

MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL

CITY OF AUSTIN, TEXAS

Special Meeting
City Council/Austin Independent School District

October 4, 1977
3:00 P.M.

Zilker Gardens

The meeting was called to order with Mayor McClellan and President Gus Garcia of the School Board presiding.

Roll Call: (City Council)

Present: Mayor McClellan, Mayor Pro Tem Himmelblau, Councilmembers Cooke, Mullen, Trevino, Snell

Absent: Councilmember Goodman

Roll Call: (School Board)

Present: President Garcia, Vice-President Griffin, Secretary Nugent, Members Davis, Gage, Hage, Kelley

Absent: None

Dr. Jack Davidson, Superintendent of the Austin Independent School District, addressed the meeting in regard to joint use and development of school and City recreation facilities. He stated that there was a need to refine more explicitly, the agreement between the City and A.I.S.D. as it relates to the specific uses of sites for future and current schools. Mr. Jack Robinson, Director of the Parks and Recreation Department, also felt that the current agreement needed to be updated. He felt that there needed to be closer coordination between A.I.S.D. and the City in acquisition, planning, design and development. Mr. Robinson stated that the long range master plan for the City and the school district needed to be looked at. He recommended joint capital ventures between the City and A.I.S.D. in the construction of new facilities. Mr. Robinson stated that use schedules for various facilities would have to be worked out. He indicated that policy would be formulated as they went along.

In regard to Capital Improvements (Covered Swimming Pool; Construction of Tennis Facilities), Mr. Jorge Carrasco, City Capital Budget Officer, outlined several school-related improvements that are currently listed in the C.I.P. Mr. Carrasco listed the following items which he stated were open for discussion:

1. Selection of sites and the design of facilities.
2. The acquisition of land including cost participation.
3. The maintenance and repair of various facilities.
4. The joint use scheduling for use of facilities by both the City and A.I.S.D.

Mr. Robinson indicated that tennis facilities are currently proposed for Crockett High School and LBJ High School. He stated that over the years there had been discussion as to the installation of a covering over an Olympic-sized swimming pool, which could be utilized all year round. It was suggested that the City pay the cost of the swimming pool and the City and A.I.S.D. jointly participate in the cost of the covering. Mr. Robinson indicated that they were willing to work with the A.I.S.D. staff on the design and location of such facilities. He stated that a long range plan was needed for the utilization of facilities.

In regard to utility service to the school district, Mr. Monty Nitcholas, Director of the Finance Department, indicated that the City was currently paying for the July and August utility consumption for many of the school district facilities. He made a comparison between the 1960 and 1977 cost for this service. Mr. Nitcholas felt that it was time to take a look at this financing of the school district. City Manager Dan Davidson felt that the school district should be reimbursed by the City for facilities used and that the school district should pay the utility bills that are accrued to each facility. In regard to rate charges, Mr. Nitcholas indicated that recommendations would be forthcoming with the report from the Touche-Ross Company, utility consultants to the City. Mr. Davidson stated that they would be able to report back to the Council and the School Board in more detail at a later date. Dr. Jack Davidson stated that there was a need for new, more specific formulas for computing utility rates for the school district. City Manager Davidson indicated that the City needed to insure some form of equity for itself in providing utility service to the school district.

In regard to the operation of the Tax Assessor-Collector's Office, Dr. Jack Davidson indicated that there needed to be some long range plan for computing what the cost to the school district will be for the next couple of years. Mr. Jack Klitgaard, Director of the Tax Department, indicated that expenditures for the school district are not cleared through the school district prior to being submitted to the City budget office. He stated that his department would be willing to provide the school district with tax information as early as possible. Mr. Klitgaard referred to House-Senate Bill #1, amending the Texas Education Code. He stated that the new law requires that the Tax Assessor-Collector's Office predetermine a tax rate for school tax purposes. Mr. Klitgaard stated that the law also provided for a change in public evaluation notices. He pointed out that there would also be the formation of a Tax Assessment Practice Board which will set minimum standards for all assessing districts having school-related tax situations. Mr. Klitgaard felt that the existing contract between the City and the school district was good.

In regard to community education, Mr. Joe Liro, Assistant City Manager, stated that the City and the school district currently shared in the operation of eight facilities within the City. He indicated that a newly revised contract had been suggested. Dr. Davidson stated that there had been some problems with last year's contract, but that those problems had been worked out. He stated, however, that the school district was uncertain as to the City of Austin's commitment to community education and indicated that they would like an administrative and policy decision as to the direction that the City wanted to go with community education.

In regard to cooperative purchasing, Dr. Davidson indicated that these should be high-use items, the specifications of which could be agreed to by the two entities. Mr. Solon Bennett, Director of the Purchasing Department, stated that one of the options was to establish an administrative agency composed of representatives from participating jurisdictions while the other option was the establishing of a piggy-back procedure where just one of the jurisdictions (either A.I.S.D. or the City of Austin) would issue a bid invitation for merchandise.

In regard to school crossing guards, Mr. George Henry, City Safety Officer, stated that the City's current investment in the school safety program was about \$380,000. This provides for safe pedestrian routes to and from schools. Mr. Henry outlined operating cost for the school safety program which included personnel services, crossing guards and supervisors, maintenance on expanding crosswalks and traffic signals and the installation of new reduced speed zones and sidewalks in the specific areas. Dr. Davidson indicated that the school district was very pleased with this program.

In regard to the MHMR school-related programs, Dr. Davidson stated that the school district had a number of existing programs that were related to MHMR. He stated that representatives from the school district assisted the MHMR Board of Directors. Dr. Davidson stated that there was a good deal of liaison work between the school district and MHMR. He stated that their main concern was that this relationship continue and that the school district continue to have some input as to what the total operation of MHMR ought to be. Mr. Jim Miller, Assistant City Manager, stated that it was time that the City, the school district and the County consider the size and number of the MHMR Board as well as funding sources for the organization.

