



# City of Grand Prairie

Temporary Meeting Place  
Grand Prairie ISD  
Administration Building  
2602 S. Beltline Road  
Grand Prairie, Texas

## Minutes - Final City Council

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Tuesday, January 31, 2012

5:00 PM

Grand Prairie ISD Board Room

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### Call to Order

Present 9 -

Mayor Charles England; Mayor Pro Tem Jim Swafford; Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ruthe Jackson; Council Member Richard Fregoe; Council Member Greg Giessner; Council Member Mark Hepworth; Council Member Ron Jensen; Council Member Tony Shotwell and Council Member Bill Thorn

### Executive Session

*Mayor England convened an executive session at 5:07 p.m. pursuant to Chapter 551, Subchapter D of the Government Code, V.T.C.A., Section 551.072 "Deliberation Regarding Real Property." Mayor England closed the executive session at 5:43 p.m. and reconvened the regular session.*

### Items for Individual Consideration

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Ordinance amending the FY 2011/2012 Capital Improvement Projects Budget for the design/construction of improvements to QT Ballpark of \$1,600,000 and a Development Agreement with GP Baseball Club, LLC.

*Mayor England said he met with Scott Barry, President of the GP Baseball Club, this afternoon and discussed financials. He explained this item was to decide if Council wanted to approve \$1.5 million from the city and \$100,000 from the GP Baseball Club for improvements to QuikTrip Ballpark.*

*Scott Barry, President of GP Baseball Club, stated that he needed Council support for these improvements. He said the bridge is a safety issue; parking is needed to provide close executive level parking for baseball and special events; and the AstroTurf is needed this year. He said the turf makes a huge difference for multiple events. He said when the stadium was built the city did not get what they bargained for with regard to drainage and grass. Artificial turf will attract more people to the baseball games and for other events and QT Park would be one of the two top fields in the area. Mr. Barry said all high schools will want to play there. He added that the prior ownership group created a lot of problems. He said the GP Baseball Club had made a lot of progress and improved the field and the team, the concessions and the restaurant. However, with the heat and three prior years it was a tough year. He said the GP Baseball Club would pay every bill owed and they have agreements with many vendors to pay them. He said he is committed to this venture. He said Council should not feel rushed into this decision because they had been meeting with the city since August regarding these improvements. Mr. Barry said the turf will change the dynamics and will need to be marketed as the pre-eminent park in the area. He said they have booked some tournaments for the next two years, but to get more of these*

events, the turf is required. Mr. Barry said the Council should not wait 8 or 9 months, because that will only put them further behind.

Wayne Poage, long-time athletic director at Dallas Baptist University, said he had worked with an artificial turf company. He said GP Baseball is trying to bring in events to make the most of the facility and there are only so many hours a grass field can take. He said the water shortage is also a factor. Mr. Poage said they will be hosting a Highland Park Tournament at this stadium. He said with artificial turf there is no worry about rain. The Western Athletic Conference will be playing at the stadium and the Texas State Jr. Championship is moving here in 2013. There are several college games to be played here next year. Turf eliminates wear and tear that would take place with grass.

Council Member Shotwell stated that one of the selling points for turf is the ability to hold events we have not been able to in the past because it is not turfed. He asked what types of events could be held that could not be held on grass. Mr. Poage replied he could not name events that could not be held on grass. He said Highland Park High School has turf and Prosper just turfed their field. When it rains they are bombarded with calls – if the city turfs, we would get those calls. Mr. Barry said the big issue is constant wear and tear on the field and there has not been this kind of wear and tear in the past. He said the infield does not drain and they had to cancel a concert last summer because of the wet infield. He said the club will be facing a more dire financial situation if games are rained out. Mr. Poage said when GP Baseball took it over, the field was in horrible shape. Council Member Jensen asked how many teams in our league have turf fields. Mr. Barry replied that Wichita has turf. Mr. Jensen asked what the charge was for a high school game. Mr. Barry said \$1,000 to \$1,500 is what Highland Park charges. Mr. Poage said the club could plan ahead and host more tournaments with turf.

