

Daily Texas

February 13, 2013

Historical monument at Mount Bonnell may be replaced, other fixtures added



Visitors of Mount Bonnell take in the scenic view of Lake Austin on Tuesday afternoon. The West Point Society of Central Texas has proposed a plan to replace the limestone monument with an inscription dedicated by the Covert family with a black-and-white granite replica.

Photo Credit: Mikhaela Locklear | Daily Texan Staff

By Hannah Jane DeCiutiis

Both natives and visitors to Austin who enjoy the expansive views of the city from Mount Bonnell may see changes to fixtures at Covert Park if a proposed plan is approved by Austin City Council.

The West Point Society of Central Texas, which serves the local community of West Point graduates, adopted the park as part of the Adopt-a-Park program in 2010, society member Stan Bacon said.

The society hopes to make landscape renovations to the park including the addition of benches and handrails. Austin's Parks and Recreation Department will be holding a community input meeting Feb. 20 at 6:30 p.m. to field concerns from the public.

Covert Park, which is named after the family who donated the property to the city of Austin in 1939, features a limestone monument with an inscription dedicated by the Covert family. The society plans to replace the monument with a black-and-white granite replica, Bacon said.

Bacon said the Covert family is willing to donate \$20,000 to replace the monument but would not be willing to pay to simply restore the existing monument. He said funds for the other renovations would come from a city grant of \$50,000 and in-kind contributions from community members, amounting to a total of more than \$100,000.

The city's Parks and Recreation Department previously considered the plan and then withdrew its proposal after receiving opposition from members of the Historic Landmark Commission, Bacon said. The West Point Society is now bringing the plan to the City Council for appeal.

"The Covert family would not pay for restoration because the city had allowed the marker to disintegrate, and if we lost that money we would lose the grant," Bacon said. "Not only would the grant go away, but the reason that Mt. Bonnell was designated a historic landmark in 1991 was primarily because of its many visitors and views, and had nothing to do with any structures on it, so there was no point in [objecting]."

Jacqui Schraad, executive director of Preservation Austin, which advocates for preserving historical landmarks throughout the city, said the organization does not support replacing the original limestone monument, as it is one of the oldest man-made elements on the property. Other parts of the West Point Society's proposal have merit, she said, but do not involve historic aspects of the park.

Justin Chandler, chemical engineering and chemistry senior, said replacing the current monument with a granite one would take away from the natural aspect of the park, which is situated on a limestone foundation.

“It would just stand out more,” Chandler said. “If you want to kind of project history and make it more noticeable, then it’s good on that point, whereas if it was granite sticking out, it would look less natural. My personal view is I would be less concerned with the historical, and more with the natural aesthetics.”

<http://dailytexanonline.com/news/2013/02/13/historical-monument-at-mount-bonnell-may-be-replaced-other-fixtures-added>

accessed 02 13 13