



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Tuesday, December 10, 2013 - 6:00 p.m.

Boards and Commissions Room

City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street

Austin, Texas 78701

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rivera called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jane Rivera, Chair; Jeff Francell, Vice Chair; Dale Glover, Susana Almanza, Hill Abell, Lynn Osgood

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Board Member Abell made a motion to approve the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Board meeting of October 22, 2013. Board Member Osgood seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 4-0 with Board Member Almanza and Board Member Glover off the dais and Board Member Roth absent.

C. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Charlotte Garza, member of the Highland Neighborhood Association's Park Committee, spoke to the Board regarding the City-owned property at 401 West St. Johns Avenue. She noted that PARD will bring forward a recommendation to the Board in early 2014 regarding use options. The Highland Neighborhood Association is in support of the watershed and parkland option.

D. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Consent

2. Make a recommendation to the Director for approval of the West Austin Neighborhood Park Conceptual Master Plan.

Presenter: Kim McKnight, Project Coordinator, PARD

Location: 1317 W. 10th St.

Staff Recommendation: Recommended.

Committee Recommendation: On December 2, 2013 the Land, Facilities and Programs Committee voted 2-0 to recommend the approval of this request. This item is offered on consent.

Staff: Kim McKnight: kim.mcknight@austintexas.gov

3. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the negotiation and execution of a new Management & Operation Agreement with Umlauf Sculpture Garden and Museum, Inc. with an initial term of 50 years with two 25 year renewal options in exchange for USGM's commitment to develop the home and studio property, and manage and operate the museum and sculpture garden.

Vice Chair Francell made a motion to approve the Consent agenda. Board Member Glover seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0 with Board Member Roth absent.

Non-Consent

4. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the final design of the Auditorium Shores Improvement project including a modification to the off-leash area design based on feedback received during the most recent series of public engagement meetings.

Marty Stump, PARD Project Management Supervisor, provided a presentation to the Board regarding this project.

Citizen Communication

Board Chair Rivera announced that a total of 10 speakers from each side will be allowed to speak. Vice Chair Francell read out the names of the first 10 speakers signed up for and the first 10 speakers signed up against. Vice Chair Francell explained that those 20 speakers may donate their time to any of the other 20 speakers identified.

Colin Wallis, Executive Director of the Austin Parks Foundation, spoke in support of the plan, addressed APF's involvement in the process to date, the safety concerns the plan seeks to mitigate, and the need for compromise on this parkland.

Eric Courchesne, Program Director at the Austin Parks Foundation, spoke in support of the project and addressed certain ecological issues. He stated that the plan would create a flexible and sustainable park space, and will address the safety concerns related to trail user conflict.

Melissa Barry, Parks Director with the Downtown Austin Alliance, spoke in support of the plan. She stated that the plan will provide a safe place for families to go and other space for other types of users.

Daniel Woodroffe, landscape architect and President of the Austin Parks Foundation, spoke in support of the plan and discussed the history of the plan for Town Lake Metropolitan Park.

David King spoke in support of the plan but shared some suggestions to make the plan better including: preserving open green spaces, encouraging more static uses of the park, sufficient space for dogs to run and play without safety concerns, more recycling and trash containers, tree preservation for existing trees, shoreline erosion protection, reduction of impervious cover, planting of native grasses, protect mouth of Bouldin Creek from erosion, maintenance plan, consistent enforcement of park rules, no event infrastructure installation.

Scott Johnson spoke in support of the plan and noted that he has been involved in the public input process since 1999. He discussed safety issues related to trail user conflicts he has experienced

Rae Bazzarre donated her time to Susan Rankin. Susan Rankin, Executive Director of the Trail Foundation, spoke in support of the plan and discussed the wear and tear the trail has experienced, as

well as safety conflicts on the trail. She stated that she believes this plan will resolve these safety conflicts, but that the Trail Foundation has no opinion as to the size and location of the off leash area.

Timothy Whittington, Event Planner and Urban Planner with SXSW Conferences and Festivals, spoke in support of the plan and listed some of the events that occur in this space. He stated he has been involved in the public input process for the last 5 years. He discussed the park's need for upgrades and the need for user compromise to achieve these upgrades.

Ralph Webster, member of the Austin Parks Foundation Board of Directors, spoke in support of the plan and noted he has been involved in the stakeholder meetings. He noted that a silent majority would prefer that this area not remain all off leash and encouraged the Board to support the plan.

Stephanie Smith, park user and dog owner, spoke in opposition to the plan. She noted that there are an estimated 277,000 dogs in Austin and 187,000 children, with the area around Auditorium Shores having the most minimum population of children in our city. She expressed concerns related to PARD and C3. She shared economic impact figures related to events and the pet industry.

