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City to begin negotiations for Sebastopol

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SEGUIN — The City Council on Tuesday approved a resolution authorizing negotiations for Sebastopol House State Historic Site to become a city park.

The council's action authorized City Manager Doug Faseler to sign a letter of intent "to enter discussions and negotiations" with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department regarding the possible transfer of ownership, control and management of Sebastopol.

"This is just a good-faith agreement that we'll be working together," Faseler told the council. "We'll be working on the negotiated agreement with them."

Besides Faseler, the letter of intent was to be signed by Brent Leisure, director of Texas state parks, who made a presentation about Sebastopol at the council's meeting on March 15.

TPWD was represented at Tuesday's meeting by Kevin Good, the department's liaison with Texans For State Parks, a non-profit organization that works for the preservation and enhancement of state parks.

"We look forward to working with you to complete this," Good said.

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Asked how many state parks had been transferred to other ownership, Good said that in recent years approximately 30 TPWD facilities have been turned over to cities and counties.

Councilman Don Keil asked what was being done regarding Lockhart State Park which, like Sebastopol, was one of seven TPWD facilities targeted by the Legislative Budget Board for possible closure or transfer due to budget cuts.

Good said the department had agreed to enter into a partnership to expand the campgrounds at Lockhart State Park in an effort to increase the park's revenues.

On a motion made by Mary Louise Gonzales and seconded by Tomas Castellon, the council voted unanimously

to adopt the resolution authorizing Faseler to sign the letter of intent with TPWD.

After the council's action, Faseler signed the letter of intent. The letter calls for transfer of the property to be completed on or before Aug. 31.

In response to a question about the date, Faseler said TPWD wanted to have the transfer completed, if possible, before the state starts its new fiscal year on Sept. 1. The city's fiscal year starts on Oct. 1.

In other action Tuesday, the council approved a three-year extension of an agreement with the San Antonio chapter of the Gypsy Motorcycle Club to continue holding its annual Aardvark Motorcycle Rally at Starcke Park.

Parks Director Tim Patek said the event has been held at Starcke Park for the past nine years. The rally traditionally has been held on the last weekend in June, and this

year's event is scheduled for June 23-26.

"Event organizers are planning for approximately 800 to 1,000 guests," Patek said in a memo to the mayor and council. "The event will charge an admission fee to all participants, and the rally will include alcohol, food, novelty sales, overnight camping and live music."

Patek said city staff, as well as the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, recommended approval of the agreement.

The council also approved agreements with the Navarro Independent School District for the use of Starcke Park for cross-country track events and with the Seguin Independent School District for the use of Starcke Park for cross-country track events and for the use of the city's ballpark facilities for high school baseball games.