

Subject: Google Huts inappropriate for our parks

Michael Barajas,
Editor in Chief, San Antonio Current

My name is Richard Medellin. I am the President of the Highland Park Neighborhood Association and I recently discovered a plan to place a utility hut in our Neighborhood Park. The more I looked in to the matter, the more bizarre I found it to be. Each person who finds out about it has the same reaction; "how can they put a private company's building in a city park?". That is just the baseline outrage that is being expressed in at least two neighborhoods that have impacted parks (highland Park and Haskin Park). Another neighborhood (Mission San Jose) is outraged about the plan to place a hut in-between and in very close proximity to three small homes.

The Google Fiber rollout calls for 'Google Huts' to be placed on any city owned land (at below market rates). The huts are outfitted with up to four industrial sized air conditioners, two of which will run 24/7 at high noise levels. Each hut will also have a gas powered generator which will be tested twice per month. The huts violate the applicable contract by having hazardous materials stored inside. State law prohibits the repurposing of a city park (state Municipal code Title 8, Chapter 253, Sect. 253.001. Out of approximately seven permits that are required, four of which require public hearings, the city has not initiated even one for the Haskin park installation. Google will have 24/7 access to parks that are closed from 11:P.M. to 6:A.M. Further violating city code. Neighbors are outraged.

Various City Departments are attempting to stonewall any public queries. They have even cited "Homeland Security" concerns while denying Freedom of information requests. The first attempt to cover their tracks is slated for tomorrow, Wednesday, Dec 21 @ 1:00 the HDRC will consider the request to approve the Enclosure for two existing huts in city parks. I, along with other community leaders will attend this meeting and offer comments to the board.

I am committed to work to prevent, through all legally available means, any inappropriately selected sites from being used and to effect the removal of those huts which have been inappropriately installed. I am not opposed in any way to Google Fiber Service or to the City of San Antonio. I only want to protect and preserve our neighborhoods, shielding them from being bullied in to accepting degradation without due process. I believe this issue to be as important and similar to the Downtown Rail Fiasco. Texas State Law currently prescribes a public vote before the repurposing of a city park. There are various City Codes which prescribe permits through processes that include public debate for the building aspects associated with the huts. These rights are being violated.

I have shared and collaborated with many affected neighbors including John Whitsett who has extensive knowledge on this subject. Please contact me at your earliest convenience (24/7) if you are interested in covering this topic. We have many more facts and figures. The Express-News printed an op-ed in today's paper though they initially indicated that they could not print it until 2017. I thank you for any consideration that you may give to this very important issue.

Respectfully submitted,
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