



**FARMERS  
BRANCH**

**MINUTES  
ARTS AND CULTURE SUB COMMITTEE  
RECREATION CENTER  
14050 Heartside Place  
Farmers Branch, Texas 75234  
Wednesday, April 13, 2016  
7:00 pm**

**Members Present:** Martina De Los Santos, Jorge Gonzalez, Elizabeth "Lib" Grimmitt, Vincent Montenegro, John Speed, Timothy Yarbrough, Louise Henning, John Jakob,

**Members Absent:** Linda Bertl

**Staff Present:** John Land

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vincent Montenegro called the meeting to order at 7:05 pm

**2. DISCUSS AND APPOINT SUB-COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

Chair – John Speed

Vice Chair – Louise Henning

Secretary – Jorge Gonzalez

**3. REVIEW AND CURRENT PROJECTS UNDER CONSIDERATION**

There is the ability to use both public, private, and government (federal, state, county) funding for projects.

It is important to coordinate efforts with different funding, project groups and subcommittees, currently various groups are working on similar and overlapping efforts that would constitute Arts and Culture. A bond package can be a catalyst to allow these efforts to be funded as a whole.

It is important to differentiate between program and policy. Art Czar (overall art master planner for the City) cannot be funded by a bond package but the public art part of this effort can. The goal of this effort is to create an overall visual link throughout the City. Hotel / Tourism taxes can be used to fund public art and art installations under this effort.

It was noted that currently a tourism consultant is working with the City to review city assets and make recommendations on what can be added or improved. Items under discussion include:

1. Hotel
2. Visitor Center
3. Historic board

**City Entry Markers / Portals:** An idea discussed is incorporating art, signage, and branding to create iconic entrances to the city from main thoroughfares (IH 35, 635, etc.)

The City is currently working with a signage/branding company (PyroAgency.com) to design an overall branding and signage effort for the entire city. There are three tiers of branding.

Tier 1 – Main thoroughfare signage (includes blade signage, landscaping, and lighting at main thoroughfare entrances)

Tier 2 – City wayfinding signage

Tier 3 – Neighborhood signage

It was noted that city lighting (light poles and signage lighting) can be incorporated into this branding effort. A current trend is to limit light pollution, the use of smaller more architectural light fixtures along main thoroughfares may help provide a visual distinction to Farmers Branch from other adjacent cities.

**Free WiFi** (in parks and public buildings similar to Carrollton) – It was noted that Detroit has done this as a private / public partnership. This effort can be combined with the Parks and Recreation effort.

Benefits to free WiFi –

1. Accessibility and security within these public spaces
2. Fast internet connection can be seen as an attractor to startups and small independent business looking for places to work from (library conference rooms, leasable startup zones, public buildings)
3. Can be a money revenue for the city (daily, monthly, or yearly fee for nonresidents)
4. Can be integrated into a Arts Center (startup location for local artists, an area for artists to work, inspire each other, and sell their work)

**City Arts District:** Combining various areas within walking distance would help create synergy for the City (similar to Klyde Warren Park). This effort should be strengthened with the Parks and Recreation trail effort to create a stronger link between these components (Trail of Culture). Ideas discussed included creating a city arts district that would incorporate the following:

Farmers Branch Dart Light Rail station  
 Parking structure to accommodate multiple event  
 Farmers Market  
 Farmers Branch Historical Park  
 Bird Sanctuary  
 Rose Garden  
 Visitor Center  
 Firehouse Theater  
 Bee Street development (café and restaurant zone)  
 Stars Center

**Firehouse Theater:** Current facility has the following assets and limitations:

Assets:

1. Seats + / - 125 seats
2. New mechanical system
3. City owned building run by a non profit
4. Great location close to Bee Street as well as light rail and small retail (may encourage future café and restaurant development)

Limitations:

1. Cannot be expanded; currently using space at Star Center
2. Portion to be demolished
3. Needs back of house space (green room, dressing, storage, etc.)

