

MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
May 14, 1979

The Parks and Recreation Board met for its regular meeting at 12:00 noon, Monday, May 14, 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, Miss Dominguez, Mr. Coffee, Mrs. Isely, Mr. Nalle, Mr. Ramos, Mr. Rose, Mr. Shaw and Ms. Stockard. There were no members absent. Member Emeritus present was Mr. Coates and Member Emeritus absent was Mrs. Crenshaw.

Staff members present were Leonard Ehrler, Roy Guerrero, David Reed, John Hughes, Dick Martin, Preston Wheeler, Jo Bright and Louise Nivison. Visitors present were Mr. Jim Miller, Assistant City Manager; Mr. Doug Murrell, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis, and Mr. Christopher Middleton from the River Hills Road Neighborhood Association; Mr. Tom Echols, Mr. Art Keller, Mr. Charles Cantwell, and Mr. Mike Metschan from the Aqua Festival.

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

ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs. Isely asked if the information concerning the reduction of swimming pool hours had been sent to the Board members. Mr. Ehrler stated that the memorandum outlining the budget reductions was sent to the city manager shortly after he came as director of the Parks and Recreation Department. The memorandum sent to the city manager was dated October 16, 1978, and in the rush of things he had neglected sending copies to the Board members. He did want to apologize to the Board for not seeing that a copy was forwarded to them. The city manager and budget director then sent the information to the Mayor and City Council. The City Council reduced funds for seasonal positions and apparently did not realize that it would result in reduction of some pool hours. On Thursday, May 10, 1979, the City Council voted to restore \$46,000 to the Parks and Recreation Department budget in order to keep all pools open the same amount of hours as the 1977-1978 budget year. There was never any correspondence sent back from the city manager or the City Council advising that they had accepted the recommendations outlined in the October 16, 1978 memorandum, and he just simply overlooked sending anything concerning this to the Board. Mrs. Isely asked if the reductions would affect other programs. Mr. Ehrler stated that it would affect the playground hours some. Mr. Garrison stated that he understood the situation because of the transition period from Mike Segrest to Leonard Ehrler. Ms. Stockard stated that she remembered that when they reviewed the charge for the learn-to-swim program that it was specifically brought out that it would not limit the hours of any of the pools. Mr. Ehrler stated that he did not remember such a statement. There was further discussion. Mrs. Arnold suggested that the following letter be sent to the Mayor and City Council from the Parks and Recreation Board:

"Dear Mayor McClellan and Members of the Austin City Council:

The Parks and Recreation Board wishes to commend the City Council for its emergency action last Thursday restoring funding to the Parks and Recreation Department to allow nine neighborhood pools to remain open on a six-day per week schedule rather than a reduced four-day schedule.

The Parks and Recreation Board was not informed of the specific planned reduction in service resulting from the Council's cutting of the Parks

and Recreation Department budget last September. Nor was it brought out in our discussions of the learn-to-swim program that such a program would not be offered at those nine pools, due to the planned reduction in service.

We hope to work more closely with the Parks and Recreation Department staff in assessing the results of the current year's budget reductions so that we may more effectively fulfill our duty in advising the City Council concerning improvements in the maintenance, operation and general welfare of our public parks, playgrounds, and recreational facilities and their use by the public.

Sincerely,

J. Barrett Garrison, Chairman"

Mr. Hall thanked Mr. Nalle for the boat tour of Lake Austin on Saturday, May 12, 1979.

Mr. Garrison stated that he would be out of town on Thursday, May 17, 1979, and Mr. Hall, Vice Chairman, would be on the program for the Givens Recreation Center dedication.

Mr. Coffee stated that he would like to have a work session by the Board to discuss the Parks and Recreation Department Master Plan.

Mr. Britton asked if the painting of Rosewood and Givens Pools would be completed before their opening date. Mr. Ehrler stated that to his knowledge all work was on schedule.

Mr. Garrison stated that he had sent a memorandum to each Board member outlining his recommendations for changes in Board meetings. Mr. Hall stated that he felt they were good recommendations and moved that the Parks and Recreation Board adopt the following:

1. That the Board change from a monthly tour meeting to a quarterly tour meeting, and allow more than one and one-half hours for the tour.
2. That the Board hold a business meeting the second Monday of each month at 12:00 noon (with the exception of a tour meeting to be held the second Monday of each quarter beginning in September, 1979), and a business meeting be held the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.
3. That the Board limit anyone speaking for a group under Citizens Communications at any meeting to 10 minutes, and one individual to 3 minutes, unless approval to speak longer has been approved by the chairman prior to the meeting, and that the evening meetings be limited to 10:00 p.m.