Marian King spoke in opposition to the plan. She discussed her weekly use of the park and noted that Auditorium Shores was one of the first places she visited when coming to Austin. She discussed the importance of dogs enjoying the park. She suggested a way to divert trail traffic.

Carol Boyd spoke in opposition to the plan. She stated that she has never been so embarrassed to be a native Austinite. She voiced concern with the future of this off leash area and suggested a larger location along fresh water in East Austin. She expressed a desire for citizens to vote on this issue.

Phil Burns spoke in opposition to the plan and noted that those who spoke in support of the plan have a financial interest. He expressed concern about floodplain issues. He expressed concern that there are not rules for public private partnerships. He expressed concerns related to event organizers and the Austin Parks Foundation.

Jamie White donated her time to Bill Frasier. Bill Frasier, Friends of Austin Dog Parks, spoke in opposition to the plan, and noted that the conversation regarding the west end play area started in 2008. He stated that he agrees a safety hazard exists among users, but that they wish the park to remain entirely leash free. He referenced two use patterns, those that gather, and those that trek. He referenced Norwood Park and the maintenance issues experienced there. He asked the Board to review park use patterns. He suggested that the Parks Department needed to do more best practices research.

Piper Becker donated her time to Elizabeth McGreevy. Elizabeth McGreevy, dog owner, mother, and landscape architect, spoke in opposition to the plan and stated that the design is not sustainable. She stated she is in support of balance. She showed a petition with over 2500 signatures. She spoke against fencing to confine dogs, the lack of a small dog area, and limited shore access for the dogs. She suggested removing gates and fences and extending the granite trail to connect to the running trail to give users options.

Edward Gemar spoke in opposition to the plan and questioned the idea of the silent majority in this issue. He read staff emails published in the Austin American Statesmen.

Jolie Dumoit donated her time to Cyndi Collen. Cyndi Collen, President of the Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Association, spoke in opposition to the plan and stated that it is in the best interest of

event organizers. She expressed concern over the possibility of increasing the number of allowable event days. She encouraged other designs or policies that do not ban dogs or limit the off leash area.

Keith Linton, park user and dog owner, spoke in opposition to the plan. He expressed that the rule regarding 10 speakers per side seemed unfair and limited public comment. He discussed the proposed off leash area's proximity to the rail road tracks, and noted dogs sensitivity. He discussed issues with the off leash ordinance approved by the Board in May.

Marjorie Hook, downtown resident, spoke in opposition to the plan. She attended a public input meeting at the Dougherty Arts Center and felt there was inadequate public notice and it was run poorly. She asked where the silent majority was and stated that it didn't exist.

Chair Rivera made a motion to recommend to the City Council the final design of the Auditorium Shores Improvement Project including a modification to the off-leash area design based on feedback received during the most recent series of public engagement meetings, and in addition, recommends that the City Council consider directing staff working on revisions to the Austin Land Development Code include a requirement that all new or substantially renovated multi-family housing project in Downtown Austin include a dog run or dog park for exclusive use of its residents who own dogs. Board Member Osgood seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-1 with Board Member Abell against, and Board Member Roth absent.

5. Approve the recommendation of the Parks and Recreation Department Director regarding suggested parks where alcohol consumption, sale, or possession with a temporary authorization permit is prohibited.

Kimberly McNeeley, PARD Assistant Director, made a presentation to the Board regarding suggested parks where alcohol consumption, sale, or possession with a temporary authorization permit is prohibited.

Citizen Communication

Joan Bartz, Vice President of the Dottie Jordan Advisory Board and President of the University Hills Neighborhood Association, spoke to the Board regarding this item. She expressed concern regarding the fact that the Director is the sole decision maker and that there is no notice given to the surrounding affected communities when a temporary permit is issued.

Vice Chair Francell made a motion to approve the recommendation of the Director regarding suggested parks where alcohol consumption, sale, or possession without a temporary authorization permit is prohibited with the exception the Auditorium Shores will be removed from the prohibited list. Board Member Glover seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-1 with Board Member Almanza against and Board Member Roth absent.

6. Board Chair to appoint members to the Concessions and Contracts Committee of the Parks and Recreation Board.

Board Chair Rivera made a motion to appoint the members of the former Navigation Committee to the Concessions and Contracts Committee. Members include: Vice Chair Francell, Board Member Glover,

and Board Member Roth. Board Member Abell seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0 with Board Member Roth absent.

E. BRIEFINGS

None.

F. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Assistant Director Jesse Vargas offered apologies for Director Hensley being unable to attend due to another work obligation.

G. FUTURE ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

None.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Rivera adjourned the meeting at 8:51 p.m.