Historical Park Development: Ideas discussed that can be incorporated into the historical park include:

1. Visitor center
2. Historical board

**Animal Adoption Center:** The current facility does not have enough room for all animals and their care. One idea mentioned is to reuse Fire Station 2 once it is moved to the proposed more city centric location.

Assets:

1. Current animal adoption center remains as the adoption center
2. Renovated building is used as the animal acclimation and quarantined building (current facility does not provide the separation required to limit spread of disease or illness between animals)
3. The children from adjacent school can be volunteered to assist in animal acclimation (reading to animal program)
4. Proposed building contains large grounds for outdoor animal use
5. Existing fire truck bay is large so can accommodate creation of separate kennel and quarantined zones

Limitations:

1. Renovation may be extensive and may not accommodate all required needs

2. Building may have extensive foundation damage
3. Building may require rework of all MEP systems (including plumbing underground)

**Library:** The library has undergone various interior remodels that have brought it closer to current library standards but currently does not meet standards of newest facilities. It was noted that the library is currently used by a broad range of local and out of town patrons; each of varying needs.

1. Students
  - a. Preschool
  - b. Elementary
  - c. Secondary
  - d. College
2. Adults
  - a. Patrons checking out books, audio, and video
  - b. Reading Clubs
  - c. Research
  - d. Work from home
  - e. Training
  - f. Unemployed using internet services
3. Classes (for example bridge, citizenship, English as a foreign language)
4. Elderly

Having a mixture of small, mid-size, and large conference rooms (with wifi and multimedia connections) would be an asset. These rooms can be reserved (or leased) for group use.

#### 4. **DISCUSS PROJECT EVALUATION STRUCTURE AND BENCHMARKS**

It was suggested that the group evaluate the matrix created by other subcommittees and create categories that will help create an evaluation structure for all proposed bond items.

These may include the following categories:

Name of proposed item

Proposer name (to be able to ask and confirm intent)

Description

Longevity of project life

Span of purpose

Value

Return on investment

Benefits

Priority

Utilization

Use by residents or non-residents

Vision

Constraints

Public Policy or program

Prior study or plan done

Return on investment

Tax value / Income revenue to the City

Cost broken out by hard cost (actual physical construction cost) and soft cost (design fees) as may be appropriate

It was noted that other discussion points may be how this bond may improve quality of life, improve the community, and help with reducing unemployment and poverty. Can this bond be used as an incentive to bring new investors into the City?

#### 5. **DISCUSS POTENTIAL ADDITIONAL PROJECTS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION**

Public Relations - It was noted that every subcommittee member should be reaching out to their neighbors and discussing their thoughts on these items to be able to add ideas or discuss concerns from other residents.

Subcommittee to discuss options to vent out bond ideas with City residents. Is the bond package sellable?

**6. CONSIDER AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

Sub Committee to discuss how to incorporate public relations to get a sense for what is wanted and needed by our communities and how the proposed items will be received.

City Staff to provide the following:

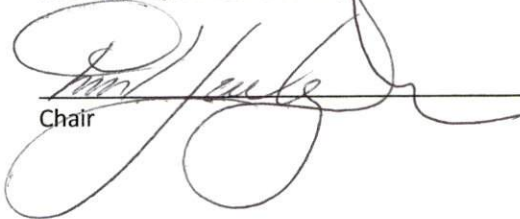
1. Matrix used by other subcommittees for evaluation and use
2. Presentation from Library and Animal Adoption Center
3. Discuss other developments already in progress that may be leveraged to benefit Arts and Culture bond packages
4. Discuss the different funding sources available for these bond packages (federal, state, county, education, private, etc.)

**7. DISCUSS FUTURE MEETING DATES / TIMES / LOCATIONS**

Next meeting to be schedule at Farmers Branch Library.

**8. ADJOURN**

Motion to adjourn made by John Speed. Motion seconded by Vincent Montenegro.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

  
Chair

Attest:

  
Secretary