

Minutes
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
February 12, 1979

The Parks and Recreation Board met for its regular meeting at 12:00 noon, Monday, February 12, 1979, at the Austin Area Garden Center. Present were Mr. Garrison, Chairman; Mr. Hall, Vice Chairman; Mr. Bray, Secretary; and members Mrs. Arnold, Mr. Britton, Mr. Coffee, Miss Dominguez, Mrs. Isely, Mr. Ramos, Mr. Rose, and Ms. Stockard. Members absent were Mr. Nalle and Mr. Shaw. Member Emeritus present was Mrs. Crenshaw and Member Emeritus absent was Mr. Coates. Staff members present were Leonard Ehrler, Mike Segrest, Bob Delaney, Dorothy Nan McLean, John Hughes, Dick Martin, Cliff Warrick, John Ellison, Dan Wilson, Preston Wheeler, Donna Brasher, Crystal Stewart, Alicia Mentell, Jo Bright and Louise Nivison. Visitor was Mr. Tom Knickerbocker, Assistant Director, City Planning Department.

The meeting was called to order at 12:20 p.m., by Mr. Garrison, Chairman.

Mr. Garrison stated that a letter had been received from Mrs. Bedinger, a former Board member, and he would be glad for those who worked with her on the Board to read the letter.

Mr. Garrison asked Mr. Knickerbocker to speak on the proposed Overall Economic Development Plan. Mr. Knickerbocker stated that the requisite step for obtaining recognition by the Economic Development Administration (EDA) of a Special Impact Area (SIA) and eligibility for financial assistance for revitalization of the inner city is the preparation and approval of an Overall Economic Development Plan (OEDP). Once approved, the area of a city which is designated as a SIA becomes eligible, through the local government, for financial assistance from EDA. That assistance provides grants to local governments for public works projects (streets, drainage, traffic), land acquisition, construction of public and private facilities (convention centers, hotels, industrial plants) and provides loans to businesses for capital equipment. Other program assistance includes job training facilities, job training and development and supporting social services.

The Economic Development Task Force was appointed by the City Council in February, 1978, for the purpose of developing the proposed OEDP. The area which appears to meet the criteria of EDA includes the East and South Austin Community Development Target Areas, and a portion of the downtown area. The East and South Austin areas qualify as SIA's as a result of their designation by the Community Services Administration as poverty areas. The downtown area qualifies because a majority of resident families have incomes below the CSA poverty level of income. The Task Force has developed a set of goals to form a basis for economic redevelopment of the area, as well as, a set of projects to aid in the preparation of such redevelopment plans. Mr. Knickerbocker stated that page 44, Cultural and Recreational Facilities, was required according to regulations. There had been some changes made in the wording and he did not have this information with him, but "exposure to Mexican-American history and food" had been changed to "exposure to local ethnic cultural history and activities." It was suggested that "camping to mountaineering trips in Colorado's Rocky Mountains" be changed to "camping and spelunking trips." Mr. Knickerbocker stated that he would be glad to make this change. After further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Coffee and seconded by Mrs.

Isely that the Parks and Recreation Board recommend approval of the proposed Overall Economic Development Plan as submitted by the City Planning Department. The motion carried unanimously. Page 44, Cultural and Recreational Facilities reads as follows: "Austin offers a wide variety of cultural and recreational experiences to its residents. With over 7,000 acres of park land, including the nationally recognized Town Lake recreation trail, Zilker Park, and its unique Barton Springs naturally spring-fed swimming pool, all Austinites can easily enjoy the outdoors. Cultural events include historic sites, the varied offerings of the University of Texas, and the assets of the State of Texas. The Austin Symphony performs regularly throughout the year and the City's own progressive country music receives national exposure through the PBS KLRN production 'Austin City Limits.' Laguna Gloria Art Museum is open year round and the annual Aqua Fest held in August offers a wide variety of exposure to local ethnic cultural history and activities. The Parks and Recreation Department offers outdoor programs ranging from camping to spelunking trips." Mr. Knickerbocker stated that when the final report is completed, copies will be sent to the Parks and Recreation Board.

Mr. Garrison stated the Board was happy to have Mrs. Crenshaw, Member Emeritus, present today and asked if she would like to speak. Mrs. Crenshaw stated that she was glad to see that the Board had disapproved the request from the University of Texas Water Ski Team to use a portion of Town Lake for practice. As Austin grows it becomes more and more obvious that you cannot allow any group to destroy the natural resources in Austin. Groups will continuously be wanting to use the Town Lake area and she hoped the Board would continue to protect this lovely area. She challenged the Board to continue to protect the natural resources of Austin. She appreciated the opportunity to speak to the Board. Mr. Garrison stated that it was an honor to have her present.

Mr. Ehrler stated that he wanted to bring attention to the proposed Parks and Recreation Department fees and charges policies that had been presented to the Board today. He wanted the Board to take the proposals home and study them. If there were questions he would be glad to answer them. These proposals would be presented to the City Council at a later date. Mrs. Arnold asked if figures for the number of participants paying fees was available. Mike Segrest stated that this information was not available in many incidents. It would be difficult to break this down. Mrs. Arnold stated that dollar figures would be helpful. Mike Segrest stated that the annual report reflects this. Mr. Ehrler stated that the 1978 annual report should be ready by April. Mrs. Arnold stated that in studying the proposed fees and charges she would like to know what has happened already, and she felt she needed more information. Mr. Bray asked if there was a time frame. Mr. Ehrler stated the department was not being pressed, but the 1979-1980 operating budget has to be prepared by May and these fees and charges would have to be included. Mr. Ehrler stated that the staff would provide any information they could. Mr. Coffee asked if the proposals could be reviewed at a later meeting and if more information was needed they could request it. Mr. Ehrler stated that the department was not geared for really specific figures but will certainly attempt to furnish any information the Board would need. Mr. Ramos asked if some fees are being charged now. Mr. Ehrler stated that only those that have been in effect for several years.

Mr. Ehrler asked Mike Segrest to go over the organization structure with the Board. Mr. Ramos stated that he would like an opportunity to visit with different staff members and learn what division they are responsible for. Mr. Ehrler stated that the different superintendents were present at the meeting and they would be introduced. Any Board member could visit with any staff member at any time. Mike Segrest, Assistant Director, went over the departmental organization chart, introduced each superintendent present and commented on their responsibilities. Mr. Ehrler stated that the organization of the department could change. Whatever quality of life Austin dictates is what the Parks and Recreation Department will do.

The meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.