The motion was seconded by Mr. Bray and unanimously carried.

USE OF PARK LAND ON TOWN LAKE FOR A PARKING LOT

Mr. Jim Miller, Assistant City Manager, stated that the reason for the request was that the Economic Development Plan done by the American Cities Corporation recommended that an additional 1,000 hotel rooms be constructed in the downtown area. This request from the Holiday Inn South was a part of the Downtown Revitalization Plan, and they were planning to build another tower with 115 rooms. The area was landlocked with the access road and the Gulf Station. The Holiday Inn has attempted to buy adjacent property but was unable to, and because of the expense could not afford to double-deck a parking lot. In no way would the Holiday Inn be constrolling the land. They were asking to lease approximately 3 acres of park land in the Waller Beach area on Town Lake, and the agreement with the City would be a License Agreement only. A public hearing will be held Thursday evening, May 17, 1979, before the City Council on the matter. The area was dedicated park land and was purchased in 1929. There was a need for 80 parking spaces. Mr. Bray asked if the Parks and Recreation Department had a need for parking in the area. Mr. David Reed, Superintendent of P.A.R.D. Planning, stated that a preliminary assessment showed that the department was below the amount of parking needed for the number of people using the lake areas. Mr. Hall asked where the entrance to the parking lot would be. Mr. Miller stated that cuts could be made along the park road if this was desired or just into the Holiday Inn. Mr. Reed explained there were 7 trees in the area. Mr. Miller stated that the trees would be saved, and all improvements and landscaping would be paid for by the Holiday Inn. Mr. Bray stated that he felt approving such a request would be setting a bad precedent and they can provide parking in another area and shuttle by bus. He was very concerned about this type of precedent. Mr. Garrison reminded the Board members that Mrs. Crenshaw advised them earlier to keep dedicated park land. Mr. Miller explained the Holiday Inn would not want the land permanently, but only want to lease it. Mr. Rose stated that if it was done with a License Agreement could the land be reclaimed as park land. Mr. Miller stated that the License Agreement could be for one year and if desired could be rescinded at that time. Mrs. Arnold stated that the Parks and Recreation Board passed the following policy on February 28, 1978:

"POLICY STATEMENT: USE OF PARK LAND

The Austin Parks and Recreation Board, believing that one of its primary responsibilities is to encourage the maintenance of an adequate system of park land and recreational facilities for the City of Austin,

Issues this statement of a basic governing principle; and

Affirms that it will support a program of land acquisition; and

Affirms that it will discourage the use of dedicated park land for other than recreational purposes; and

Assures the City Council that in cases where park land must be diverted to other uses it will seek monies or land of equivalent or greater value as replacement."

Mr. Bray stated that he felt the Parks and Recreation Department staff should have a chance to work with the Holiday Inn architects. Mr. Hall stated that this was not trading land but to have additional parking and would be beneficial to the Downtown Revitalization Program. Mr. Reed stated that the area was a major access point to IH-35 and in this case could be multiple use. It was moved by Ms. Stockard and seconded by Mr. Bray that the Parks and Recreation Board recommend to the City Council that the Board reaffirm their policy on the "Use of Park Land" and deny the request of the Holiday Inn to lease a portion of dedicated park land on Town Lake in the Waller Beach area for parking lot expansion.

Mr. Bray asked that the City Council be informed that the Board would welcome an opportunity for the Parks and Recreation Department Planning Division staff to meet with the architects from the Holiday Inn to discuss the project to see if there could be a way worked out to compliment the park land and park programs. The Board felt that at this time, without sufficient time to study the proposal, that the request be denied, but they were not closing the door on the proposal.

The motion carried with Mrs. Arnold, Mr. Nalle, Mr. Britton, Mrs. Isely, Miss Dominguez, Mr. Coffee, Mr. Ramos, Mr. Shaw, Ms. Stockard, Mr. Bray and Mr. Rose voting yes. Mr. Hall voted no, and asked that the records show his opposition to the motion was because of his support for the Downtown Revitalization Project. Mr. Rose asked that the records show the actual vote on the motion. Mr. Garrison, Chairman, did not vote.

