



***ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, April 5, 2023***

The ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION convened in a regular meeting on Wednesday, April 5, 2023, at 6310 Wilhelmina Delco Drive in Austin, Texas.

Chair Ramberg called the Environmental Commission Meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

Commissioners in Attendance: Kevin Ramberg, Perry Bedford, Rick Brimer, Hanna Cofer, Haris Qureshi, Melinda Schiera, Rachel Scott, and David Sullivan

Commissioners in Attendance Remotely: Pam Thompson and Colin Nickells

Commissioners Absent: Jennifer Bristol

Chair Ramberg made a motion to limit item-specific public comment to two minutes per speaker on agenda items.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION: GENERAL

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the Environmental Commission Regular Meeting on March 1, 2023 and Environmental Commission Special Called Meeting on March 29, 2023 (**5 minutes**)

The minutes of the March 1, 2023 Environmental Commission Regular Meeting and March 29, 2023 Environmental Commission Special Called Meeting were approved on Commissioner Bedford's motion, Commissioner Qureshi's second on a 9-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent. Commissioner Coffey abstained.

ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER UPDATES

2. Recognition of Ana Aguirre and Audrey Barrett Bixler for their service on the Environmental Commission – Katie Coyne, Environmental Officer, Watershed Protection Department (**5 minutes**)
Item conducted as posted. No action taken.
3. Update on the waterline break at Shoal Creek – Katie Coyne, Watershed Protection Department (**10 minutes**)
Item conducted as posted. No action taken.

STAFF BRIEFINGS

4. Staff briefing of Project Connect Light Rail Update – Jen Pyne, Chief of Planning and Risk Management, and Peter Mullan, Chief of Architecture and Urban Design, Austin Transit Partnership **(1 hour)**
Item conducted as posted. No action taken.

DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

5. Discussion and possible action on the ecological recommendations in the Draft Zilker Park Vision Plan – Gregory Montes, Program Manager II, Parks and Recreation Department, Claire Hempel, Principal at Design Workshop, and Jonathan Ogren, Siglo Group. **(1 hour)**

Speakers:

Tanya Payne, Rewild Zilker
Mike Cannatti, Barton Springs Conservancy
Karen Blizzard, Zilker Collective Working Group
Gordon Kelley, Waterloo Disc Golf Club
Carol Phillipson
Garret Nick
Bobby Levinski, Save Our Springs Alliance
Christy Valenzuela
Christie Curtis
Gail Rothe
Robin Rather
Stephanie Hoffman
Mark May
Audrey Barrett-Bixler
Sarah Faust
David Weinberg
Karen Kreps
Mac Ragsdale
Laura Massengale
Kirk Mitchell
Ana Aguirre
Ben Thompson, ReWild Zilker
Roy Wayley
Daniela Silva
Mark Weiler
Bill Bunch
Teri Adams
Steve Beers
Joe Kendal, Texas River School
Shelbi Orme

Chair Ramberg made a motion to recess at 8:43 P.M.

Chair Ramberg reconvened the meeting at 8:52 P.M.

Speakers:

Gregory Montes, Program Manager II, Parks and Recreation Department

Claire Hempel, Principal at Design Workshop

Jonathan Ogren, Siglo Group

Justin Schneider, Community Engagement Spec, Parks and Recreation Department

Charlie McCabe, Charlie McCabe Consulting

A motion to extend the meeting until 10:20 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Bedford's second on a 9-1 vote. Commissioner Nickells was opposed. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 10:35 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Sullivan's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 10:50 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Bedford's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 11:00 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Bedford's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 11:15 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Bedford's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 11:30 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Bedford's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 11:40 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Bedford's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to recommend the adoption of the Draft Zilker Plan was made with conditions on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Sullivan's second.

A motion to extend the meeting until 11:50 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Qureshi's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

An amendment from Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Schiera, to recommend a condition to remove the umbrella nonprofit organization overseeing Zilker Park, as articulated in the draft plan, passed on a 6-3 vote. Commissioners Thompson, Scott, Bedford, Schiera, Sullivan, and Brimer voted in favor of the amendment. Commissioners Nickells, Ramberg, and Cofer were opposed. Commissioner Qureshi abstained. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 11:59 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Qureshi's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

An amendment from Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Thompson, to recommend a condition to remove all construction projects from the draft Zilker Vision Plan, most notably the welcome center, parking garages, and theater, failed on a 3-5 vote. Commissioners Thompson Scott Brimer voted in favor. Commissioners Nickells, Schiera, Sullivan, Ramberg, and Cofer were opposed. Commissioners Qureshi and Bedford abstained. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 12:10 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Qureshi's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

An amendment from Commissioner Schiera, seconded by Commissioner Scott, to remove the 5,000 person venue at the current location from the Draft Zilker Vision Plan failed on a 4-4 vote. Commissioners Thompson, Scott, Schiera, and Brimer voted in favor. Commissioners Nickells, Ramberg, Cofer, and Sullivan were opposed. Commissioners Qureshi and Bedford abstained. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to extend the meeting until 12:20 P.M. was approved on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Qureshi's second on a 10-0 vote. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

An amendment from Commissioner Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Brimer, to recommend a condition to remove the land bridge from the draft Zilker Vision Plan failed on a 1-8 vote. Commissioner Thompson voted in favor. Commissioners Nickells, Scott, Bedford, Ramberg, Schiera, Cofer, Sullivan, and Brimer were opposed. Commissioner Qureshi Abstained. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

An amendment from Commissioner Scott, seconded by Commissioner Brimer, to recommend a condition to remove the welcome center from the Draft Zilker Vision Plan failed on a 3-5 vote. Commissioners Thompson, Scott, and Brimer voted in favor. Commissioners Nickells, Ramberg, Schiera, Coffey, and Sullivan were opposed. Commissioners Qureshi and Bedford abstained. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

A motion to recommend the adoption of the Draft Zilker Plan was approved with conditions and an amendment from Commissioner Scott on Commissioner Ramberg's motion, Commissioner Sullivan's second on a 9-1 vote. Commissioner Thompson was opposed. Commissioner Bristol was absent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

6. Urban Forestry Committee – Richard Brimer (Committee Chair), Pam Thompson, Rachel Scott, and Colin Nickells
7. Report on the Joint Sustainability Committee – Haris Qureshi (member) and Richard Brimer (alternate member)
8. Report on the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan Citizen's Advisory Committee – Jennifer Bristol
9. Report on the Joint Committee of the Environmental Commission and Parks and Recreation Board – Pam Thompson, Rachel Scott, Perry Bedford, and Haris Qureshi
10. Report on the South Central Waterfront Advisory Board – VACANT

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11. **Officer elections and committee appointments will occur at the April 19, 2023 Environmental Commission Meeting – Elizabeth Funk, Environmental Commission Liaison, Watershed Protection**

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Ramberg adjourned the meeting at 12:12 a.m. without objection.

The minutes were approved at the April 19, 2023 meeting on Commissioner Bedford's motion, Commissioner Scott's second on a 9-0 vote. Commissioners Bristol and Thompson were absent.