



**City of Farmers Branch  
Joint Meeting  
Historical Park &  
City Council Minutes  
2 p.m.**

**Fire Station  
13333 Hutton Drive  
Farmers Branch**

**Wednesday, November 1, 2017**

**Presiding:** - Mayor Robert C. Dye

**City Council Members Present:** - Mayor Pro Tem John Norwood, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Mike Bomgardner, Council Member Ana Reyes, Council Member Bronson Blackson, Council Member Terry Lynne

**Historical Preservation & Restoration:** - Chair Clare Connally, Marjorie Cutler, Bill Stolp, Elisa "Bitsy" Laney, Vice Chair, Carol Dingman, Tamara Cleghorn, Gail Cope, Kay Lynn Lyon *(arrived at 3:08 p.m.)*

**Absent:** - Danielle Neumeyer, Ann Christman, Scott Ames

**Staff:** - Charles Cox, City Manager; John Land, Deputy City Manager; Amy Piukana, City Secretary; Braeden Metcalf, City Attorney; Benjamin Williamson, Assistant to the City Manager; Tom Bryson, Communications Director; Brian Beasley, Human Resources Director; Allison Cook, Economic Development Director

**A. Call to Order**

Mayor Dye called the Special Called Joint meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

Chair Claire Connally called the Historical Preservation and Restoration Board to order at 2:01 p.m.

Mayor Dye asked the City Council and Historical Preservation and Restoration Board Members to introduce themselves.

**B. Regular Meeting**

**B.1 17-614 Discuss the roles, responsibilities and relationship between the City Council and the Historical Preservation and Restoration Board.**

Mayor Dye reviewed the duties of the Historical Preservation and Restoration Board, which include review the acquisition of historical buildings, artifacts, seek donations, assist with planning for the Historical Park, and assist the Friends of the Historical Park with raising funds for park projects.

Mayor Dye introduced Director of Parks and Recreation Jeff Harting who briefed everyone on recent events at the Historical Park.

Mr. Harting reviewed the following: Encounters from the Past, had 414 in attendance; Date Night in the Park had 4,000 in attendance; Murders in Mayhem had 362 in attendance; Bloomin Bluegrass had 8,250 in attendance; Haunted Houses had 1,200 in attendance; Halloween in the Park had 11,400 in attendance, Owl Prowl has 87 registered to attend, Laura Ingles Wilder 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event set for November 21<sup>st</sup> has 263 confirmed to attend with a total attendance in the months of September and October of 26,361, visits to the Historical Park. He further stated this is the first time the City has charged a fee for the Haunted Hedge (\$5), which was just under \$4,000's in revenue.

Mayor Dye thanked staff and the Historical Preservation and Restoration Board and Friends of the Historical Park for making these events so successful.

**B.2    [17-615](#)                      Discussion regarding the future of the Farmers Branch Historical Park.**

Board Member Bill Stolp introduced Board Member Bitsy Laney who read the primary mission of the Historical Preservation and Restoration Board.

Board Member Bitsy Laney stated the primary mission of the Historical Park is to have a living history museum, to collect, preserve, interpret and celebrate the history of the United States and Texas with an emphasis on Peters Colony and Farmers Branch. She noted the secondary mission is to generate hotel nights.

Board Member Gail Cope read the following vision statement of the Farmers Branch Historical Park - to be a premier accredited museum of North Texas history, and to bring to life our shared experiences through interpretation of people, objects, cultures and activities from the ancient past through the present day. It will be a place where citizens and visitors can connect, understand and explore history.

Board Member Marjorie Cutler provided several artifacts from the early 1900's of William F. Dodson, Maude Dodson and William Smith Dodson, sharing their history with the City Council. She explained the photos presented are reproductions of the originals.

Board Member Marjorie Cutler reviewed the history the Gilbert house explaining it was also the McKee's house. She explained many artifacts are stored at the house, noting it is also the Curator's office.

Chair Claire Connally passed out a Christmas ornament and wooden branding from the Historical Park to the City Council, as a token of appreciation. Ms. Connally explained the wooden brand, is from Dr. Gilbert's cattle brand.

Board Member Bill Stolp explained additional historical pictures are located at the Historical Park, along with sentimental pieces of history.

Board Member Bill Stolp explained the story of Farmers Branch should link from our past to our future, and the underlying theme of sustainability. He recommended Staff or a contracted professional writer construct a compelling story, which will define our direction. He further stated this story will determine what artifacts, facilities, staff, events, activities we need to have in place to tell it to accomplish our mission and vision.

Board Member Bill Stolp reviewed the following programming ideas:

- Adding one or two more Destination Events.
- Explore doing a Civil War Reenactment
- Antique Farm Equipment Show
- 1920's Jam Session
- Antique car show

Board Member Bill Stolp suggested one weekend a month, have all the buildings open and have several demonstrations of skills, trades, gardening, cooking, distilling and brewing, tiny houses, blacksmith and other historical activities for viewing. He suggested holding these twice a weekend (daytime) and less frequently during the week, with tours. He stated these could be done on a regular schedule, and allow tours. He noted the City may wish to charge a fee.

Board Member Bill Stolp suggested having some special smaller events such as Encounters of the Past, Murders and Mayhem, Victorian Christmas, Vintage Baseball, Lectures, etc. He reviewed educational activities, events, and Hotel night events. He also reviewed facilities, and infrastructure.

Board Member Bill Stolp reviewed the following Organization and Staffing proposal:

- To be fully accredited by the American Alliance of Museums - Not an all or nothing proposition (Progressive levels of accreditation Pledge of Excellence – Museum Assessment Programs – full accreditation.)
- Establish the Historical Park as a separate City Department, (not under Parks and Recreation)
- Operate the Park using the procedures and best practices of a Museum.
- Essential Staff includes Museum Director, Accredited Curator, Education Director (Danielle), Development Director(fund raiser,sponsorships, grants), Administrative staff (Kim), docents, Landscape and Maintenance (Tony Derrick and his crew).
- Museum Director, Accredited Curator should be hired immediately as they are essential to the realization of this vision and mission.
- Desired Staff includes Volunteer Coordinator, Wedding Planner, others as needed.
- Recommends artifact collection be overseen by a professional Curator and maintained and organized using Best Practices
- Ensure collection is properly stored and cared for.
- Expand artifact collection to support the museums mission.
- Collect and organize Oral Histories so they can be shared with the public.
- Complete the transcription of Dr. Gilbert's journals.
- Continue working with pioneer families to acquire heirloom pieces.
- Add to the Story we are telling/

Board Member Bill Stolp explained the goal is to move forward and align with the City Council's goals.

Mayor Dye explained today's discussion is about the future of the Historical Park. He thanked the board for providing a strategic plan. He stated City Council will set the goal. He further stated a mission statement and vision statement could be used to create a strategic plan.

Council Member Lynne suggested marketing in order to create a founders circle to raise funds in an effort to support a building. He stated, a minimal fee could be charged. He

explained the Historical Park is just one area, the other area of space he calls "the green", could be used to brand the area differently.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner stated you must address the cost, timeline, and end results. He further stated you need a long term plan.

Chair Claire Connally stated the green space is what she considers the downtown area.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner stated the business plan provided today is in his opinion, too broad, and unspecific. He stated, he supports maintaining artifacts but does not support a new facility.

Council Member Reyes suggested better defining the Board's role. She explained staff could assist the Historical Board with obtaining cost estimates.

Board Member Carol Dingman, stated the strategic plan is a ten year plan, and asked Mayor Pro Tem Norwood if the proposed document was sufficient.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood stated this is definitely a step in the right direction, noting there are four goals he would like to see: (1) tell the story of North TX history by being an accredited history museum; (2) high quality events and entertainment that generate revenue; (3) maintain excellent historical structures and artifacts; and (4) maintain fiscal responsibility.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood stated we need more information regarding museum accreditation, such as the cost, and benefits of obtaining.

Council Member Blackson stated he is not opposed to constructing a building, but stated it must make financial sense.

Chair Claire Connally explained staffing is critical, noting two recent resignations have left the Historical Park at a loss with leadership.

Council Member Lynne replied explaining the City Manager handles staffing and personnel issues.

City Manager Charles Cox explained if the vision were to be an accredited museum, staffing would need to be adjusted. He noted the demand would define the need.

Board Member Bitsy Laney stated a museum does not necessarily mean a building, stating currently, we are a living history museum. She stated the accreditation gives us a level of credibility and helps market the City.

Board Member Gail Cope asks that we stay unique.

Council Member Lynne suggested obtaining grant funding.

Board Member Carol Dingman stated the accreditation status, would be beneficial in helping the City obtain grant funding.

Board Member Bill Stolp stated we need to review accreditation cost, noting he will reach out to other museums, and come up with a revised plan.

Board Member Gail Cope suggested considering a mixed-use building.

Board Member Kay Lynn Lyon suggested creating a subcommittee of two Council Members and two Historical Park Board members and staff to allow smaller group discussions.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood stated he supports contracting with a curator who could begin an assessment and provide feedback.

Mr. Cox states that he will move forward with contracting with a curator. He noted a Programmer, Manager, a part time position or two will be necessary to implement staff recommended changes.

Board Member Gail Cope suggested utilizing art students. (Interns)

Mayor Dye asked two Council Members to volunteer to serve on the Sub Committee.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood and Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner volunteered to serve on the Sub Committee.

**C. ADJOURNMENT**

Historical Park Chair Claire Connally adjourned the meeting at 4:14 p.m.

Motion made by Council Member Lynne to adjourn. Motion seconded by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner. Motion prevailed by unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
City Secretary

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair, Historical Park Board