

Resolution

By the Hancock Neighborhood Association

Whereas, the greatest cities of the world for centuries have realized the value and importance of open, natural spaces for the health and peace of mind of their residents; and

Whereas, PARD is planning to shut down Hancock Golf Course after decades of operating losses and PARD's community survey indicated that Austinites are against any sort of private lease and primarily want to ensure that Hancock is preserved as open, green space; and

Whereas, Hancock is dedicated parkland and therefore cannot be sold or alienated for non-park uses without a city wide vote as per §3.07 of the City Charter; and

Whereas, Hancock was not intended to forever remain a golf course. On Feb. 27, 1964 Councilwoman Emma Long proposed that a "study of Hancock be made to see if it should continue to be used as a golf course or as general recreation, as many other people would like to use it for general recreation purposes." The City Manager at the time responded that the "course would be abandoned eventually, as a nine-hole golf course is not economical. It definitely would be eliminated if another golf course is constructed." Since then several golf courses have been constructed; and

Whereas, Hancock Golf Course's significant yearly operating deficits over the last decades has put this public green space at risk of being leased to a private golf developer, and no viable plan for the fiscal solvency of Hancock Golf Course has been successful, despite the implementation of multiple cost savings measures; and

Whereas, numerous philanthropic organizations exist to support open green space, as has been proven with conservancies such as the Pease Park Conservancy and the Shoal Creek Conservancy; and

Whereas, the first two major goals of PARD's Long Term Plan are to "ensure parks act as a relief from urban life" and to "expand and improve park access for all," with secondary goals to "protect and increase natural areas that support immersive nature experiences," "add between 4,000 and 8,000 acres of new parkland over the next 10 years," "expand greenbelts and trails along creek buffers" and "invest in multi-purpose, unstructured spaces capable of supporting flexible uses;" and

Whereas, Hancock Golf Course, located in the rapidly densifying urban core, is already dedicated parkland owned by the city and constitutes one of the oldest and last mid-sized open spaces left in the center of Austin; and

Whereas, the ecological restoration of Waller Creek, which runs through Hancock Golf Course before continuing through UT and the new Waterloo Greenway, is a widespread community goal and will provide unique wildlife experiences for the residents of Hancock and surrounding neighborhoods; and

Whereas, a Hancock Park could be the crown jewel of North Austin parks that would be cherished by all Austinites for generations to come; and

Whereas, the Hancock neighborhood, above all else, wishes to keep this cherished plot of land as non-fenced, natural open space for all of Austin; **now, therefore**,

Be it resolved by the Hancock Neighborhood Association to:

Direct PARD to transform Hancock Golf Course into a public park "as is", allowing all Austinites to enjoy this cherished land; and to:

- Cease plans to lease this public land to a private golf developer
- Enact an ecological restoration plan for Waller Creek according to Watershed Protection's successful Riparian Restoration program
- Survey and consult with the Austin community to design a long term plan for Hancock Park