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group has proposed major changes for a city facility that would limit public access and alter use of a public park," Knapp said at a news conference yesterday.

"Months of time and effort have been spent fighting to retain park land for public use. It is time to insist legally on change."

In a letter to City Manager Doug Harman, the group warned that it expects the city to allow open bidding on the concession business or for the city to stop awarding private contracts and handle the business itself.

City Attorney Wade Adkins has said law does not require competitive bidding on the contract, but the City Council can seek open bids if it desires. State bidding requirements apply only when the city spends money, and the city receives money on the concessions contract, city attorneys said.

The Forest Park Association has asked to bid on the concessions contract, which expires Oct. 14. The Zoological Association traditionally has used proceeds from concessions to improve the zoo.

Knapp's group says another reason the city should strip the Zoological Association of its contract is because the group's membership is closed to the public. The association consists of about 50 members of a board of directors and has no general members.

Wilba Almanan, a representative of the Como Neighborhood Advisory Council, also demanded that the city terminate its contract with the Zoological Association.

"Why should the largest, most popular park in Fort Worth be entrusted to a

wealthy, closed group?" she asked.

Almanan called the Zoological Association "a selfish, insensitive, demanding group."

Zoological Association Executive Director Tim Stephens said the group recently began an effort to sign up general members to "get the whole community behind the zoo."

But Stephens said that the combined general membership would be given only one vote, compared with the 58 votes held by board members.

"We don't have any minority members who have ever applied," Stephens said. "I'm sure if we had a minority who had a sincere interest, we would be more than happy to have them on the board."

Knapp pledged that the board of the Forest Park Association will be democratically elected by members if it receives the concessions contract. He said one-third or more of the group's members are minorities.

Knapp said the group also is prepared to take over other zoo operations now handled by the Zoological Association, including running volunteer staff operations and purchasing and exchanging of animals.

Harman has said he would allow the opponents to bid on the concessions business only if the group also agreed to participate in the other work, which the Zoological Association has done.

But Assistant City Manager Ramon Guajardo said yesterday that the Forest Park group cannot bid on the contract because it has not submitted information requested by city officials such as its bylaws and state charter as a non-profit group.

"We do not have a legitimate proposal from the Forest Park Association to consider," Guajardo said.

Guajardo said city policies requiring a percentage of contracts to be given to minorities don't apply to the concession contract because no money is paid to the group.

Knapp, asked what would happen if the contract is again awarded to the Zoological Association, responded: "Then we are prepared to take legal steps."

The zoo expansion plan has been attacked by a wide range of interests across Fort Worth, including park preservationists, neighborhood associations and minority and church groups that depend on the park for recreation.

The Zoological Association has vowed to raise more than \$30 million to pay for new zoo exhibits, including those in the proposed 14-acre expansion. The association originally proposed expanding the zoo by 51 acres, to 108 acres.

But Knapp said most of the Zoological Association's donations come from profits on the concession business, which it gets because of the city contract.

"To label concession profits as private funding is a distortion of terms," Knapp said.

But Stephens said private donations unrelated to the concession business made up \$225,000 of the \$368,000 the group gave the city in 1986.

"Over the past 20 to 25 years, with the exception of the elephant house, every major exhibition was built by the Zoological Association," he said.