

# Minutes for the first meeting of the City of Austin Parks and Recreation Board's Baseball Field Working Group

June 19, 2024

*Participants: Lane Becker (PARB board member), Stephanie Bazan (PARB board member), Tyler Sneed (Austin Sandlot Baseball), Joel Manzo (Austin Sandlot Baseball)*

## Introduction of Current WG Members

- Tyler Sneed is a Sandlot Baseball member who handles scheduling duties for the Austin Sandlot group, interfaces with the city.
- Joel Manzo is a baseball advocate involved with Sandlot men's league, focusing on accessibility and space for community baseball.
- Lane Becker is a Parks Board member.
- Stephanie Bazan is a Parks Board member who was involved in dealing with similar issues regarding soccer fields earlier this year.

## Overview of Agenda for Today's Meeting

- Lane Becker outlines the agenda: What, when, and who regarding baseball fields. Topics include meeting cadence and specific subjects to cover.
- Lane Becker discusses the timeline for group output and meeting cadence, including consideration of additional participants in the Working Group as well as potential featured speakers.
- Stephanie Bazan is asked to share her experience about what makes a Working Group effective from her previous experience with the Zilker Park Bathhouse Working Group.

## Discussion on Agenda Overview

- Lane Becker suggests discussing potential recommendations and reports that could result from the Working Group.
- Stephanie Bazan agrees to share details on structuring a successful Working Group, including identifying key members who can consistently participate in meetings.
- Stephanie Bazan explains the process of selecting key Working Group members, including using meetings with special guests to address specific questions.

- In her previous Working Group, weekly meetings with special guests were used to quickly progress tasks.
- Special guests provided insights at the start of each meeting before leaving and helped answer key questions for the Working Group.

## **Topics to Cover**

- Team members offered up potential topics for discussion by the Working Group. Topics mentioned were:
  - Up-to-date contact info for any field not fully under PARD control, which includes every field except for Govalle;
  - Public, available in advance calendar for every baseball field in Austin;
  - Sensible field allocation, where adults play on fields that can support adult ball, kids play on fields that can support kids ball;
  - Sensible field hours, ensuring keep the fields that can be open later, especially during summer;
  - Maintenance of the fields and how it can be handled and improved; and
  - Contracts and ordinances, including a holistic evaluation of ordinances governing field use and contracts with third parties.

## **Discussion on Topics to Cover**

- Board Members Lane Becker and Stephanie Bazan to finalize the recommendation and report and submit into backup for review and vote once completed.
  - Full group will have input on the outline, the initial draft, and conclusions.
- Stephanie Bazan emphasizes the importance of including an external voice in each meeting to ensure progress and diversity.
- Group discussed the selection process for guests to aid in forming comprehensive recommendations.
- Group discussion of potential additional committee members and special guests.
  - Lane Becker agrees to hold off scheduling until other guests are invited.

## **Timeline for Recommendation and Report**

- Lane Becker aims to have the recommendation and report ready by end of August if possible.
  - Group considers if the timeline is too aggressive due to summer schedules.
  - If not completed by August, Working Group will aim for September.

### **Action Items and Next Steps**

- Lane Becker will contact additional potential members discussed to see if they would be willing to join the Working Group.
  - Tyler Sneed will consider who would be good additional members for the Working Group from the Sandlot Baseball community.
- After considering summer schedules, Lane Becker agrees to schedule a follow-up meeting in late July or early August once new Working Group members have agreed to join.