

MINUTES

ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS
March 24, 1977

Members Present: Chairman Murphy
Assemblyman May
Assemblyman Craddock
Assemblyman Jeffrey
Assemblyman Mann
Assemblyman Robinson
Assemblyman Westall
- Assemblyman Jacobsen

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Murphy. He explained that the purpose of the meeting was to hear testimony on AB 485 which was concerned with issuance of bonds for the purchase of land to be used for a park.

AB 485: Assemblyman Gomes was the first to speak in favor of the bill, as introducer. She stated that the bill was drafted by Russ McDonald and that he would answer any specific questions regarding the legislation itself. She stated that any changes that have to be made so that the bill would comply with the highway standards would be made later.

Mr. Russ McDonald stated that knowledge of the availability of the land in question had come up some time ago to the people involved at a prior meeting. And, they found out at that time that the owner, Mrs. Herman was asking \$6,000,000 for the property. He stated that the owner had indicated to them that she wished to dispose of the property quickly and that is what lead the group to declaration of an emergency situation because of the current situation regarding sewer service, water and the zoning of the land in question. He said that he felt that an emergency situation may or may not, indeed, exist.

He stated that this bill would make any one, or all, of the three entities involved able to purchase the property by the sale of general obligation bonds. He stated that the legislature has authorized the sale of these types of bonds, without an election, at least 5 times over the last thirty years for various reasons.

He stated that in regard to the bill itself certain things had to be assumed. He pointed out that it was his understanding that this park would be of the open air recreation type, such as Golden Gate and Central Park. He stated that he did not believe that that covered football stadiums, etc.

He commented that he had discussed the bill with a Denver bond counsel, Dawson, Nagel, Sherman and Howard and they had approved the way the bill was drafted. And, that if the bill passed the county and both cities would have the authority, under their charters and general law, to issue subject to the vote of the people, the general obligation bonds for that purpose. However, he did not feel there was authorization presently for these

ASSEMBLY GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

March 24, 1977

Page Two

entities to work together in this manner. He then explained the provisions of section 3 and how the investment and responsibility would be divided among the parties. He stated that the results of the appraisal which was being done would be in within two to three weeks.

He stated that Mr. Walters had told them prior to the drafting of the bill that Ring Road would be bisecting the property and he was sure that there were appraisals made by the highway department, but that they had not received any information from those appraisals.

He stated that if the entities decided to join in the project that they would be tenants in common forever on the property and he felt that the land should be master planned and that should include provisions for possible disposal of the property if necessary.

Mr. McDonald also pointed out that there might be some provision for use of some of the property by the University of Nevada for public education purposes. He also pointed out that the highway corridor which will be going through the property should be compatible with the purpose and use of the park.

He stated that the following things should be kept in mind in regard to the park: 1. The definition of park that is to be used, 2. The method of acquisition, and 3. The master plan approach, 4. The resulting loss in property taxes by not developing the land earlier.

Virginia Cursey was next and spoke in favor of the bill. She stated that she felt there should be some provision in the bill so that some space would be preserved for the future.

Mr. Pete Walters, representative for Mrs. Herman, stated that there were builders trying to buy the land currently, but, that Mrs. Herman was more anxious to sell the land to the county or city so that it could be used as a park, rather than having it developed into homes.

Chairman Murphy asked Mr. Walters if she was interested enough in selling the land to the county to wait for an election. Mr. Walters stated that Mrs. Herman had stated that she was willing to wait a "reasonable time", but he did not feel that the length of time it would take to put on an election was a reasonable time. He said he felt any length of time beyond the adjournment of the legislature would be too long unless this bill was passed.

Chairman Murphy asked Mr. McDonald how long he felt it would take to get the measure on the ballot and Mr. McDonald stated that if action were initiated soon it would be very close as to whether or not it could make the May election in Reno but it would still be a special election for the county and cost about \$30,000.

Mr. May asked Mr. Walters if all improvements and water rights were offered in the sale as well as the property and Mr. Walters stated that all rights were included as well as the improvements.

Mr. Jacobsen asked what the total acreage was in the parcel and Mr. Walters stated that it was 459 acres less the amount that the highway department will take which is supposed to be a simple through road.

Mrs. Gomes stated that Mr. McDonald was close on his estimate of notice time if this was to go on the ballot. She stated that the law requires that the notice be given once a week for two consecutive weeks, not more than 50 days prior to the election or less than 42 days prior to the special election.

Mr. Bill Engle, Nevada State Highway Department, stated that they had a primary interest in that portion of the park parcel on which they wished to extend Ring Road. He stated that because of the 1974 highway act they had to consider several problems if the land were developed in to a park, such as: 1. noise barriers, 2. building separation, 3. separate drainage facilities. He stated that if the park is planned without taking into consideration these problems that it could result in some very expensive mistakes. Discussion then followed among the committee on what alternatives might be considered regarding these problems.

Mr. Engle stated that their project is 95% federally funded and once the project is completed the federal government doesn't like to put out the money or even consider coming back to change any of the project. He pointed out that negotiations for the property are expected to close soon and they did not anticipate having to go through condemnation procedures on the property. He also pointed out to the committee that he did not know what plans the city or county might have for future streets in this area.

Mr. Jim West, Right-of-Ways Division of the Highway Department, stated that he had been negotiating with Mrs. Herman since December 1976 and they had closed yesterday on the thirty-five acre portion for the right of way. He stated that one thing that had been agreed to was that the present irrigation system is to be maintained.

