

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
Austin, Texas

Special Meeting -- March 29, 1960

The meeting of the Commission was called to order at 8:45 p.m. in the Council Room, Municipal Building.

Present

D. B. Barrow, Chairman  
Marvin B. Braswell  
Howard E. Brunson  
Carl A. Johnson  
S. P. Kinser  
Doak Rainey  
Emil Spillmann

Absent

H. F. Kuehne  
W. Sale Lewis

Also Present

Hoyle M. Osborne, Director of Planning  
Doren Eskew, City Attorney

R960 SHOAL CREEK PATHWAY

Mr. and Mrs. Russell Fish appeared before the Commission and suggested consideration of a pathway along Shoal Creek, possibly from the Colorado River to Northwest Park, graded and possibly surfaced with crushed rock to provide a path for walking or riding bicycles. They said they had been very much interested in this project and had found this beautiful country in the middle of town where the path could be constructed without crossing a street for about six or seven miles. They explained that much of the property is already City-owned and that the pathway would be of benefit to everyone in Austin. They said there was previously a trail north from 12th Street but it was destroyed by the relocation of Shoal Creek at several points and by other construction. In response to a question from the Commission, Mr. Fish said they had discussed this with the Parks and Recreation Board three times within the past three years and had discussed it with the Mayor who had suggested that they present it to the Commission.

Mr. Barrow said the suggestion is very good and would be considered in the discussion to be held on the Riverfront development.

R1270 LOCATION OF POST OFFICE-FEDERAL BUILDING

Mr. Barrow requested an expression from the Commission regarding the proper approach in presenting the location question to the General Services Administration.

The Commission discussed the possibility of presenting this to Senator Yarbrough, Congressman Thornberry, and Senator Johnson or his administrative

RL270 Location of Post Office-Federal Building--contd.

assistant to get the thinking of people in Washington on this location and development, especially since the final decision will be in Washington. It was the general opinion that, before any recommendations could be made, it would be necessary to know the size and purpose of the site desired and how it would fit in with the future of the downtown area. It was also suggested that the committee visit the General Services Administration in Dallas to find out what they might require and another suggestion was made that the Chairman write a letter explaining that the representatives were missed at the meeting and offering the services of the Commission in locating the necessary site. Mr. Eskew suggested that there is also the problem of providing public facilities which will be necessary wherever the site is located, and problems that will be generated by them and for them. He thought the Commission might ask for an opportunity to help them not only in the selection of the site but also in providing supporting facilities and being able to anticipate problems that can be avoided. It was then

AGREED: That the Chairman would meet with the committee and with the Director to decide the proper procedure.

C9-60-1 RIVERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

The Director presented to each member a copy of "Recommendations from Highland Lakes Committee Concerning Development of Town Lake" which had been submitted by the Chamber of Commerce committee for the consideration of the Commission. He reported that he had been reviewing material showing what has been done in other communities.

Mr. Osborne pointed out the flooding problem affecting fairly extensive areas along the riverfront, that there is industrial zoning on the south side of the River east of Congress Avenue, and some privately-owned small pieces of property on the north side along the Interregional Highway and back toward Congress Avenue. He mentioned a variety of uses such as hotels, motels, etc. which might be permitted with the condition that they be developed with some semblance of an architectural standard in terms of general appearance and in terms of a use standard to prevent undesirable uses. He noted that this would be a natural use for "hot dog" stands, a few of which are already in the area. The present Ordinance does not control this development unless the zoning is changed back to "O" Office and residential and that would eliminate most of the commercial uses, and it still does not control structural conditions.

The Commission discussed the flood plain area and the possible damage to privately-owned structures and the public in general. Mr. Eskew suggested that if you had a structure in this flood plain that was apt to cause great harm to people downstream or to the dam and bridge structures you could have regulations concerning the type of structure that could be built within the flood plain, but that this is extremely complicated and would involve

C9-60-1 Riverfront Development

the question of condemnation and compensation. The Commission discussed the setback recommended at the previous meeting and the possibility of regulations related to the topography of the land. Mr. Eskew said if you take into account the size of the flood plain, the type of flood that might be carried, assuming a rather uniform type of development along the River within that flood plain, to permit the type of structure that would not result in too much flooding damages to other land or to public structures across the River would probably reduce the damage considerably. If the uses you are permitted to make are reasonable uses, you would not have to pay for it, but if you were denied all use of your land obviously you would have to be compensated for it; you get into the area then of what is an unreasonable restriction. If rules are reasonable to the public safety, health and welfare, they would be sustained without payment of compensation.

