

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Recessed Meeting

April 16, 1948

3:00 P.M.

Council Chamber, City Hall

The meeting was called to order, with Mayor Miller presiding.

Roll call:

Present : Councilmen Glass, Mayor Miller, Councilman Thornberry

Absent : Councilmen Bartholomew and Johnson

Present also: Guiton Morgan, City Manager; Trueman E. O'Quinn, City Attorney; J. E. Motheral, Director Public Works; Chas. Granger, Planning Consultant ; and

Messrs. Holtzmann, Kirkpatrick, and other officials of the Missouri Pacific Railroad; Members of the Real Estate Board; Members of the Association of General Contractors, Austin Chapter; and others.

The Mayor stated that the meeting was called at the request of Mr. Rex Kitchens, President of the Austin Chapter of Association of General Contractors, for a meeting of the General Contractors, the Real Estate Board, and the Railroad officials with the City Council for a more thorough discussion of the proposal of the Missouri Pacific Railroad to build a depot at Lamar Boulevard and Third Street, or, in lieu thereof, a platform station, and to see if something satisfactory to all could be worked out.

The Mayor then reviewed the developments in the matter up to the present time, pointing out that when the Missouri Pacific Railroad first made known to the City Council that it wanted to build the new station, the City Council called in the City Plan Commission and the Railroad was advised that if the City Council approved the plan it was to be understood that the Master Plan calling for a relocation of the railroad tracks and the erection of a union depot in the eastern section of the City would in no wise be abandoned. Following this, a request was submitted by the Real Estate Board asking that before approval was given for the new station a survey be made by competent engineers to determine the feasibility of relocating the railroad tracks as called for in the Master Plan; and that he then contacted the State Highway officials in the matter of this survey and they indicated they would assist to the extent of furnishing their engineers and all the data they have, and the Railroad officials had stated the same thing. The Mayor further pointed out that the Railroad is not asking the City to pay any part of the expense of building the station, but has agreed to donate

it to the City for a recreation center at such time as the relocation of the railroads called for in the Master Plan is carried out.

A discussion of the whole matter was then gone into, substantially as follows:

Mr. Rex Kitchens declared that his Association has the City's best interest in mind and was not attempting to do anything that was not practicable or feasible, and did not want to do anything that would hamper the future of the City; that the railroad problem was a big one, and they did not want to see a platform station built.

Mr. Chas. Granger declared that he was very much in favor of moving the railroads, but that to do so would cost approximately eight to twelve million dollars and with the City's present bonded indebtedness, the City probably could not be able to finance the City's part of the cost of relocating the tracks and building of the union depot for at least fifteen to twenty years; that a survey of the nature outlined to be made this year could probably determine the most advantageous location for re-routing the tracks, which, from a planning angle, he thought would have to go much farther east than planned. He declared that it was going to take time to make the survey and that the location of a temporary station west of Lamar Boulevard would relieve congestion in and around Congress Avenue and would be a definite step towards eliminating trains in downtown area, and he thought it would be to the City's advantage to have the Missouri Pacific Railroad put in the new station and improve the property, with the understanding that at such time as the Railroads are called upon to build a union station, they do not use that station to block it.

Mr. Landon Bradfield stated that when this matter came up for discussion in a meeting of the Real Estate Board, it was referred to the Civic Affairs Committee and they met with Messrs. Granger, Kuehne, and Gubbels in an effort to determine what was to the best interests of the City, and the Committee learned from them that the railroad master plan was practicable and would be a benefit to the City and that there were no legal involvements that could not be taken care of and they rather hoped that the survey which they had asked for before could be had. Then the new station came up that seemed to conflict with their plan.

Mr. Kirkpatrick declared, in answer to a question by Mayor Miller, that when the matter of a new station first came before the Council, the Railroad agreed it would not interfere in any way with the removal of the railroad tracks when the time came to carry out the Master Plan and that they would then abandon the new station. He stated further that the Railroad had rather build the depot than the platform, and was ready now to go ahead with the building of the depot if the obstacles were removed.

A member of the Real Estate Board declared that, in his opinion, it was a mistake to spend money for a survey that was needed to build sewers and other things when all admitted that the survey would be worthless, and that he thought the Railroad should go ahead and build the station and forget about the survey.

Councilman Glass reiterated his stand in the matter, declaring that he was not opposed to a survey at the proper time when it could be of

some value, but was opposed to spending money for something that could not be carried out for fifteen to twenty years.

Following the lengthy discussion, the Mayor asked the group if they were all agreed that the depot should be built if the obstacles could be worked out satisfactorily, and they stated that they were. It was then agreed that the Real Estate Board and the General Contractors would meet with the Railroad officials and work out those obstacles.

The meeting was then recessed.

Approved: Tom Miller.
Mayor

Attest:

Shelia McKeen

City Clerk