Mr. Fred Davis, lobbyist for the Greater Reno Chamber of Commerce, stated that he felt this was a very unique opportunity and he felt that the bill should be passed.

Mr. Clyde Biglieri, Reno City Councilman, stated that he did not wish to speak either for or against the bill. He said he felt there were facts that the members of the committee should be made aware of. He stated that he felt it was a beautiful piece of property and would make a great park. He stated that the Reno City Council had never seen nor discussed the bill. He also stated that the property is zoned A-1 which is one house per acre

and it is not, he thought, zoned for multiple dwellings. He also stated that if the deal goes through it would be the largest land purchase the City of Reno has ever made in its history and would result in payments of \$40,000+ per month for 20 years. He stated that his sources tell him that the property has been on the market for years and he does not, therefore, think that it is an emergency measure.

Mr. Clark Santini, Co-chairman of the Citizen's Ad Hoc Committee, stated that he appreciated the opportunity the committee had given them to express their support for the bill and inform them of why they feel that way. He stated that they have gotten over 1,000 signatures from the citizens in support of the measure. He stated that all the people, almost, that they spoke to were in support of a special election and he commented that they did not feel that parks happened by themselves. He said they felt this was most important since there had not been a regional park developed since Idelwild Park. He said he felt that the parks are a hidden asset to an area and that it will help pay for itself by its recreational uses such as horsetrails, etc. He said that they were in opposition to a golf course being made into the park because there are enough of these facilities in existence now. He also said that they were not supportive of a stadium complex either. He said that the open space aspect to it was very important to the area because of the tremendous growth of the area.

He said that their group would support purchase of the property at any fair appraisal value because in ten years that price would be considered a joke because of the inflationary trend in property costs. He stated that they are not opposed to housing, but, they feel that it is also extremely important to have the park areas for those people who are coming into the area to be able to enjoy. He elaborated on why he felt this was necessary.

Barbara Bennett, candidate for City Council, was next to speak and she stated that a preliminary survey showed overwhelming support for the idea of this land being used for a park. And, she stated that the majority of those surveyed supported the limited use concept. He said that she felt that parks are a number one priority of 70% of the people.

Orland T. Outland stated that he was speaking against the method which had been used in bringing about this bill, not against the end result. He said he felt that these types of facilities are badly needed; however, the voter is being bypassed and the proper information is not being disseminated to those voters.

He said that he felt that the pressure being exerted in the name of expediency was not necessary and that it was setting a bad precedent and was based on poor planning.

Chairman Murphy stated that there would be another hearing on this matter next Tuesday at the legislature building in Carson City at 7:00 a.m..

Mr. Jim Watson, Reno land developer and builder, stated that he concurred with the previous speaker. He stated that he felt that this purchase was being rushed into without full considerations of what might be involved in the developing of this land. He said that the maintenance costs must be considered and that there will also be a policing problem in a park this size. He said that he had tried to donate a 40 acre cite in Sparks and they had turned him down there because they did not feel they could properly police a park that size, much less one of over 400 acres. He said he would not send his children to Idelwild park for just that reason he did not feel the security was present in that park.

Mr. Bruno Menecuci, was the last speaker to address this issue. He stated that he did feel that there should be provisions in the bill for the continued operation and maintenance of the area.

He also pointed out that the area has been referred to as similar to Golden Gate Park and he said that Golden Gate Park has some six different income producing areas in it. He stated that he felt that the work between the highway department and the city should be a two-way street and they are willing to work with them in any way they can to achieve a good result.

He also pointed out that though this particular bill may not have been seen physically by the City Council, they have, in the past, supported this concept. And that support was from Reno, Sparks, the county and the Board of Regents of the University.

He stated that he did feel that if this did go to elections, that it was, indeed, too late for the May elections. And, he felt therefore there should be more hearings on the subject.

Mr. Santini again spoke briefly to reiterate their support of a special bond election. And, he pointed out secondly, that he had spent many, many hours getting the public involved in this issue and did not think they were being overlooked.

Chairman Murphy stated that if there were any other persons wishing to testify they could at the next Tuesday's meeting in Carson City. There being no futher business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. A letter of support is attached and marked Ex. A.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Morgan

Kim Morgan, Secretary



SIERRA CLUB

Toiyabe Chapter - Nevada and Eastern California
P.O. Box 8096 - University Station - Reno, Nevada 89507

March 23, 1977

Chairman Murphy
Committee on Government Affairs
Nevada State Legislature
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Chairman Murphy:

The Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club supports A.B. 485 which authorizes the cities of Reno and Sparks and Washoe County to issue general obligation bonds to purchase land for park purposes.

There is little doubt that the population within the greater Reno Metropolitan Area will continue to expand. The several parks in the area, while excellent, are already experiencing crowded conditions even during the colder winter months. At times there is standing room only at the more popular parks such as Idlewild and Virginia Lake.

The opportunity to purchase a large acreage like the San Rafael Ranch will probably not happen again. This area is next to a very populated section of Reno which has few parks. But because of the Ring Road this area will be easily accessible to people from outlying areas as well. The park will be especially enjoyable if some of the "ranch character" can be retained. For example, the ranch house itself might be used as a home for a grounds keeper.

We hope that committee will recommend to the legislature that A.B. 485 be passed.

Sincerely,
Dennis Ghigliera
Dennis Ghigliera
Conservation Chairman