



Residents want more access to Sports Park !

By MEGAN HUCKABY, Enterprise-Journal

McCOMB, Miss. (AP) — City officials face a dilemma in how to make the **McComb Sports Park** more accessible to the public and more secure in the wake of multiple burglaries.

Albert Eubanks of McComb recently told the city board that elderly residents and children have nowhere to play or exercise in east McComb. "If I am not mistaken, part of the sports park was supposed to be a walking track," he said. "I know we continue building baseball fields. I am asking is there any money in the budget to put a walking track?"

Eubanks said residents "are out walking in the streets because there is no other place to walk at." Eubanks also expressed concern for children playing in streets because there are no playgrounds in the area.

"I see some playground equipment stored by the train display. ... Can they get that and bring it over so the kids will have something to do and somewhere to go?" he said. Mayor Whitney Rawlings said the city has applied for grants to bring a walking track to the sports park.

Board of Selectmen member Tommy McKenzie said the plan to make the park more accessible with a track also makes it vulnerable to break-ins. He said it would be counterproductive to put in a public walking track and have the park closed off by a security fence.

The sports park was burglarized several times last year. In September, thieves stole more than \$8,720 worth of tools, food and equipment, including a set of bleachers. In December, thieves broke in and stole two speakers worth \$3,500 that were bolted down in welded cages that had cut-proof locks. Burglars pried open the cages to steal the speakers.

The city responded to the break-ins by putting in fencing and video surveillance equipment, but someone entered the property and damaged the surveillance equipment during the Thanksgiving holiday. As for public walking spaces, Rawlings said the city has invested much in sidewalk and street improvements in east McComb.

"The neighborhood in east McComb is very fortunate in that in years past the city invested ... in extensive sidewalks curbs and gutters," he said. "That is a beautiful space for walking about."

Rawlings said there are plans to start a "**McComb Fights Dirty**" campaign to clean up city streets and sidewalks. Rawlings said officials will work with neighborhoods to clean up the sidewalks so people won't have to walk in the street.



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