

Minutes
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
August 13, 1979

The Parks and Recreation Board met for its regular meeting at 12:15 p.m., Monday, August 13, 1979, at the Parks and Recreation Department. Present were Mr. Garrison, Chairman; Mr. Hall, Vice Chairman; and members Mr. Britton, Miss Dominguez, Mrs. Isely, Mr. Nalle, and Mr. Ramos. Mrs. Arnold, Mr. Bray, and Mr. Coffee were absent. Ms. Doering and Mr. Shaw were ill. Member Emeritus present was Mr. Coates and Member Emeritus absent was Mrs. Crenshaw. Staff members present were Leonard Ehrler, Roy Guerrero, Don Cramer, David Reed, Bob Delaney, Faustino Leos, Crystal Stewart and Louise Nivison. Visitors included Mr. Larry Grosse and Mr. Tom Hoerstman from the Northeast Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association; Mr. Bill Archer and Mr. Neal Spelce from the Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Juan Valera-Lema, Environmental Specialist from the Environmental Resource Management Department; Mr. Jose Gil; and Mary Ann Kreps from the Daily Texan.

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 p.m. by Mr. Garrison, Chairman.

WASTEWATER LINE IN WALNUT CREEK THROUGH WALNUT CREEK DISTRICT PARK

Mr. Larry Grosse, representing the Northeast Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association explained they were asking the Parks and Recreation Board's consideration of rescinding its previous endorsement of the wastewater line in Walnut Creek through Walnut Creek District Park, pending the completion of studies to reroute same. Mr. Grosse explained the City of Austin Water and Wastewater Department is proposing the installation of a 54" wastewater main in Walnut Creek, beginning east of Dessau Road and proceeding upstream. Phase I of this project extends from Dessau Road to IH-35. A later phase is scheduled to continue the line upstream from IH-35, which will include Walnut Creek District Park.

The solid limestone bottom aids in providing a year-round flowing creek. This year-round flow provides a setting for the maturing and spawning of fish as well as shelter and water for birds and other wildlife. In addition, there are many large trees adjacent to and overhanging the banks of the creek which provide the required shaded areas for much lush undergrowth. If the proposed wastewater main is allowed to be installed in the creek channel, the end product could well result in the demise of the creek and the environment it sustains. For example: once the solid rock bottom is cut or blasted for the installation of the pipe, there is no sure method of sealing the installation to prevent the spring-fed water flow from going underground along the many fault lines. The results would be a storm drainage ditch instead of a free flowing creek. Also, in the Phase I portion of the project, there are 24 trees larger than 6" caliper that are scheduled to be removed from the permanent easement for the pipe installation, plus many additional trees falling in the temporary work space area.

The Northeast Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association and the Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association were joining together in an effort to reroute the proposed wastewater main. One alternate route under study would relocate the wastewater main along the north boundary of the Walnut Creek District Park. The alternate route would serve the original purpose of the wastewater main without disturbing the existing natural environment of the creek. By taking the alternate route it would be 9/10 of a mile shorter. Mr. Garrison asked about the cost for the alternate route. Mr. Grosse stated that at this point, they did not have costs ready, but were working on this item. Mr. Grosse explained that on August 9, the City Council directed the Water

and Wastewater Department to meet with the neighborhood groups. They were not against the sewer line, but wanted an alternate solution. Mr. Jose Gil stated he was not familiar with the alternate route, but there were archeological sites in the park. Walnut Creek is also known as the recharge zone for the aquifer in the area. If the line is put into the creek, it will eliminate the springs.

After further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Hall and seconded by Mrs. Isely that due to the fact that the City Council has requested a more detailed study from the Water and Wastewater Department and the City Manager on the proposal to place a wastewater line in Walnut Creek through Walnut Creek District Park; the information submitted August 13 by Mr. Larry Grosse, from the Northeast Walnut Creek Neighborhood Association concerning an alternate route out of Walnut Creek and Walnut Creek District Park; and the fact that the Parks and Recreation Board submitted a recommendation to the City Council at their meeting held May 22, 1979, that the Parks and Recreation Board ask the City Council for guidance and instructions on whether they should reconsider their previous recommendation on this matter.

The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Grosse explained they were meeting with the Planning Commission on August 14, and wondered if they could report that the Board would reconsider their recommendation if feasible. Mr. Garrison explained that if the alternate route was cheaper or even if the costs came out the same, the Board would probably reconsider their recommendation. Mr. Garrison thanked Mr. Grosse for his interest in Walnut Creek.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROGRAM PHASE I

Mr. Ehrler explained the City Council has asked the Parks and Recreation Board to recommend how they really feel about the proposed Downtown Revitalization Program. Mr. Neal Spelce from the Chamber of Commerce explained the Board of the Chamber of Commerce met and approved the concept of the plan and made this recommendation to the City Council. Certainly they were not endorsing each aspect of the plan. They see it as a step forward with each specific item subject to input, and it should be a people place. David Reed explained the Urban Transportation Department was presently planning to make First and Third Streets a one-way pair. This would make them extremely heavily traveled. Town Lake is a most important amenity and natural attraction. It would be most unfortunate if First Street should become a physical barrier to Town Lake. We should be thinking of marrying Town Lake and the city, and more and more people are discovering the importance of Town Lake.

