workshop, asking Planning and Zoning Officer Mike Efird to discuss the latest updates on the progress of the park planning.

Mike Efird began by explaining he met with Chambers Engineering and was able to discuss a park they recently designed in New London. Chambers advised Mike Efird to visit the new park in person, and when Mike did visit the park he was very pleased with what he saw. Chambers also offered to draw up a preliminary plan of the park using the survey of town hall property they had already. Mike Efird presented copies of this preliminary plan to everyone at the meeting along with a larger copy on display in the meeting room. Mike Efird explained to everyone that this is just a very rough draft of the plan they came up with using the information they were given, but this can be changed very easily as discussions continue.

Chairman Lionel Hahn opened the floor to discussion and comments.

 There was a question regarding the distance of the trail on the plan, which was answered it is about 1.2 miles as drawn currently. Another citizen requested disc golf possibly be incorporated since it seems to be a popular activity. Heather Britt mentioned she would like to see the trails be connected more and cross the parking lots less.

 Chairman Lionel Hahn also visited the park in New London and presented to the room, photos he took of the park. The photos showed the different areas with swings and benches that are rustic built with cement pads under to prevent wearing of the ground below. There was also an area with built-in cornhole games that people can use if they bring their own bean bags. There was a large shelter with picnic benches, lights, restrooms with keypads on the doors for locking/unlocking, and even cameras around the building. There was also an area outside the restrooms with water fountains of different heights for better accommodations. Some discussion was made to look into the newer fountains that will fill water bottles, and even a fountain for filling dog bowls or for dogs in general to use. The sidewalks are flat and level with the parking lot for drainage purposes and also handicap accessibility. There was an area at the entrance of the park with a bulletin board to show any necessary information visitors may need including a map of the park and trails. There were also park rules posted, which included no grills allowed. Some of the citizens and members discussed their experiences and thoughts on whether grills should be allowed. It was decided that more investigation should be done on the matter as to what the pros and cons are of grills in a park. The trails were all paved and were 6 feet wide which seemed to accommodate a good amount of traffic. There was discussion regarding paved trails Vs. Non paved are beneficial to prevent trip hazards, accommodate children on bicycles, strollers, and even wheelchairs. There were many trash and dog waste receptacles around the park. There was a dog park that was divided into two separate areas which included rules posted, more waste receptacles, and double entrance/exit gates to allow transition without the current playing dogs being able to escape. There were also benches, picnic tables, and bricks with small personalized plaques to allow people to honor loved ones and bring in revenue to pay for amenities.

After the pictures were presented and discussed Chairman Lionel Hahn opened back up for discussion. Lionel Hahn mentioned someone had expressed to him that playground equipment for small toddlers is something they would like to see be considered. Andrew Smith expressed he would like to also put more thought into a great name for the park. The name should tell the story of Red Cross being more of an agricultural place and reflect the history of the town. He also expressed he would like to see less trees, more green/open space, and less parking taking up the green space. There was also further discussion to include a memorial section or garden in the park. Many groups around the area may be interested in planting and maintaining flowers/gardens. Musical events and festivals would be a great way to bring the members of the community together and invite others to the community. There was also discussion about trying to include a splash pad, fishing either open or derby, and what will be needed in terms of maintenance employment for the park.

Mike Efird discussed his findings in looking into grants for the park. It is best to look at the park as work in progress when it comes to grants, rather than the park as a whole. When applying for a grant you need to know the amount needed for the project. Some of the grants that will work for the project are 50/50 grants. The town will need to pay for half of the project and the grant would match and cover the other half. The most important step is to work towards deciding which parts of the park is the biggest priority and begin getting those projects and grants started first. One way to get feedback would be to possibly have a survey monkey sent to the citizens to give them a way to share their opinions regarding what they feel is most important to see in a park.

The board set the next workshop for the public park for April 29, 2024 at 6pm.

Lionel Hahn asked for a motion to adjourn the workshop, Jennifer D’amore made the motion, and Wendell Copeland 2nd, 5 yea, 0 Nay.

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 Shannon Alberta- Town Clerk

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 Lionel Hahn - Chairman