



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, August 26, 2008

Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Parks Board was held on Tuesday, August 26, 2008 at the Boards and Commissions Conference Room, 301 West 2nd St. Room 1101.

Board Members Present: Interim Board Chair, Linda Guerrero, Marilyn Bostick, Jeff Francell, Mark Vane, Sara Marler and Jane Rivera.

Board Members Absent: Interim Vice-Chair Danette Chimenti

Staff Members Present: Stuart Strong, Cora Wright, Ricardo Soliz, Farhad Madani, and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting called to order

Board Chair Guerrero called the meeting to order at 6:18 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

Board Member Francell moved to approve the July 22, 2008 minutes, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 4-0 with Board Members Rivera and Marler abstaining.

C. Citizen Communications

Gilbert Rivera, Rosewood-Glen Oaks Neighborhood Association and President of the Rosewood Neighborhood Planning Team, expressed concern over the charging of fees for the use the meeting rooms at the Conley-Guerrero Senior Activity Center. He indicated that the group has been meeting there since 1985 and was never charged any fees which are now \$15.00 per hour. He asked the Board to support discontinuing the fees. Board Chair Linda Guerrero indicated that she would send the issue to be discussed at the next Land, Facilities and Programs committee.

Steven Kreger, Acting Vice-President-Austin Softball Association, reported concern with the \$25 fee increase per team which has raised the team rate from \$300 to \$325. He requested Board support to have the City Council retain the fee at the current rate and that it should be in place for at least 4 years.

Charlie McCabe, Austin Parks Foundation, announced the pending deadline for the submitting neighborhood grants and that additional information could be found at their web site. He also updated the Board on the restoration of Republic Square, Phase II.

Debra Bailey, Bull Creek Off-Lease Group, said her group was adopting the dog lease area at the Bull Creek District Park. Their aim is to educate the public about scooping after their dogs and asked the Board to support their work with the Watershed Protection Department.

Terry Wilson, President of the Capital City Golf Association, announced his support for the Morris Williams Golf Course and said that more money was needed in the mitigation process.

Travis Eckert, Golf Advisory Board, said that it was up to the Board to ask the City Council to raise the needed funds to renovate the golf course.

Mary Arnold, Golf Advisory Board, said that \$461,000 had been taken out of the golf fund during the period from 2001-2005 to pay the Aviation Department. She requested that the money should be returned and be added to the mitigation amount to improve the golf course.

Marcia Macha, Golf Advisory Board, indicated that now was the perfect time to update the golf course but that the amount of the current mitigation monies was not enough.

D. Briefs

1. Brief on Summer Programs.

Joanna Mesecke and Patrick Corona, Division Managers reported on the department's activities throughout the summer.

The update highlighted activities that occurred throughout the summer. Among them were: 1) P3 Opening Ceremonies which had over 1,000 PARD participants; 2) Recreation Summer Camps where participants had 10 weeks of summer fun; 3) a TAAF Regional Track Meet; 4) Summer Food Program, where over 23,000 lunches were served to children; 5) Summer Playgrounds which open 35 sites throughout the City and served over 2,700 participants. Ms. Mesecke also announced that the department would be hosting the annual Texas Recreation and Park Society State Institute on February 24-28 2009. This event is the premiere education and training event for park professionals and citizen advocates in the state.

2. Brief on the update on bacteria at Bull Creek.

Mateo Scoggins, Watershed Protection Department, updated the Board regarding the bacteria levels at Bull Creek Park. This was a follow-up briefing regarding the bacteria levels. Mr. Scoggins, outlined the sequence of events starting in Aug. 2007 with the sewage spill upstream of the park. After determining that the high bacteria counts were not a result of the spill, it was determined that dog excrement and dog feces were contributing to the high levels. Since then a multi-department task force has been formed to do intensive monitoring and a public education campaign has been put in place to educate the public about the problem. Also, the Bull Creek Dog Off Lease Group (BCDOG) has been formed to also assist in educating the public. The group has requested leaving the off lease area as is and is working with the Watershed Protection Department to test for dog and human waste to separate the source of the bacteria problem. Next steps include: 1) extend monitoring of the area; 2) investigate increasing concentrations above the off leash area; 3) continue to study sediment-bacteria dynamics; 4) evaluate genetic bacteria source tracking methods and; 5) continue the multi-department task force to assess other off-leash areas.

Skip Cameron, President, Bull Creek Park Foundation, provided two charts tracking the high bacteria levels at both Bull Creek Park and at Lakewood 360. He indicated that BCDOG is doing a good job of educating the public about the problem and added that Austin Police Department as well as Park Police are now ticketing citizens who do not pick up after their dogs. He hopes to come to the Board later and report better findings.

