



Parks & Recreation

To: Mayor and City Council Members
Doug Faseler, City Manager

From: Jack Jones, Director of Parks and Recreation

Through: Rick Cortes, Assistant City Manager

Date: August 18, 2015

Subject: **Approval of the demolition of the Hoermann House at Park West and creating a group pavilion underneath the existing protective metal roofing with picnic tables and barbeque pits utilizing 2013 Parks Bond funding.**

The City of Seguin purchased approximately 48 acres of property (Park West) located south of San Antonio Ave. and east of N. Vaughan Ave. in June 2007 with Destination Seguin bond funds. In November of 2013, Seguin voters overwhelmingly approved \$5 million in park improvements of which over \$4 million is dedicated to Park West.

With the voter approved improvements at Park West almost complete, the question has come up as to what to do with the Hoermann House that is remaining on the property. The old house is in very bad shape and deteriorating rapidly due to weathering and vandalism over the years.

The structure was previously recorded in 1936 for the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) and described as a 2.5 story, stone and stucco house. Since then, the house has been extensively modified consisting of only one-story now without any of the wooden structural additions depicted in the HABS photographs. The house has been covered by a metal roof installed in 2010/2011 that was intended to protect the structure from the elements and is surrounded by a chain-link fence to deter trespassers.

At the request of the City, the Hoermann House was visited and evaluated on March 11, 2015 by Stanley Graves with Architecture, Planning and Historic Preservation, Inc. In a letter dated March 23, 2015 (attached), Mr. Graves concluded that the main structure has since been significantly altered most likely rendering it ineligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or recorded as a Texas Historic Landmark. Mr. Graves suggested that the City work with the Texas Historical Commission (THC) directly to confirm whether or not the remains of the Hoermann House should be considered a historic or archeological landmark.

To meet the requirements of THC, the City contracted TRC Environmental Corporation (TRC) to conduct the necessary cultural resource investigations. Subsequently, TRC archeologists submitted a Texas Antiquities Permit Application to the THC, and Antiquities Permit #7301 (attached) was issued to archeologist Paul M. Matchen to serve as Principal Investigator for the necessary cultural resource efforts. In the Intensive Cultural Resource Survey of the Park West Community Park report to THC (attached), Mr. Matchen and his team determined that the Hoermann House and surrounding property is not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

A letter from THC dated August 11, 2015 (attached) concurs with the findings of Stanley Graves and Paul Matchen that the site and house is not eligible for inclusion in the NRHP based on the lack of significant

research value and the lack of association with a significant person or event. Additionally, THC concurs that the standing remains of the Hoermann House have been significantly altered and therefore the structure itself does not meet criteria for inclusion in the NRHP. As such, the City can determine the future of the Hoermann House.

Staff recommends approval for the demolition of the Hoermann House at Park West and create a group pavilion underneath the existing protective metal roofing with picnic tables and barbeque pits utilizing 2013 Parks Bond funding designated for Park West. This will create a usable public space nestled in large live oak trees for such things as family picnics and can be used as a base for nature studies.