Mr. Bill Milstead stated that he has a business in the eastern portion of the city and he feels the program is very good. Input from boards and commission and citizens is very good. He felt that what the people want is very important. This would certainly encourage people to move back into the downtown area. He wanted to commend the input of the Parks and Recreation Board and supported the concept of the plan.

After further discussion, it was moved by Mr. Hall and seconded by Mrs. Isely that the Parks and Recreation Board recommend to the Mayor and City Council endorsement of the basic concept of the proposed Redevelopment District Plan with the following concerns regarding parks and recreation objectives:

The Parks and Recreation Department's Planning Division staff has

reviewed the American City Corporation Plan in order to determine its relationship with our present philosophy, policies and activities. Up to this point, we have been pleased with the sensitivity which the planners of this Urban Renewal project have shown, given park and open space consideration, and their efforts to incorporate our ideas into the program.

In particular, we are concerned with the relationship of this entire project with the major natural feature of downtown Austin, which is the Town Lake greenbelt. Our park planning philosophy favors a sensitive integration of public/private efforts to create viable social, economic and environmental opportunities. We are concerned that new development in the project area foster a marriage of town development and public open space/parkland development that reflects integrity, purpose, sensitivity and most of all, a blending of objectives. The Town Lake greenbelt is one of the showplaces of Austin, and we seek opportunities to complement that feature with sensitive revitalization programs.

Other concerns are Congress Avenue, one of the most significant, cultural and historical features which is currently a major revitalization project in the downtown area; and the Waller Creek development, designated as a joint public/private venture focused on the creek corridor from Town Lake to Tenth Street, which was adopted as a Bicentennial development program.

Specifically, we are concerned with the following issues and aspects of the plan as currently presented:

1. First Street as a Barrier

We are concerned over First Street becoming a physical barrier between the core revitalization project and the Town Lake greenbelt. Every possible effort should be made to link visually and physically through exciting and innovative means, the downtown development and the waterfront. Too many riverfront cities have made the mistake of sealing the waterfront from the central city area.

2. Impact on Town Lake Greenbelt

The proposed project will place increased use pressure and demand on Town Lake beaches, shores, the water's edge, trail system and other facilities. Creature comforts, penetration points (pedestrian and vehicular access), upgrading of existing trails system, parking and expanding waterfront facility development will be necessary to respond to new and increased uses of the greenbelt. Increased maintenance and guidance of public use will be necessary. If sensitively designed and linked with the proposed development, this impact can be addressed appropriately and consistently with present Town Lake policy.

3. Congress Avenue Sensitivity

Congress Avenue from the State Capitol Square to Town Lake is a downtown feature which the Parks and Recreation Department is committed to preserving and enhancing. The project must relate to this effort appropriately.

4. Tram Project

While this project presents an opportunity as a tourist attraction and can expand the recreational opportunities of the area, two questions emerge;

- a. Aesthetically will the structure blend with the environment.
- b. How does the project relate to people mover (mass transit needs) of Austin; and other modes of non-vehicular movement systems.

5. Drainage and Water Quality

Urban runoff is a concern to the greenbelt program. Remedial measures must be taken to assure adequate drainage across greenbelt lands and efforts to maintain high water quality standards of Town Lake, which supports water contact use.

6. Landscaping - Plaza Development

The Parks and Recreation Department encourages sensitivity of landscaping and plaza development that complements Town Lake. Sufficient green space, maintenance requirements and appropriate design and selection of landscaping is a concern.

7. Architectural Design Controls

The Parks and Recreation Department's philosophy is to promote architectural performance criteria to promote sound land use development that reflects taste, continuity, harmony and appropriateness. Signing, street furniture, paving surfaces, choice of building materials, and an overall design theme are areas of concern.

8. Public-Private Cooperation

The Parks and Recreation Department seeks joint public/private efforts to attain common goals. Food service, boat rentals and other concessions are possibilities that should be encouraged to arise with purpose and direction. In this manner, visitor accommodation will be maximized.

9. Waller Creek and Other Greenbelt Development

The Downtown Revitalization Project should encompass and complement the joint public/private development on Waller Creek, and recognize in design both Shoal Creek and West Bouldin Creek greenbelts which support hike and bike development.

The motion carried unanimously with Mr. Britton expressing concern that the total community be brought in and East Austin's primary concerns include areas other than economics.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR RECOMMENDED NAME FOR DAM PRESENTLY
BEING CONSTRUCTED IN THE UPPER SHOAL CREEK WATERSHED

Mr. Garrison explained that Capt. James Buford died in the line of duty in this area in 1972. Approximately three years ago the old fire tower on Town Lake was named the "James Buford Tower." The only name submitted for the dam was the "James Buford Dam." Mr. Hall stated that he did not feel two facilities should be named for the same person and his personal opinion would be to take no action or name the dam "Woodhollow Dam." After further discussion, no action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board.

WORK SESSION FOR TENNIS CENTER SITE

Mr. Garrison urged all members of the Board to attend the work session on the 16 court tennis center site to be held Thursday, August 16, 1979, 5:00 p.m., in the Parks and Recreation Department.

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 p.m.