3. PARD Budget Presentation

Acting Director Strong briefed the Board on the upcoming proposed budget. The following are the high points of his report:

- ? The budget will be \$35.8 million next year, down from \$35.9 million
- ? 473 staff positions are budgeted however, 24 positions will not be hired.
- ? There will be slightly more funds for Capital Improvements and more money for mowing cycles.
- ? Expenditures on commodities and contractals will be held back, including training and travel for employees.
- ? Some employees will be shifted to park improvement projects instead of regular daily maintenance in order to charge the cost to the Parkland Dedication Fund.

Board Member Bostick requested a copy of the proposed budget be sent to all Board Members and Board Member Vane requested a brief on the Parkland Dedication Ordinance. Board Chair Guerrero requested a matrix be provided of the breakdown of every improvement, repair and the allocation of the amount spent plus an update of the dedicated parkland fees.

E. New Business/Action Items

4. Election of Officers:

Interim Chair Guerrero reminded everyone that under the new Standard Boards and Commissions Bylaws, Boards were to elect interim officers in February 2008 (the Board elected Linda Guerrero Interim Chair and Danette Chimenti Interim Vice-Chair). The ordinance also indicates that new officers are to be formally elected at the first meeting after August 1st to serve between September 1st and August 31st. As a result, Board Member Francell moved to elect Linda Guerrero Chair, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 6-0.

Board Member Bostick moved to elect Danette Chimenti Vice-Chair, seconded by Board Member Rivera. Motion carried 6-0.

5. Make a recommendation to City Council regarding a permanent and temporary use of Morris Williams Golf Course.

Gopal Guthikonda, Austin Water Utility, updated the Board on the tunnel being bored underneath the golf course. He said that the Utility has been working with the Parks Department in order to minimize interruption of play. Since the Utility is under a contract to complete the project to meet the needs of the Mueller Development Mr. Guthikonda is requesting Board support to move the project forward. A temporary and permanent easement is needed to complete the project. The Utility is working with the Department to agree on a mitigation amount that compensates construction and loss of rounds. According to Mr. Guthikonda, the total cost of the mitigation amount is over quarter of a million dollars (\$268,000) for the construction only. Additional mitigation funds will be added next year as soon as the loss of revenue is determined. Board Member Francell moved to approve the recommendation for a permanent and temporary use of Morris Williams Golf course; increasing the mitigation amount to a total of not less than \$500,000, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 6-0.

Board Member Vane read the following resolution regarding the Morris Williams Golf Course:

A Resolution to the Austin City Council

WHEREAS Morris Williams Golf Course, located on the east side of Interstate 35 near the former Mueller Airport, opened in 1964 as Austin's 3rd municipal course; and
WHEREAS Morris Williams Golf Course has served as a neighborhood icon, allowing a diverse group of Austinites to enjoy the game of golf; and
WHEREAS designed by Leon Howard, one of the most prolific golf course architects of his time, the Morris Williams Golf Course served as the home of the University of Texas golf teams under legendary coaches Harvey Penick and George Hannon. During this time the University won 2 NCAA Championships with teams that featured Tom Kite and Ben Crenshaw; and
WHEREAS the redevelopment of the Mueller Airport will attract many more Austinites to the neighboring Morris Williams Golf Course, thereby stressing the already fragile infrastructure of the beloved golf course; and

WHEREAS Morris Williams Golf Course has not seen much needed upgrades since the course opened in 1964, and although fee increases have been initiated, the fees have not positively impacted the golf course, the course is now in need of significant repair to its infrastructure, including the clubhouse, cart barn, driving range, and other facilities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Austin Parks and Recreation Board strongly recommend to the City Council that the Council instruct the City Manager to find funds, public and/or private, this year to improve Morris Williams Golf Course and provide the much needed repairs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City Council instruct the City Manager to work with the Austin Parks and Recreation Board and the proper stakeholders in order to determine which improvements are needed and are priorities.

Board Member Francell moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 6-0.

6. Make a recommendation to City Council regarding the Sunshine Camp parkland improvement agreement.

Board Member Francell moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 5-0.

7. Make a recommendation to City Council regarding East Riverside PUD

Richard Suttle, representing CWS, requested that the Board approve a variance from the Waterfront Overlay regarding the secondary setback. He provided a term sheet relating to 222 and 300 E. Riverside Drive which reflected compliance with primary and secondary setbacks as prescribed by the Waterfront Overlay. The plan calls for the dedication of 1.5 acres of additional parkland, extension of the hike and bike trail, the bulk of the buildings will conform to the original Waterfront Overlay Ordinance, a maximum building height of 96 feet will be used and there is potential for a favorable mix of uses. Board Member Francell moved to approve the request, seconded by Board Member Bostick. Motion carried 6-0.

8. Director's Report

Acting Director Strong reported staff changes and the status of the boating study.

9. Future Items from the Board - Not discussed due to lack of quorum.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:42 p.m.