

Clovis News Journal

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Citizens discuss parks programs

The firm hired to create a master plan is seeking information on what Clovis residents want from their park programs.

Craig Kelsey of PlaySafe Inc. in Albuquerque is holding a series of eight "town-hall" type meetings with selected members of the public invited to help decide what features should be included in which parks, and if the City should try to maintain the parks it now has.

A meeting held Wednesday morning was attended by a few residents of District 3, invited by District 3 Commissioner Robert Moreno, to address the concerns of that district. Meetings for youth agencies, senior groups and others were to be held from Tuesday through late today.

Most of the groups had between 15-20 people attending, and some of the same themes and questions came up in several of the groups, Kelsey said.

He said several people wondered about the 26 parks in Clovis.

"They wondered if we should reduce the number of parks in order to improve the quality of them," Kelsey said.

District 33 resident Paul Tankersley asked Public Works Director Joe Thomas if he had the budget to adequately maintain all 26 parks. Thomas said he did not, and added he would like to see the number of parks reduced.

Thomas mentioned that some of the parks were actually small lots or strips of land not suited for building.

"They aren't big enough to allow any type of activity, but they still require maintenance," he said.

Kelsey also said that several people believed Hillcrest Park was the "signature park" and should be enhanced.

He said it was a "widely held view" that the golf course should be moved, if possible.

Those at the meeting generally agreed that funding was "the bottom line of everything," and such an expensive move might not be possible now.

Thomas said the City has looked at building a new golf course elsewhere, but the cost could easily be between \$5-6 million. He said the City had discussed trying to get someone in the private sector to build and run the golf course on city land, but they haven't found anyone interested.

One thing that surprised Kelsey by its absence was the pool issue. He said no one had raised a question or made a comment about public swimming facilities.

He also said that while most of the attendees were middle age there was a great deal of concern about programs and facilities for youth teen-agers and senior citizens.

"There is a lot of interest in joint participation between the city, schools, and even Cannon (Air Force Base), trying to use all existing facilities rather than competing," Kelsey said. "Most people here agreed that Clovis is well endowed with parks and recreations facilities and people here are very interested in the quality of life in Clovis."

Kelsey said some members of the City Commission had seen some preliminary parts of his report but a final report should be ready in about 45 days.