



PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

Tuesday, April 28, 2015 - 6:00 p.m.

Boards and Commissions Room

City Hall, 301 W. 2nd Street

Austin, Texas 78701

MINUTES

A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Rivera called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

Board Members in Attendance:

Jane Rivera, Chair; Jeff Francell, Vice Chair; Susan Roth, Lynn Osgood, Michael Casias

B. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. Approve the minutes of the Parks and Recreation Board meeting of March 24, 2014.

Vice Chair Francell made a motion to approve the minutes from March 24, 2015. Board Member Roth seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0 with Board Members Abell absent and Glover.

C. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Gavino Fernandez addressed the Board regarding his disappointment regarding the proposed closure of Metz and Mabel Davis pool for the 2015 season. He expressed frustration about the timing of the announcement, and expressed concern about gentrification. He noted that the pools being closed are east of IH-35, and utilized mostly by minority populations.

Rick Luna addressed the Board regarding the proposed pool closures for the 2015 season. He expressed that he is very upset with the Director and Board for making this decision.

Frank Cruz donated his time to Ron Torre. Ron Torre, Texas Association of Bass Clubs, addressed the Board regarding improvements at Walsh Boat Landing and Festival Beach. He shared pictures with the Board demonstrating the opportunities for improvements.

Bertha Marie Delgado, President of East Town Lake Citizens Neighborhood Association, addressed the Board regarding the proposed pool closures for the 2015 season and expressed her concerns about the closure. She explained that her neighborhood association was not notified or consulted.

D. NEW BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS

Consent

Chair Rivera announced a Board request to move Item 5 to the Consent Agenda. Vice Chair Francell made a motion to approve items 2 and 5 on the consent agenda. Board Member Osgood seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 5-0 with Board Members Abell and Glover absent.

2. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the negotiation and execution of a park concession agreement with the Austin Parks Foundation to manage and operate a concession at the Old Bakery and Emporium site.
5. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the adoption of the Master Plan for Onion Creek Metropolitan Park.

Non-Consent

3. Public comment period to consider the installation of a permanent marker at Auditorium Shores at Town Lake for President Obama's February 23, 2007 rally at that site.

No speakers came to address the Board on this item.

4. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the MOPAC South Environmental Study, including potential impact of the proposed MOPAC Expressway transportation improvements from Cesar Chavez to Slaughter Lane, and potential expansion of the existing Lady Bird Lake Bridge.

Mario Espinoza, Deputy Executive Director of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, and Melissa Hurst, Community Outreach Manager of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority, gave a presentation to the Board regarding this proposed improvement project and responded to questions from the Board.

Citizen Communication

Michael Cannatti addressed the Board to introduce the Barton Springs Conversancy and discuss their efforts to date, especially related to fundraising. Mr. Cannatti signed up for General Citizen Communication but was overlooked in error.

Bobby Levinski addressed the Board regarding the CTRMA presentation and expressed concern about the timetable for approval. He provided the Board with a visual depicting the impact to parkland. He expressed concern about the impact to Mopac and the surrounding area. He requested the Board not approve this item.

David King, Zilker resident, noted that he is very concerned about these flyovers and their impact to Zilker Park. He expressed concern about adding 18 wheelers to this area of town and how noise and air pollution could impact trail and park users. He also expressed concern about the long-term impacts to parkland as this project expands.

Dr. Craig Nazor, Austin Sierra Club and volunteer at Zilker Botanical Gardens, expressed concern about this proposal and the expected negative impact to the Zilker Botanical Gardens and the Austin Nature Center. He urged these Mopac improvements to be viewed as a whole, instead of pieces at a time. He urged more study regarding the environmental impacts.

Barbara Rush, representing Travis County Commissioner Bridget Shea and formerly with Councilmember Laura Morrison's Office, addressed the Board on this issue. She expressed concern and opposition to this proposal, including the comment period available. She discussed the county's opposition to the 2040 plan and urged the City to act.

Roy Whaley, Austin Sierra Club, addressed the Board on this issue and expressed his opposition to this proposal. He announced a rally at the Crenshaw Pedestrian Bridge on May 2 in opposition to the impact on parkland. He expressed concern about the noise for neighbors and park users and that this proposal does not truly address the transportation issue. He urged the Board to oppose.

Board Chair Rivera made a motion to recognize that there is a great need in Austin to provide alternative vehicular routes through the City in addition to IH-35, but to recommend to the City Council to not approve or accept the MOPAC South Environmental Study, due to the potential impact of the proposed MOPAC Expressway transportation improvements from Cesar Chavez to Slaughter Lane on Zilker Park, particularly expansion of the existing Lady Bird Lake Bridge, and potential increased traffic expansion on Cesar Chavez that could require a taking of parkland for such an expansion. Board Member Osgood seconded the motion. The motion carried on a vote of 4-0-1 with Board Member Roth abstaining and Board Members Abell and Glover absent.

E. BRIEFINGS

6. Brief the Parks and Recreation Board regarding progress toward finalizing a partnership with the Zilker Botanical Garden Conservancy to transition operations of the Zilker Botanical Garden from a Parks and Recreation Department direct service to a public private partnership operational agreement between PARD and the Conservancy.

Assistant Director McNeeley introduced the presenters and informed the Board of the work to date regarding this collaborative effort. Jeff Pavlat made this presentation to the Board, providing historical context for the Zilker Botanical Garden, and explaining next steps to pursue the creation of this conservancy.

Citizen Communication

Dr. Craig Nazor spoke in support of this conservancy model, and expressed the need for donations. He offered his assistance with fundraising and involvement with the conservancy.

F. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Director Hensley reported to the Board regarding two awards recently received by the department.

Director Hensley reported that the department is preparing 5% reductions, and that the Board will receive a presentation on the budget in May.

G. FUTURE ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Board Member Casias suggested crosswalks across busy streets to provide better pedestrian access to Lady Bird Lake and the Hike and Bike Trail from adjoining neighborhoods. The streets identified were

Riverside between Congress and IH35, Lakeshore, and Nash Hernandez from I35 to Chicon. Director Hensley committed to contacting Public Works and Transportation.

H. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Rivera adjourned the meeting at 7:36 p.m.