Mayor England stated that GP Baseball had been talking about three additional select baseball fields and said this is not going to happen any time soon. He added that Lone Star Park still needs to do a master plan. Mr. Poage said he was just addressing QuikTrip Park. Mr. Barry said he wanted the baseball complex and it would be a mistake if the city does not build the complex. He said he would look at an alternate site, but the person he spoke with at Lone Star Park said they did not have any use for that field. Mr. Barry said the economic impact (second only to gaming) of a baseball complex would be very significant. Discussion took place about not being able to get an ambulance onto the field, and Mayor England stated he had spoken with the Fire Department and they said they would be able to get very close to the entrance to the field and get a stretcher to anyone who was injured in a timely manner.

Mr. Poage said he would have a baseball complex booked for a year immediately. Mayor Pro Tem Swafford asked if they planned to turf the entire field including the infield. Mr. Poage stated they would turf the whole field. Mr. Swafford asked why the Rangers did not put down turf. Mr. Poage said major league players do not like artificial turf and the Rangers are not making money bringing other events into their stadium. Minor leagues and colleges are trending to AstroTurf. Mr. Barry said having turf allows them to have more events thus getting more revenue for fence signs, concessions, etc. He said they were trying to dig out of a hole they did not create. He said these improvements would be good for business and good for the city.

Maston Sillin, 529 Newberry Street, said he had been an usher for the AirHogs for two seasons. He said there were things that could be improved for the benefit of the audience. Mr. Sillin said in the concourse after dark the lights create a glare so people can not read any of the signs on the restrooms or seating. The signage for

*restrooms is confusing and could be less confusing if a sign were to be placed over the drinking fountains directing men and women to the appropriate restroom. He added that people are not allowed to sit on the low walls next to the turfed terraces, but there are no signs to that effect. Signs warning people to keep off the wall are needed. Mr. Sillin asked that the water fountains be refrigerated because many people who attend the games cannot afford bottled water.*

*Mayor England stated there were financial issues that present a problem and he asked Council to delay this decision until next season.*

*Council Member Hepworth moved to remove the parking lot funding and amend the ordinance to \$1.4 million for the bridge lift and Astroturf; Council Member Thorn seconded the motion.*

*Ayes: Council Members Hepworth and Thorn*

*Nays: Council Members Fregoe, Giessner, Jensen, and Shotwell, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Jackson, Mayor Pro Tem Swafford and Mayor England*

*The motion failed.*

*Council Member Shotwell moved to fund the bridge lift and additional parking now and bring back consideration of the Astroturf at a later date. Council Member Giessner asked for a friendly amendment to remove additional parking. Council Member Shotwell refused the amendment. Council Member Thorn seconded the original motion.*

*Ayes: Council Members Shotwell and Thorn*

*Nays: Council Members Fregoe, Giessner, Hepworth, Jensen, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Jackson, Mayor Pro Tem Swafford and Mayor England*

*The motion failed.*

**Mayor Pro Tem Swafford moved to approve the request from the GP Baseball Club operator for the bridge lift and have the city Marketing Department assist with marketing, fund up to \$50,000 to assist with their marketing program, and return in August for consideration of funding Astroturf; Council Member Jensen seconded the motion.**

**Mayor Pro Tem Swafford asked to amend his motion to stipulate the funding source from the Capital Reserve Fund for \$100,000 for the bridge lift and \$50,000 for marketing. Council Member Shotwell clarified that this motion waives the first \$100,000 cost from GP Baseball Club. Mr. Swafford and Mr. Jensen agreed and received consensus from the Council. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Ayes: 9 -**

Mayor Charles England; Mayor Pro Tem Jim Swafford; Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Ruthe Jackson; Council Member Richard Fregoe; Council Member Greg Giessner; Council Member Mark Hepworth; Council Member Ron Jensen; Council Member Tony Shotwell and Council Member Bill Thorn

## **Citizen Comments**

*There were no citizen comments.*

**Adjournment**

**Mayor England adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m.**

*The foregoing minutes were approved at the February 7, 2012 Council meeting.*

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*Catherine E. DiMaggio, City Secretary*