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## "Overton Parkway Route Cleared By City Council"

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*An important date: city was under curfew; nation in turmoil: Martin Luther King, Jr., had been murdered in Memphis April 4, 1968;*

**Overton Parkway Route Cleared By City Council**

MEMPHIS ALWAYS  
A 4-5-68 By ROBERT KELLETT

After more than three months of renewed opposition to an expressway route through Overton Park which included new studies, hearings and proposals, City Council members said yesterday they are going to do nothing—with regret.

A resolution drawn up in executive session and read in a 4 p.m. open meeting of the council by Councilman Philip A. Perel called the originally designated route through the park "the feasible and prudent location for said route and the design as presently made is acceptable to the council."

Most of the eight council members who voted to adopt the resolution which will in effect open the way for the building of the expressway through the park said they were doing so regretfully.

"We are hemmed in to the present route," said Councilman Wyeth Chandler, who said decisions made dating to 15 years ago have obligated the council.

"We are taking something in the name of progress and we can't replace it," said Councilman Fred Davis Jr., who abstained in the voting.

The council decision came a day after Federal Highway Administrator Lowell Bridwell had urged councilmen to decide what they wanted to do about the expressway.

The latest controversy over the east-west expressway began in December while the City Commission form of government was still in office when Representative Dan Kuykendall (R-Tenn.) said he was responding to pleas of his constituents by calling for reconsideration of the proposed park route.

Mr. Bridwell re-examined the route at the request of Representative Kuykendall and received the backing of Mayor Henry Loeb and state officials when he called for going ahead with the proposed route.

*g.v.?*

In a March 5 resolution the City Council called for rerouting the expressway out of the park and asked for more information from the federal planners before any decision was made. Representative Kuykendall said soon after that any further studies and decisions should be left up to the council.

In the resolution yesterday the council said it had received new information and added that "the council has likewise been informed by the same agencies that its action to date has caused no delay in the building of this part of the expressway but that further study and hearing could materially affect the beginning of construction."

Dr. Arlo Smith, one of several citizen leaders opposing the park route, said after the council adopted the resolution that opponents still hope that suits that are planned in federal courts will block the route.

A second resolution passed yesterday gave city assurance that streets will be closed as needed for the building of the expressway.

Councilman Lewis R. Donelson III, who voted along with Council Chairman Downing Pryor against the resolution said he still favors a route along the northern edge of the park, and said, "If I were voting 13 years ago I would not vote for putting the route through the park in any way."

Between the positions there was some rationalization. Said Councilman Robert James: "A lot more people are going to see the beauty of Overton Park than ever before."

*this plan to defy an injunction forbidding him to march was on the minds of the City Council at this point — and surely the black councilmen were in no mood (no position) to hold out for the park.*

*(Good! I thought Pryor would go this way.) (But ironically stated?)*

CA 4-5-68

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