



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, July 24, 2007

Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Parks Board was held on Tuesday, July 24, 2007 at the Boards and Commissions Conference Room, 301 W. 2nd St. Room 1101.

Board Members Present: Board Chair, Linda Guerrero, Board Vice-Chair, Jeb Boyt, Marilyn Bostick, Jeff Francell, Hector Ortiz, Danette Chimenti and Stephen Shang.

Board Members Absent: Secretary/Parliamentarian Mark Vane and Clint Small.

Staff Members Present: Warren W. Struss, Stuart Strong, Ricardo Soliz, Randy Scott and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting Called to Order

Board Chair Guerrero called the meeting to order at 6:10 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Boyt moved approval of the minutes, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 7-0.

C. Citizen Communication

The following speakers, Friends of Mary Moore Searight Park, shared concerns about the preservation of the wildflower area: Bill Meacham, President, Annette Martinez, Carolyn Cook, Jackie Davis, Patricia Michael and Lyndon Henry.

They provided a slide presentation expressing concerns with the mowing of the wildflower area at the time that the flowers were still in bloom. The Friends, an association of concerned citizens, want to incorporate as a 501 (c) (3). They indicated there was an understanding with PARD regarding the timing of the mowing and suggested a policy of preserving the wildflower area, mowing it only in the winter. In addition they want: 1) a commitment by PARD to preserve the natural habitat; 2) a policy to prevent mowing until the flowers go to seed; 3) a boundary demarcation – posts and cable around the area; 4) viewing benches outside the area; 5) give Friends of Mary Moore Searight approval authority over mowing and; 6) PARD to reseed and revegetate the destroyed area.

D. Discussion and Action Items

1. Approve a resolution regarding changes to the Capitol View Corridor that eliminates or degrades view from public parks.

Board Chair Guerrero indicated that she had sent out to all Board Members a copy of the new resolution that expanded the language of the recommendation that the Land and Facilities committee had approved. She also indicated and welcomed any edits or changes to the resolution. Board Member Chimenti indicated that the language in this resolution was more detailed than the original motion and was in support of the resolution. Board Member Boyt explained that the recommendation from the Downtown Commission report called for the improvement of view corridor #10 (Town Lake and Lakeshore Drive). This call was to remove the vegetation to improve the view. The second recommendation regarding Wooldridge Park is not as clear. In fact, he indicated that there was no clear resolution on it, but urged that Board to consider supporting a stakeholder meeting (City, County and other interested stakeholders) to create a public plan/ process for the park and the view corridor. He also suggested to add this language to be added to the proposed resolution. After much discussion on the resolution the language was not added and Board Member Boyt abstained from voting on the resolution.

Daniel Yanes, Chair, River Bluff Neighborhood Association, and a member of the Govalle/Johnston Terrace Planning Area indicated support of the resolution to protect and enhance the capitol view corridors.

Susanna Almanza, PODER, is also in support of the resolution as written and indicated that if any changes are made to the corridor view, stakeholders from throughout the state need to be involved as well.

Jeff Jack, President, Zilker Park Neighborhood Association, said we need to maintain what we already have and is in support of the resolution.

Board Member Chimenti moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried, 6-0, with Board Member Boyt abstaining.

2. Make a recommendation to the Design Commission regarding the Density Task Force recommendations.

Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager, indicated that that the Planning, Design and Construction Planning Team had looked at the proposed recommendations and was generally supportive of the spirit behind the recommendations. Specifically they include; 1) recommendations to accommodate increased density; and 2) the implementation of the Density Bonus Process. Board Member Boyt moved to approve the staff recommendation, seconded by Board Member Shang. Motion carried. 6-0.

3. Consider approval of the Gary Smith Boat Dock Site Plan Correction Case Number SP-06-0418DS – Item Pulled.

4. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding the Texas Rowing Center’s Dock expansion. Item pulled, with public hearing slated to take place at the August or September Parks Board meeting.