The Director then suggested that a new zoning district be added applying to the riverfront and lakefront area in which all development would be under Special Permit. Mr. Eskew said he did not know of any other one event which has affected the welfare of the city as a whole to the extent that the creation of the lake will affect it other than, perhaps, the Interregional Highway and the lake development will do much more even than the Highway. This enormous area that affects so many people might justify the creation of a new Use District in the flood plain itself and the areas adjacent to the flood plain that would be affected and where there is an economic use adjoining this flood plain. He thought that the regulations would of necessity have to apply to the City as well as to private property and to that extent he felt that this vast area which has been heretofore unzoned property should be in the same zone and be treated the same as private property. Mr. Barrow said he would hesitate to control what they do on private land only, except that he favored commercial zoning rather than industrial. The Director noted that the "D" Industrial zone is mostly First Height and Area and a structure may not be built over 35 feet in height.

The Commission discussed the present development along the riverfront which is scattered due to flooding danger. Mr. Barrow said we encounter difficulties when we try to enforce what is aesthetic but Mr. Osborne pointed out that the Commission in the past few years has not gone into the aesthetic aspect in applying the Special Permit provisions of the Ordinance.

Mr. Eskew suggested that there might be some regulations on the lake development which the Commission would want to make for some other groups to consider. Mr. Barrow noted that the Commission at the last meeting had recommended adoption of the regulations now applying to Lake Austin until further study is made.

Mr. Osborne said he could only recommend a "GR" zone as the least and most restrictive at this time. Mr. Rainey thought we should have a special zone

C9-60-1 Riverfront Development--contd.

for this area. Mr. Braswell suggested a setback requirement of 100 feet from the water but Mr. Rainey felt that you would not need this setback on the south side at Riverside Drive. The Commission then

AGREED: To recommend that a 100-foot setback be required subject to variations because of topography.

The Commission again considered the construction in the flood plain and it was

AGREED: To recommend that construction in the flood plain be controlled by Special Permit.

In discussing the rezoning to "GR" General Retail, Mr. Eskew suggested that the Commission omit any reference to any other Use District now in the Ordinance and that this be a new conception about a new kind of use. He said there may be other uses that would be entirely appropriate along such a watercourse that normally would require a different classification. Mr. Barrow suggested that this would be a propitious time from the standpoint of public opinion to do these things because of the general interest in the lake and the use of the lake. It was then

AGREED: To approve the study of a new Use District to apply to development of the riverfront area.

The Commission then discussed other types of use, including the erection of piers, and if so their length and design, the creation of inlets instead of piers, and the type of signs to be permitted, but took no action.

C10-57-2 THOROUGHFARE STANDARDS REVIEW

Mr. Barrow reported on a City Council meeting on the thoroughfare standards. He said that in the meantime Mr. Tom Bradfield had met with the Home Builders and Real Estate people and they wanted the Commission to reconsider their former recommendations in the matter of street widths. He reported that the City Council has set this matter for hearing Thursday to consider the widths of streets and the refund policy.

Mr. Barrow said the groups were agreeable to the minimum width of 50 feet for residential street rights-of-way except in cases in which the Ordinance provides for variances, but they think that in some areas, especially in predominantly VA and FHA neighborhoods, the paving widths should not be over 26 feet. He noted that the Commission does not set the paving widths but that is done by the Department of Public Works but they wanted to know if the Commission is still of the opinion that this paving width should be 30 feet. Mr. Braswell felt that the only possible place for 26-foot paving would be on cul-de-sac streets and that a 34-foot width would be better where two lanes of traffic are needed to enable two cars to pass when cars are parked on each side of the street. After discussion, it was

C10-57-2 Thoroughfare Standards Review--contd.

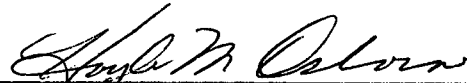
AGREED: That the Commission still recommends the 50-foot minimum right-of-way and a minimum 30-foot paving for residential streets.

Mr. Barrow said another thing they are very much interested in is the case where you have a street in existence and a subdivision is developed in that area and the City wants a thoroughfare along that street. They feel that where it is an existing street the City should pay for the excess width over whatever width is required over 50 feet. Mr. Rainey agreed with their thinking but felt that the City should not pay more than the raw land cost. Other members felt that their former recommendations should stand and that the City pay for the width over 80 feet unless it is shown that the subdivision does not need the extra width. Mr. Barrow said it is difficult to tell if the subdivision does not need up to 80 feet so there would be few cases where the City would pay for all of the right-of-way over 60 feet since a collector street does serve a subdivision, but that the City should pay for all over 60 feet if it is clearly shown that the subdivision does not need the width required. It was then

AGREED: That the Commission still recommends payment for right-of-way over 80 feet unless it is shown that the subdivision does not need the width required over 60 feet.

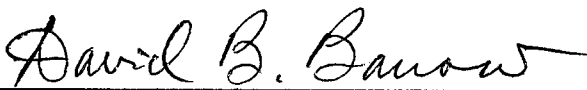
## ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 p.m.



Hoyle M. Osborne  
Executive Secretary

APPROVED:



Chairman