

Historic 'Mushroom' Shelter To Be Demolished

(KAIR)--Controversy surrounding a historic park shelter to be demolished.

That followed Monday's Atchison City Commission meeting when commissioners voted 3-2 to tear down the historic 'Mushroom' Shelter on top of Guerrier Hill in Jackson Park at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.

Deputy Public Works Director Clinton McNemee said safety is the primary concern with the shelter as small to medium size chunks of concrete have fallen from the roof structure and it continues to deteriorate.

Although the shelter has been cornered off since late 2016, park visitors continue to ignore the warning signs and use the shelter.

McNemee said repair or replacing the shelter would be too costly, and destroying the shelter would be the most cost-effective and safe option.

Repairing the structure would cost \$15,000 while replacing it would cost \$30,000, McNemee estimated. And repairs would only last 5-8 years.

Worried about the influx of people to Guerrier Hill during the solar eclipse happening Aug. 21, city staff felt the 'Mushroom' Shelter was an immediate concern.

During discussion, however, tempers flared as commissioners disagreed on how to proceed forward.

Commissioner Charlie Purdue questioned McNemee wanting to know why maintenance was neglected on the structure saying there's money in the budget for other improvements at the park, but non for the 'Mushroom Shelter'.

“That's what the budget is all about commissioners, priorities,” said Atchison City Manager Trey Cocking. “Yeah, we could cut somewhere. What do you want to cut so we don't raise the mill levy? The illusion that you have that these guys could just work a little harder and fix this stuff, no. Justin and I have both tried, Clinton has worked for years. That's an illusion. It's either more money, or cutting elsewhere to create more money. That's how we do a better job of maintenance.”

The concerns were raised during a presentation of the Jackson Park Master Plan draft being reviewed by commissioners. That plan will be open for the public to provide feedback before further action is taken on other aspects of the park.

Despite disagreement, commissioners voted to tear down the 'Mushroom' Shelter with Purdue and Commissioner Larry Purrcell casting the no votes.

Many Signals Communications