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FRIDAY, APRIL 9, 2021 | FAIR, 93° (WEATHER/)

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Speaking out for a facility



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Look out below! Forrest Cano, 13, kick-flips his skateboard down a set of stairs behind Leander High School. A group of local youths wants to have their own place to skate without the chance of getting into trouble with the police.

Posted Thursday, July 10, 2008 6:00 pm

by Jenn Rains, Hill Country News

They can be found outside local schools, in parking lots, driveways and parks around the area. They are often run off from these places and frequently scolded by the police for trespassing. They're kids who like to skateboard.

Skateboarding is becoming an ever-growing attraction for kids in the area which is creating a problem. Skateboarding, like football, soccer and baseball, is a sport that requires practice, but unlike those other sports, there is no facility in Cedar Park that allows skateboarders to practice their techniques. That could all be changing soon though.

At Tuesday night's Cedar Park 4B meeting, the board heard from Cedar Park Parks and Recreation Director Curt Randa about a possible skate facility that could become a part of the soon-to-open Brushy Creek Sports Park.

Randa said many in the city have been considering a skateboard facility for the last several years; after looking at many factors including location, funding, design and construction, the future sports park looks like a prime location. "This looks to be a suitable location for this facility," said Randa, who believes the park could utilize the existing parking and infrastructure.

Scott Thiltgen, who enjoys skateboarding with his kids, said a group of interested people have been trying to get a skate park for several years. "\$125,000 was approved for a skateboard park earlier but they could never find a place to put it," Thiltgen said.

He believes the Brushy Creek Sports Park will make a great place for the facility because "it would be a spot with light, visibility and parking."

The nearest skateboarding facilities are located near the recreation center in Round Rock and Ramp Ranch Skatepark in Liberty Hill. "It's getting really tiresome to take them to Round Rock to skate," said Thiltgen.

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Many kids turned out at the meeting to provide support for the park and were vocal on their desire for a skate facility in the city. The skaters offered many reasons why a park was needed including transportation problems to other parks, reduction of trespassing and getting in trouble for skating in town, and providing another attraction to get more people to Cedar Park.

Kaden Pasawicz, 12, who has been skating for four years, has to skate in the streets, parking lots and at the schools because his mom works and can't take him to skate facilities. "It would be pretty cool to have [a skate park] because most around here are far away and I just can't get to them," he said.

Tourist attraction

The skate park could also be a good tourist attraction for the city, said Ryan Holloway, a Cedar Park resident and amateur skater. Holloway said pro skaters could be brought in to do demonstrations and hold other events. "We can do competitions and jams and show kids what it's really about," he said.

Lisa Hall, a mother of kids who skateboard and a teacher in LISD, spoke at the meeting about the need for such a facility. While skaters sometimes have a bad connotation, "my kids are good kids," she said. Though they do get in trouble constantly and get tickets for skateboarding, "it's just because they don't have anywhere to go to do it."

The design presented by Randa would create an 8,000 square foot facility and would be laid out by a designer. It would take into consideration the existing trees and incorporate them into the design, said Randa. Unlike other projects, Randa would prefer this facility be built at one time and not in phases to allow skaters to begin using the facility sooner.

Jose Santamaria, owner of Skate Culture in Leander, said the biggest challenge with creating the facility is making sure it appeals to all types of skaters - transitional and street skaters. "If a skater goes there and all the elements are there, they can't wait to get back to the park. That's why the plan and design are the most important things," he said.

The proposed amount of the project is \$250,000 and Randa is asking the 4B to approve the money for their facility. The 4B board asked many questions and was very receptive to the idea. They even questioned whether \$250,000 would be enough or if more money would be needed to make this a state-of-the-art facility. When making next year's budget, the board will consider the facility and the amount needed in order to build it right.

"I see what Round Rock did and I think we can do something even better," said Holloway. "If it's a good, really innovative skate park, skaters will really know Cedar Park is the place to go for that."

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