Deputy City Manager Home Reed indicated that the staff of the school district had proposed to the staff of the City that the roadway south of Austin High School as well as the lands between the roadway and Town Lake be dedicated to the City and the City assume responsibility for maintaining the street. He indicated that the original roadway was first constructed as a detour by the State Highway Department during the construction of MoPac Expressway and the First Street connection. Mr. Reed stated that it was anticipated at that time that that would become the permanent access to Austin High School. However, the school district decided that it would be best to not have a straight connection crossing in front of the high school and proposed an alternative route. Mr. Will Davis, School Board member, stated that this was not true and that the subject street was never anything but a temporary street. Mr. Reed stated that the new alignment for the street was not constructed to City or State Highway Department specifications. He stated that the proposed street had some design problems as far as qualifying as a City street. Mr. Reed pointed out that at present the street was not a City street and as such the police could not

exercise jurisdiction on it. He stated that available options were to leave the street as it is with the school district maintaining the responsibility for the street or to accept the dedication of the street. Mr. Reed stated that the dedication could be accepted with some conditions such as the re-design of the intersection with the West First Street interchange. Dr. Davidson stated that there needed to be specific, clear language in dealing with the problem.

City Manager Davidson indicated that he would be willing to work with Dr. Davidson in regard to maintenance policies for joint use of land and facilities.

In regard to joint participation in grant applications, Assistant City Manager Jim Miller stated that there needed to be closer coordination in some of the programming such as community education, the humanities, culture, and recreation. He felt that the option of having staff work on these things on a project basis was probably the best way to go about handling the problems.

In regard to senior citizen homestead exemptions, Mayor McClellan indicated that next year there would be an early evaluation of property and that the exemption situation could be handled then.

Councilmember Snell indicated that he wanted to see bus shelters placed with other capital projects.

Mayor Pro Tem Himmelblau stated that she would like to see the City and the school district go back to a joint immunization program again.

Mr. Garcia indicated that he wanted to work out the problem of the homestead exemption prior to budget time.

Mr. Davis asked if lighting and a pro shop for Austin High School was in the current capital outlay program. Mr. Robinson stated that it was and that the City would be working on an agreement with the school district towards the first of next year.

Mr. Garcia asked Mr. Klitgaard to expand upon the aforementioned Senate Bill #1. He stated that it seemed as if the school district would be announcing a tax rate before it adopted its budget. Mr. Klitgaard indicated that the new State law stipulates that property owned in the school district has to be reassessed within the year. Moreover, the Tax Assessor is required to notify property owners not only assessed values but the rate as well three months before it is known. Mr. Garcia felt a letter from the Commissioner of Education or the legal staff was needed to clarify the matter. Mr. M. K. Hage, Jr., asked if an early tax estimate could be obtained. Mr. Klitgaard indicated that this would be risky as it is usually after January 1st before it is known what property is taxable.

In regard to the utility service to the school district, Mayor McClellan stated that the cost was going to have to be looked at. She stated that the pending Touche-Ross report would have to be referred to. The Mayor indicated that she would like a 90-day reporting period. City Manager Davidson stated that he thought this would be an adequate time frame.

Mayor McClellan indicated that information was needed on how to expand the community school system and felt that both staffs should get together to work on the problem with a report to be delivered at a later date. Mr. Jerry Nugent felt that there was a policy question as to how much community education should be expanded and at what rate. Rev. Marvin C. Griffin asked if the City and the school district would be sharing the cost equally. Ms. Pat Otis gave a report on the Northeast development of community education. Mr. Nugent stated that guidelines were needed regarding the development and expansion of community education. Councilmember Cooke felt that there was a concentration of community education in certain areas, whereas other areas were not really being addressed. Mayor McClellan stated that there was a question as to whether the City would be providing services as well as money, in which case the Council would have to make some kind of decision. Mayor McClellan stated that she wanted to see the advantages and disadvantages of continuing with the current funding arrangement and also the prospect of the City providing services as well as funding. City Manager Davidson indicated that he would report back to the Council on the issue within 90 days.

In regard to school safety, Mayor McClellan felt that public safety and school crossing guards were the responsibility of the City. Mayor Pro Tem Himmelblau felt that stop lights and traffic signs were the responsibility of the City but that the school crossing guards were the responsibility of the school district. Mr. Davis concurred with Mayor Pro Tem Himmelblau.

Mr. Davis felt that the Mental Health portion of the MHMR program was the responsibility of the school district. He stated that any regulation or funding of MHMR from the school district would be contrary to their duty.

Rev. Griffin felt that the construction of utility extensions as a cause of desegregation should be included among things to be looked into.

Mayor Pro Tem Himmelblau felt that the school district should be involved with MHMR. Mr. Garcia indicated that there were problems with this because the last appointee they made to the MHMR Board did not have expertise in school administration. Mayor Pro Tem Himmelblau suggested that the school district appoint someone from its own staff to serve on the MHMR Board. Mr. Garcia indicated that the school board would want to know more about MHMR and some of its by-laws to be adopted.

In summary, Mayor McClellan indicated that there would be a report within 90 days on the utility service to the school district, a 90-day report on community education and a 30-day resolution on the Austin High School street. She stated that future items to be placed on the agenda for future meetings were bus shelters, joint immunization programs and construction of utility extensions as they effect desegregation.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting then adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

October 4, 1977

APPROVED

Carole Keeton Miller

Mayor

ATTEST:

Grace Monroe

City Clerk