



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, July 22, 2008

Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Parks Board was held on Tuesday, July 22, 2008 at the Boards and Commissions Conference Room, 301 West 2nd St. Room 1101.

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

Board Members Absent: Hector Ortiz

Staff Members Present: Stuart Strong, Cora Wright, Ricardo Soliz, Farhad Madani, Toni Arnold 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 to approve the May 27, 2008 minutes, seconded by Board Member Chimenti. Motion carried 7-0.

D. Briefs (Note: Board Chair Guerrero amended the agenda by hearing two briefs before citizen communications)

-Brief of current status on the 2006 bond package.

Tony Arnold, Planning, Design and Construction Division, provided information on current projects that were included in the 2006 bond package. The information consisted of: 1) new facilities; 2) facility renovations coming on-line; 3) parkland acquisition; 4) pool renovations; 5) playscape renovations; 6) golf course renovations; and 7) trail renovations. Several of the projects have already been completed. They include: Alamo Recreation Center roof, Austin Nature Center pond and roof projects, plus playscapes at Bartholomew, Mary Moore Searight, and NW Balcones park. Jimmy Clay Golf Course renovations have also already been completed.

-Brief on Downs Field

Farhad Madani, Assistant Director, provided an update on Downs Field usage. In a meeting with interested stakeholders, the following recommendations were agreed upon:

- ? Restroom facilities will be made available to the public during baseball games and will be maintained by the organizations during their respective seasons.
- ? Leagues are willing to conduct baseball clinics for the neighborhood youth. The Rosewood Neighborhood Contact Team will commit to sending out flyers to the entire community.
- ? PARD will work with Huston-Tillotson University and the Austin Metro Baseball League to establish a long-range maintenance plan for Downs field.
- ? PARD will finalize an agreement with both organizations for exclusive use of the fields during their respective seasons.
- ? Huston-Tillotson University will work with their Alumni Association to facilitate the addition of a storage facility, allowing PARD to transform the current storage space back to a changing area for umpires and players.
- ? PARD will continue to work closely with the community stakeholder groups on all future improvements or concerns.

C. Citizen Communications

Jim Von Wolski, reported that the Red Bud Bridge is dangerous and is in need of repair. He suggested that a new structure be built, one that is higher than the existing one and parallel to the old bridge. He is asking Parks Board support for the new bridge.

Sharon Blythe, Director, Austin RAMP, requested that the Austin Memorial Park Cemetery construction contract between the City of Austin and Covenant Presbyterian Church not be extended past October 1, 2008.

Doug Kilday, Graves, Dougherty, Hearon, and Moody, P.C., appearing on behalf of the Covenant Presbyterian Church, requested that the Parks Board take no action on the contract that was executed by the City and the Church several months back. The contact relates to the use of a 50 foot strip of vacant land in Austin Memorial Park Cemetery.

-Brief on Sunshine Camp parkland improvement agreement, rebuild and expand proposal.

Jason Qunell, briefed the Board on a campaign to rebuild and expand both Zilker Park and Travis Camps. The brief included the history of the camp and the three (3) programs that are currently being offered. The include: 1) the Sunshine Camp Program, a program that has 800 kids enrolled; 2) Sunrise Leadership Program, a program that mentors and tutors kids weekly and; 3) the Sunshine Scholarship Program, a program that offers scholarships for kids that need financial assistance. Action will be requested by the Board at next month's meeting to approve demolishing the existing building and to build a two-story structure that will stay within the existing footprint. A new park improvement agreement with the department will be executed at that time.

D. New Business and Action Items (cont.)

-Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding Austin Water Utility construction project for the Mueller Redevelopment, in the Morris Williams Golf Course.

Since there is no mitigation proposal completed, there was considerable discussion whether to proceed with the discussion on the Morris Williams Golf Course. Board Member Boyt indicated that the Golf Advisory Board has been working on a mitigation agreement but it has not been finalized. Board Chair Guerrero asked Advisory Board member Mary Arnold to provide the Board with the latest regarding the mitigation proposal. Ms. Arnold indicated that the Board would meet soon to discuss this, but said that the other pressing issue was to determine the deadline for completion and whether a penalty would be imposed if the contract was not completed on time. David Miller, Engineer for the Kotelis Development Company, said that the on-line date for completion would be November 2009.

John Linton, Morris Williams Golf Course supporter, said the course needs improvements and is afraid of losing too many golfing days. He added, that the department should use the down time to improve and update the facility.