BOAT RACES ON LAKE AUSTIN

Mr. Tom Echols from the Aqua Festival stated that he wanted to thank the Board for their interest in touring the proposed site requested for boat races. Also, they were requesting to have races only on August 11 and 12, 1979, and the first week in June to hold test runs. The test runs would last one-half day during the week for five different boats. Ms. Stockard asked if they were willing to pay for the following requests they had made:

1. Request that a boat take-out ramp be installed.
2. Request that traffic up and down the lake be closed during the boat races.
3. Request that a judges stand be erected at the finish line.
4. Install electrical outlets, 110 volts, at staging, starting and finish line.
5. Install communications wire (minimum of 2-8 PR cables) from ramps to finish line.
6. Install speakers and wire on poles.
7. Request that the course be surveyed.
8. Request that repairs be made to the road from 2222 to Lake Austin Park.

Mr. Echols stated that the Austin Boat Club was willing to pay for surveying, electrical work and hopefully portable speakers, and anything not considered in-kind by the Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Ehrler stated that some of the costs would be absorbed by the Parks and Recreation Department. He had talked with Mr. Art Keller and Aqua Festival was willing to do whatever they could to cooperate in the project.

Mr. Murrell from the River Hills Road Neighborhood Association stated that their group was concerned about the shoreline on the west side of the lake. They lived directly across from Lake Austin Park and a safety feature would be involved. If a fire occurred there would be no way to control it. Also, River Hills Road was very dangerous and would be a real problem for police, ambulance and traffic. Also, they were concerned about the water quality as Lake Austin was the water supply for Austin. The oil from the boats, fumes, and litter would be a problem in addition to the noise pollution. The noise would be deafening and they were also concerned about the invasion of their privacy. They felt they would be inundated with people on their property taking advantage of being able to see the races free, and they were opposed to any races in the area. The lake would have to be blocked off to boat traffic and residents in the area had creek frontage. If one race was allowed, what about the future? Mr. Mueller stated that their group was equally concerned about the safety of the crowds on the Lake Austin Park side. The shade in the afternoon would be on the west side of the lake and they knew large crowds would be attracted, plus the fact that they would not have to pay to see the races. All access to the water is private. The access road is public, but is very narrow and not well kept by the County and they would be afraid to try any races at all. Mr. Ehrler stated that the concern of the Parks and Recreation Department was the safety factor. These boats would be going 160 to 200 m.p.h. and the lake was narrow in this area. Mr. Echols stated that they had reversed their run and would be running upstream rather than downstream, and the finish line would be in front of the pier. Mr. Rose asked how the course compared with the Town Lake course. Mr. Echols stated that it was about the same width and no boats would be going to the end of Lake Austin Park. Mr. Middleton pointed out that the boats do not shut down immediately. Mr. Echols stated that it takes about one-fourth mile for them to shut down. Mr. Middleton stated that the people living in the area live there because they enjoy nature, and the quietness of the lake. He could not see the rationale of a small group of people being allowed to come in and rape nature. Another member of the River Hills Road Neighborhood Association explained she was concerned about the future. How many more people will be encouraged to use high speed boats on Lake Austin, and they were certainly inappropriate for leisure. It was also a disturbance to the ecological system.

Mr. Coffee asked if Lake Long had been studied as a site. Mr. Keller stated that a study had been made and it would cost \$1.8 million dollars to ready the area for racing. The Aqua Festival felt this was much too high. The Parks and Recreation Department had also evaluated 6 or 8 locations on Town Lake. They had at first thought about the area between MoPac and Lamar Boulevard Bridge, but the evaluation showed this to be a dangerous area because of the swift current.

Mr. Ehrler expressed concern about the safety of running against the tide on Lake Austin. Mr. Preston Wheeler explained that he had talked with Lower

Colorado River Authorities and they would be generating between now and October. This certainly would present a problem. Also, if it continued raining a lot they would probably open the flood gates. Mr. Coffee asked about sites on Lake Travis. It was explained there were no sites suitable on Lake Travis.

After further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Rose and seconded by Mr. Hall that the Parks and Recreation Board recommend to the City Council approval of Aqua Festival boat races to be held on Lake Austin on August 11 and 12, 1979; that the races be for a one year trial period; and that the event be monitored and a report sent back to the Parks and Recreation Board. The motion carried with Mrs. Isely, Mr. Bray, Mr. Coffee and Mr. Ramos voting no.

Mr. Ehrler reminded the Board of the Givens Recreation Center dedication at 3:00 p.m., Thursday, May 17, 1979, and the Martin Swimming Pool dedication at 4:00 p.m. on the same date.

Mr. Ehrler asked that the Board study the 1977-1978 annual report and let him know of their comments. It was the 50th anniversary report.

The meeting adjourned at 1:40 p.m.