5. Consider approval of the Austin Country Club Marina expansion Case Number SP-2007-0278D

Board Member Francell indicated that the Club wants to expand the marina with the construction of 18 additional boat slips on a slew that is not on the main body of the lake. He explained that the expansion is within the 20 % rule but has asked the marina to provide staff (Randy Scott) with a letter indicating that they will not seek expansion beyond the 20% guideline (they can repair deteriorating slips but not construct new ones). Board Member Francell moved to approve the Austin Country Club Marina expansion with a stipulation that the Country Club provide the Department with a letter indicating that the 18 additional slips are the maximum extent of their expansion, seconded by Board Member Shang. Motion carried 6-0.

E. Other Business

1. Briefing by the Texas Department of Transportation on the proposed acquisition of 5.5 acres of parkland out of John Trevino Jr. Park at Morrison Ranch for the purpose of SH 969 road expansion.

Ricardo Soliz explained that the proposed acquisition is to expand the road to a six lane roadway, affecting the John Trevino Park. Shelly Eason, Environmental Specialist with TDOT, provided a map of the roadway. She explained that currently the roadway has lots of curves and a tilted surface so the proposal is to straighten out much of the road. She indicated that their data shows that 150 accidents have occurred on the road from 1998 – 2002. Also, there are three historic sites surrounding the area. They are asking for deminimus action (minimizing or not affecting the features of a parkland) to take the 5.5 acres from the 30 acre park. TDOT is proposing a deceleration and an acceleration lane, so that the entrance to the park is separated from the 6 lane highway.

Board Member Francell reminded all that the 30 acre tract was the single largest acquisition of the destination park process and indicated that taking 5.5 acres of parkland should not be considered as diminimus. Board Member Boyt requested that a TDOT engineer provide the Land and Facilities committee with a detailed report explaining why the road cannot be move further north in order to minimize the encroachment to park. Board Member Bostick requested a tour of the area.

When asked why the road needs to be widened, Ms. Eason said that purpose of the project is to increase mobility and improve safety. Bob Harwell, Right of Way Office-

Austin District, talked about the right-of-way acquisition process and also about an appraisal process which will be conducted sometime afterwards to determine the fair market value of the land. Board Member Boyt asked where the money from the sale of the 5.5 acres would go and was told that legal was looking into it.

2. Staff Update - Development of Sparky Park.

Stuart Strong, Assistant Director, provided a briefing about Sparky Park which he indicated was formed from an acquisition of land from Austin Energy. The park is a .5 acre park that was a sub-station for Austin Energy at one time. Mr. Strong indicated that the department has received a four year up front payment of \$198,000 to develop the park, but the money has to go through the appropriations process (this will be done in September 07). He also said that the neighborhood has worked with several consultants to develop the park and have developed a conceptual plan that includes: landscaping; berms, pathways, and a wall to decorate as an art project (this will go through the City's Art in Public Places process).

Bill Bednar, President, North University Neighborhood Association, wants the process to be executed expeditiously.

Douglas Plummer, Managing Director, Title Ins. Co. urged the Board to move the project along. He also expressed concern that the park is being used as a dumping ground and graffiti is also increasing.

Mary Ingel, Vice-President, North University Neighborhood Association, thanked the department for the new park sign and is happy that the building is now secured. She urged the Board support funding the art wall in a timely manner.

F. Director's Report

Mr. Struss reported that the accreditation team had completed the assessment and will be recommending accreditation of the Department at the annual meeting in September. He also said that Barton Springs Pool has flooded for the 17th time this year and that the department is working hard to try to open the pool between 4 and 5 days after each flood. The City Manger's budget will be announced on the 26th of July. The Board will be appraised of the PARC budget soon afterwards.

G. Items From the Board.

Land and Facilities – Balcones Park concerns with transportation issues, and the CWS 222 and 300 project will be back in August as well as the Zachary Scott Theatre expansion. The next Land and Facilities will be held in the evening.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.