



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number: 17-4900

Agenda Item Number: 5.

Agenda Date: 8/31/2017

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Center City Development and Operations Department

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Jacks

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Council District 1

SUBJECT: Travis Park Monuments

SUMMARY:

This ordinance authorizes the following:

1. City to arrange for the removal and storage of the Confederate Soldier monument and two cannons located in Travis Park.
2. City Council allowing a modification to the process outlined in Chapter 35-640 and 35-803 of the Unified Development Code that provides the Historic and Design Review Commission review authority of changes to City Parks.
3. City Council appropriation of funds in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for the purpose of the following:
 - a. removing the monument and cannons;
 - b. transporting the monument and cannons to a storage facility; and
 - c. logistical support that is necessary for the removal and relocation of the monument and cannons.
4. City to execute professional services contract with a contractor for the purpose of removing and relocating the monument and cannons.
5. City to negotiate and execute a donation agreement with a non-profit involved in historic preservation or education for the acceptance of the Confederate Soldier monument and two cannons.

BACKGROUND:

Travis Park is one of San Antonio's oldest parks. The land originally belonged to Samuel Maverick who donated the property to the City for use as a park upon his death in 1870. By 1876, the City had made upgrades to the park, including planting grass, installing painted wooden benches, and installing a fence to enclose the

area. In 1892, two cannons reportedly used during the Civil War battle at Val Verde, New Mexico, were given to the City by Major Teel and installed in the park.

Prior to 1899, Travis Park lacked a formal design and was densely vegetated. The development of Travis Park into a formal urban square was a result of the City Beautiful movement which sought to integrate beauty and order into the urban landscape during the 1890s and early 1900s. Centrally-located sculptures and monuments in public squares were popular during this time. In the south during this timeframe, monuments to the confederacy became increasingly common in public spaces.

San Antonio's Confederate monument was funded by the Barnard E. Bee Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy who raised \$3,000 for the effort. The ceremony for the laying of the foundation stone on June 4, 1899, and the monument was completed in early 1900. The 40-foot tall monument is positioned centrally within the park with planters and sidewalks radiating to the perimeter of the park. It was designed by Miss Virginia Montgomery of New Orleans and constructed by sculptor Frank Teich, a German-born sculptor who operated a granite quarry and memorial company in Llano, Texas.

In 2013, the City made additional improvements to the park including repairs and new amenities to better engage the public. The City provides regular programming in the park and it serves as a community gathering space and is regularly enjoyed by family and friends through specialty programming like Movies by Moonlight, Fitness in the Park, Jazz Alive, and the food truck program. The July 25th Movies by Moonlight event had 3,500 attendees.

Over the past several years there has been a national debate over public memorials depicting Confederate figures. The recent and devastating incident in Charlottesville, Virginia, has elevated the debate. Cities and universities across the United States have removed and relocated their Confederate memorials to museums and other places. The City of San Antonio wants to keep Travis Park a community gathering area where all can feel safe and welcomed. The Confederate monument and cannons in Travis Park should be removed and ultimately placed in a location where the historical significance can be communicated in an instructive and not divisive way.

ISSUE:

Staff is recommending removal of both the Confederate monument and the two cannons and their relocation to an adequate storage facility. Staff is also recommending that the items be donated to a non-profit that will place them in the appropriate historical context.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City could keep the monument and cannons in Travis Park.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This item appropriates funding in an amount not to exceed \$150,000 for the purpose of removing the monument and cannons and transporting them to a storage facility. The funding will also address any security or logistical support that is necessary for the removal and relocation of the monument and cannons. Funding is available in the Facilities Services Fund FY 2017 Adopted Budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval.