

Skatepark plans develop slowly

(KAIR)--Setting a goal to give the youth of Atchison something to look forward to.

That's what an Atchison couple, seeking the City's assistance in the creation of a skateboard park, hopes to see as their idea advances. "We just want to stay on top of it, so we're not brushed under the table, or not that important, not needed, and then, a year from now, we're at the same spot," said Pam Cline during a special meeting April 30 of the Atchison Parks and Forestry Board. Cline, along with her significant other, Jeremy Watkins, is working to see the skateboard park built in honor of Cline's 17-year-old son, Joshua Kinsman, who died in January.

The project, long discussed with the Parks and Forestry Board, was brought by Cline and Watkins to the City Commission on April 16.

At that time, they explained their goal was to place the skatepark on private property located in the area of 10th and Commercial Streets, in Atchison.

That concept was addressed again during the special Parks and Forestry Board meeting.

Assistant Public Works Director Justin Pregont, during the session, outlined a list of reasons, including limitations of upkeep, as to why the best plan to gain City Commission approval to make the project a reality is to locate it on existing city owned park property. "You're certainly free to pursue developing the project proposal that you want, on whatever property it is that you want, but I can't tell you with certainty that the Commission is going to be willing, when it comes time to do that, to say yes, we're going to buy that property, or yes, we're going to accept it, because of x, y, and z."

Discussion led to one possible alternative, Atchison's Reisner Park, located at 10th and Kearney. "My only concern [with] Reisner Park, there's a lot of residents down there," Cline stated during the meeting, referring to concerns of neighbors of the park becoming disgruntled with a skatepark being located there. Issues of limited parking in the area of the park were also noted.

Ultimately it was decided that Cline and Watkins will meet regularly with city staff as they work to conceptualize the park, and to formulate costs, for the project.

Pregont explained that the goal is to have that process finalized in time to be presented at the City Commission's June 18 capital project budget workshop.

The matter is also expected to be addressed at the Parks and Forestry Board's next meeting on the evening of May 14.

Many Signals Communicatons