



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, April 20, 2004

Study Session

Item -2

Parks and Greenspace Development Fund

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

Council Agenda Memo

From: Chad Nabity, AICP Regional Planning Director

Meeting: April 12, 2004

Subject: Greenspace and Park Acquisition Fees

Item #'s: 2

Presenter(s): Chad Nabity, AICP Regional Planning Director
Steven Paustian, Grand Island Parks Director

Background

As the City grows it is to the benefit of the community if land for parks can be acquired concurrent with or preceding development. The Grand Island Parks Plan contains recommendations for park sizes and general locations. Acquisition of land for parks can be very costly. Most of the land on which development is anticipated (areas where parks will be necessary) could easily be developed with residential lots covering the entire property without leaving any space for parks. The city cannot afford to acquire parkland at building lot prices.

Discussion

Historically the City of Grand Island has acquired parkland primarily through the donation of property that could not otherwise be developed, or by purchasing tracts of ground with tax dollars. Recently, the City has been able to purchase undeveloped tracts of ground (at predevelopment prices) in areas where parks were needed (Cedar Hills Park). The City will need additional parks as residential development occurs. The Grand Island Parks Plan suggests that every house should have a neighborhood park within ½ mile of the property.

Most property currently being developed in the City does not have an area that can be donated or purchased for parks because it cannot be developed for housing. It is unlikely that there will be property the owners would choose to give as a park rather than develop to sell for lots.

To meet the recommendation of the Grand Island Parks Plan, the City needs to create a park acquisition and development fund. This fund needs to be large enough to provide

adequate money to buy land for a neighborhood park every 3 or 4 years. Generally between 80 and 120 lots are developed in Grand Island during the course of a year. A park fee of \$250 to \$500 per lot would provide between \$20,000 and \$60,000 annually toward the acquisition and development of new parks. Any fees of less than \$250 per lot would not generate enough funds to build an effective park acquisition and development fund. The fees charged to the development could be lowered if the developer is willing to provide property useable for a park, easements for hike/bike trails and/or build a trail through the subdivision with the development.

The fees could be collected from the developer at the time of execution of the subdivision agreement or from the builder at the time of the building permit.

Alternatives

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

1. Direct Staff to bring forward fees for the creation of a Park Acquisition and Development fund at a level of not less than \$250 per lot.
2. Direct Staff to create a Park Acquisition and Development fund from property taxes.
3. Direct Staff to create a Park Acquisition and Development fund from sales taxes.
4. Direct Staff to not bring this item forward again for 3 years or until such time as it is requested by City Council.

Recommendation

City Administration recommends that the Council direct staff to bring forward fees for the creation of a Park Acquisition and Development fund at a level \$500 per lot (with allowances for property or facilities in lieu of payment upon approval of council) payable upon execution of the subdivision agreement.

Sample Motion

To direct Staff to bring forward a resolution and/or ordinance creating a fund for the acquisition and development of parks to be funded by a fee of \$500 per lot on the creation of new lots within the jurisdiction of the City of Grand Island.