


MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 12, 2018
TO: Mayor White & City Council
VIA: Mercy Rushing, City Administrator
FROM: Cindy Karch, Finance Director 
SUBJECT: Discuss Prairie Dogs at Preserve

Council Meeting Agenda Item for October 15, 2018

Background Information:

On Thursday, September 20th, 2018, Mercy Rushing hired a trapper to remove the Prairie Dogs at the Preserve. When she advised the Parks Board that she had found someone, several members were not happy with her decision and asked her to stop. At that time, Mercy felt it necessary to bring the issue to council as this species is an invasive species and the decision to introduce them to the Preserve was never brought to them in the first place.

Attached are minutes, correspondences and photos. In the minutes, you can see where the parks board approved introducing a colony of Prairie Dogs in the Preserve on September 20th, 2016. On April 18th, 2017, a motion was made and carried to have the Prairie Dogs removed because of damage to the Preserve. Mercy spoke with Mark McDonald two times asking him to remove them, and he promised he would. She called him a third time and left a message and never got a response. Mercy never heard back from Mr. McDonald, and numerous reports were documented in the minutes of the continued damage caused by them over the course of the next year and a half. At the time of the East Texas Revive Fest in September 2018, she and William Crump toured the Preserve and noticed that the damage was extensive in the festival area and worried about the liability for this event. When another trapper approached the city, she hired him to get rid of the Prairie Dogs as Mr. McDonald failed to communicate with her over the course of a year on when he was going to remove the animals.

Recommendation:

City staff is asking the council for guidance on how to handle the Prairie Dog issue at the Preserve. Staff does not recommend allowing them to stay, and further recommends removing them. Of course we would like to do this in a humane way as to not injure any dogs, but the fact is that if they stay, they pose a liability to the citizens, staff and wild life.

Final Disposition: