

Oak Ridge City Council to Host Public Meeting August 25 on Clark Center Park

The Oak Ridge City Council will hold a public meeting on Monday, August 25th at 7:00 p.m. to gather community input regarding the possible transfer of ownership of Clark Center Park from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) to the City of Oak Ridge.

The meeting will be held in the Municipal Building Courtroom, and will be in lieu of the regularly scheduled monthly work session.

The DOE's Oak Ridge Office is in the process of reviewing the agency's land holdings across the Oak Ridge Reservation, which is located within the City limits of Oak Ridge, and includes Clark Center Park.

Clark Center Park (formerly known as Carbide Park) is an 80-acre parcel under consideration by DOE for possible transfer from federal ownership. The Park area includes a swimming area along Melton Hill Lake, and incorporates two picnic areas, a playground, restrooms, a boat ramp, two ball fields, and also provides access to the Gallaher Bend Greenway. Approximately \$300,000 is spent annually by DOE to maintain the park.

In a letter dated August 4, 2014 to the City, DOE Oak Ridge Office Manager Larry Kelly stated "Given the Park's benefit to the citizens of Oak Ridge, the option we currently favor would be to transfer ownership to the City at no cost, provided that the property remains a recreational park asset for the public." Kelly also emphasized in the letter that DOE has not established any timeframe for disposition of the property.

City Council adopted a resolution on August 11th authorizing City Manager Mark Watson to conduct further discussions with DOE and to provide regular reports on the discussions. The resolution also recognized an interest in soliciting input from Oak Ridge citizens regarding possible transfer issues to consider.

There will not be a formal presentation at the meeting. The public is asked, but not limited to address several topics:

1. What are the options to finance ongoing operation of the park?
2. What amenities/improvements would the community desire?
3. Is City ownership the best option? Costs? Benefits?
4. What is the Oak Ridge public's definition of a recreation use for Clark Center Park?