

AGENDA



Thursday, December 10, 2009

Item(s) to Set Public Hearing(s)
RECOMMENDATION FOR COUNCIL ACTION**Item No. 46**

Subject: Set a public hearing to consider an ordinance granting a site specific amendment to City Code section 25-8-514 (Save our Springs Initiative) and a variance to City Code section 25-8-482 (Critical Water Quality Zone) to allow construction of a temporary access road and temporary crane pad in the Critical Water Quality Zone of Barton Creek. This action concerns land located within the Barton Springs Zone. (Suggested date and time: January 14, 2010, 6:00 p.m. at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, TX)

Fiscal Note: There is no unanticipated fiscal impact. A fiscal note is not required.

For More Information: David Johns, 974-2781; Tom Nelson 974-9337

Prior Council Action: October 19, 2006 - Council approved a resolution to hire a consultant to develop a master plan for Barton Springs Pool.

September 10, 2007 - Council allocated \$6.2 million to fund short-term projects for Barton Springs, including the removal of the gravel from the pool.

January 15, 2009 - Council passed a resolution adopting the Barton Springs Pool Master Plan: Concepts for Preservation and Improvement.

In 1998 and again in mid 2000, Barton Springs experienced major flood events. As a result of these flood events, a large amount of debris washed into the pool and formed a gravel bar.

In 2006, the Parks and Recreation Department (PARC) hired American Underwater Services to remove the gravel bar that had accumulated in Barton Springs due to flooding. This company utilized a vacuum technique to remove material from the pool. The system worked well for small material and silt, however it did not work well with larger material. It was determined that their method was not effective with removing the amount and size of material that largely makes up the gravel bar but their system would be beneficial for routine maintenance.

As a result of these efforts, Weston Solutions developed a plan that uses a crane to remove the remaining portion of the flood debris. The plan incorporates a crane that is situated on the South lawn. The crane will lift equipment into an area of the pool that is dewatered with a coffer dam and lift flood debris out of the pool. A temporary pad will be placed on the South hill to provide stabilization for the crane and a temporary road will be installed to facilitate removal of material. Engineering drawings are included as back up for site reference.

It is important to note that one of the most difficult aspects of guarding an open water facility, like Barton Springs, is turbidity. During the routine Thursday cleanings, staff flushes out the deep end of the pool with a fire hose. The fire hose helps to suspend silt in the water column so that it can flow out of the pool. The gravel bar has hindered this effort. In addition, with the peak of the gravel bar being so close to the surface of the pool, silt is stirred up due to recreational activity. Thousand of patrons visit the pool on any given day. Because of the amount of activity in the pool, a large amount of silt is suspended in the water column, making it more difficult to guard.