

**Parks and Recreation Department Board
Minutes
March 28, 2000
Regular Meeting**

DRAFT

Board Members Present: Rosemary Castleberry, Chair, Elaine Carter, Secretary, Jeff Francell, Mary Ruth Holder, Carol Kim, Mike Librik

Staff Members Present: Jesus M. Olivares, Director, Kim Jamail Mitchell, Stuart Strong, Randy Scott, Juan Valera Lema, Don Koehler and Dina Haines

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at approximately 6:40 p.m. by Rosemary Castleberry, Chair.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from the March 14, 2000 meeting

Mary Ruth Holder had a change to D.1. Special Presentations, the first sentence should read Dick Pierce with the Austin Food Security and Gardening Coalition spoke regarding community gardens and their proposed existence at the Colorado River Park. Carol Kim had a question regarding the Navigation Committee report on the second page, the last sentence regarding request for soccer fields at Colorado River Park should be moved to the Land and Facilities Committee Report. Carol Kim made a motion that the minutes be accepted with changes. Elaine Carter seconded. The motion passed in favor. (6-0-0).

CITIZENS COMMUNICATION

None

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Bob Coffee of Coffee, Crier and Schenck Architects/ and Ponciano Morales with Morales Architects, Inc. worked together on the Mexican American Cultural Center Master Plan and submitted a drawing of the building to the American Society of Registered Architects. The plan was awarded one of seven national prizes in recognition of superior achievement and professional design excellence for the Mexican American Cultural Center. They presented the award to the Parks and Recreation Department.
2. Juan Valera Lema spoke regarding a presentation he had done recently at a Borderlands Conference on Parks, Recreation and Wildlife in Mexico where he spoke regarding conservation, the black capped vireo and the golden cheek warbler. Mr. Valera then introduced a new employee, Don Koehler, Senior Biologist. Mr. Koehler spoke regarding an update on the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP). Mr. Koehler stated that their current activities essentially involve protecting and monitoring endangered species in their habitat and also to enhance the habitat for these endangered species. For more information please see the attached outline for the BCP update.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. The Sutton Company Request for Variance for the Plaza Lofts, 5th and Guadalupe. Mac Pike and Buster Holmack developers of the project Plaza Lofts, requested a height variance from 120 feet to the maximum of 140 feet for their development adjacent to Republic Square. Sketches were shown showing the height differences and the building location in relation to the park. Mr. Pike stated that in the spirit of Smart Growth they will be providing approximately 53 residential units at this site, and also that they have staff support from the Fire Department, Downtown Austin Alliance, the Downtown Commission and the Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association. Elaine Carter made the motion that the Board grant the request for a variance. After discussion, Jeff Francell seconded. The motion passed in favor (5-1-0). (Librik).
2. Discuss and Make Recommendation to City Council regarding the Proposed EMS Station at 401 Deep Eddy Avenue. Stuart Strong spoke briefly regarding the proposal for an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) station on parkland at Deep Eddy. Mr. Strong stated that this area just West of Mopac is an area without an EMS station in close proximity and is underserved. This item has been to the Land and Facilities Committee and concerns were addressed by posting the area for citizen input and performing decibel tests on the sirens that would be used. Blake Tollett, President of the West Austin Neighborhood Group spoke briefly, stating he was available to answer any questions. Richard Herrington, Deputy Director with Emergency Medical Services was also available to answer questions. After discussion, Mary Ruth Holder moved that Parks Board approve the EMS Station at this site with the understanding that they continue to talk to Stuart [Strong] about mitigation and go as far as their budget can take them on mitigation, bring the design and landscaping back to Parks Board at some future point, and construct the building around the existing trees. Mike Librik seconded. The vote was in favor (6-0-0).

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

An Austin Parks Tomorrow presentation was handed out to Board Members. The Director, Jesus M. Olivares, explained that this is an overview of issues that the Austin Parks Tomorrow group is addressing during the budgetary process. These issues are included in the department's 5-year forecast. Another meeting of Austin Parks Tomorrow has been scheduled for Wednesday, April 5, 2000. Also, a reminder that the next Parks Board meeting will be held at the Zilker Clubhouse on Tuesday, April 11, 2000. Copies of the National Parks and Recreation magazine was handed out and there are 12 pages of coverage for the Totally Cool, Totally Art program.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs Committee – Did not meet.

Land and Facilities Committee – Did not meet.

Navigation Committee – Met this evening. Randy Scott gave an update on the Lake Austin Hydrilla Task Force that he attended. Looked at a couple of boat docks that will be coming up and also looked at the Lone Star River Boat Dock application to extend the boat dock out in the water.

Downtown Committee – Reviewed the request regarding the Plaza Lofts and also a project called the Brazos Lofts.

Municipal Airport Advisory Committee – Nothing to report.

Arts and Recreation Committee – Did not meet.

ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Ms. Castleberry stated that the Montopolis Recreation Center boxing program received a bid for the Junior Olympic Boxing Tournament. There were various issues discussed by the Parks Board Members.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.