Bertha Means wants the Board to see the big picture. She has a vision that the Morris Williams Golf Course should be the equal to any other public or private golf course.

Del Womack, Golf Advisory Board, provided a draft list of improvements for the golf course. The list consisted of things such as net on driving range, service counter replacement, pro shop renovation, new cart barn among other things. The list provided estimated costs for each of the projects in addition to anticipated completion times.

Gene Payne is in full support of the renovation of the golf course but does not want a manufactured building on the course golf.

Board Chair Guerrero announced that the matter will continue to be discussed at the next Land and Facilities meeting which will be held on Tuesday, August 12, 2008.

-Make a recommendation to City Council regarding permanent and temporary use of Blunn Creek Preserve parkland.

Watershed Protection and Development Review Department is requesting to use 7,603 square feet of parkland for permanent use at Blunn Creek Preserve. The tract is to be used to install a permanent stormwater line. The project start date is March 2, 2009 with the completion date approximately 120 calendar days afterwards. Watershed Protection has agreed to provide mitigation in return for the use of parkland. Board Member Chimenti moved to approve the recommendation, seconded Board Member Bostick. Motion carried, 7-0.

-Make a recommendation to City Council regarding a permanent and temporary use of parkland at Boggy Creek Greenbelt.

Austin Water Utility is requesting the use of parkland located at Boggy Creek at Rosewood Park. The tract is to be used for temporary work space, access and permanent wastewater easement. The project is scheduled to start in September 2008, with the estimated duration of the project to be 90 calendar days. Austin Water Utility is in agreement to provide mitigation for the use of parkland. Board Member Shang moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 7-0.

_ Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding a parkland use agreement with AISD at Kennermer Pool.

This agreement is between the City of Austin and Austin Independent School District in which the district intends to construct renovations and additions on the Campus. The District has committed to improve park property for a 27 car parking lot to serve the campus. The Land and Facilities committee has reviewed and endorses the recommendation. Board Member Vane moved to approve, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 7-0.

-Make a recommendation to the Acting Director of the Parks and Recreation Department regarding an Austin Parks Foundation Project, Auction Oaks.

Charlie McCabe, Executive Director, Austin Parks Foundation, updated the Board on the work being done at Republic Square Park. He reported on Phase I which includes pruning and root mapping of the auction oaks, testing bores for the proposed deck, removing of berms, fencing the area and placing of signage directing questions to the Parks Foundation. He requested Parks Board approval for phase 2 which calls for: 1) finalizing plans for 3,500 square foot deck/stage under the central Auction Oaks; 2) adding limestone block and chain enclosure around the Auction Oaks area and 3) adding granite gravel path around the enclosure. Board Member Francell moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Shang. Motion carried 7-0.

E. Director's Report

Acting Director Strong talked about the department's 2007 annual report. The report prepared by department staff, documents the department's achievements throughout the year. Highlighting this year's report, includes the Department being the 1st major metropolitan city in Texas and one of 73 parks and recreation agencies to receive national accreditation. He also indicated that the department would be receiving a proclamation at the council chambers celebrating July as Parks and Recreation month. The Camacho Recreation Center's girls mountain bike team received 1st and 2nd place awards at the national competition tournament. Finally, the Summer Musical is in its 50th year of performing at the Zilker Park Hillside Theatre. Beauty and the Beast is this year's musical.

G. Future Items from the Board

Board Member Shang, whose term has ended, indicated that this meeting would be his last meeting and that he has been proud to serve as a Parks Board Member. He wished all the members of the Board luck in future endeavors. His last request is that the Board look into the issue of park acreage per person. Board Member Vane requested an update on the Saving Muni Initiative. Director Strong indicated that the City has created a team, which includes the Parks Department, to address the issue. After additional discussion on this issue, Board Member Chimenti requested updates regarding Lions be addressed as needed. Board Member Boyt reported on the Downtown Commission especially the presentation of the Downtown Plan. He indicated that the Downtown Commission would be requesting funding for the PARD master plan as well as two district plans. Since this is also Board Member Boyt's last meeting, he thanked all the members for their contribution to the Board and wished all well. Board Chair Guerrero announced that she would like information on the Lake Austin Boat Study at the next board meeting. Other action at next month's meeting is to appoint members to the following committees: 1) Land and Facilities; 2) Downtown Commission; 3) BCCP and: 4) Navigation.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:46 p.m.