



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, February 24, 2009

Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board was held on Tuesday, February 24, 2009 at the Boards and Commissions Conference Room, 301 West 2nd St. Room 1101.

Board Members Present: Board Chair Linda Guerrero, Board Vice-Chair Danette Chimenti, Jeff Francell, Sara Marler, Mark Vane, Marilyn Bostick and Jane Rivera.

Staff Members Present: Sara Hensley, Stuart Strong, Farhad Madani, Ricardo Soliz, Chris Yanez, and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting called to order

Board Chair Guerrero called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

1. Board Member Marler asked for clarification of the minutes of the January 27, 2009 regular meeting regarding the sustainable events policy. She requested clarification concerning the not-for-profit agencies that do not ticket, and those that do ticket.

Note: In an effort to make it clear we have clarified the policy by breaking it up into two separate sentences as follows:

Events (subject to this green policy) that use parkland for all or a portion of their event and register/charge/or ticket for participation should pay a **sustainability fee** of 25 cents/person to the Austin Parks Foundation for park specific projects to build a sustainability fund for the impacted park(s).

Events (subject to this green policy) that ticket or charge admission for entrance as described in the adopted Parks and Recreation Department Special Events policy should not pay a sustainability fee.

For events that use park land for multiple day events, the organizers shall be charged once per contract/rental period

With the above changes, Board Member Marler moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Board Member Chimenti. Motion carried 5-0 with Board Member Vane abstaining.

Board Member Rivera moved to approve the minutes of the Special Called meeting of February 10, 2009, seconded by Board Member Chimenti. Motion carried 5-0 with Board Member Vane abstaining.

C. Citizen Communication

Phil Burns expressed concern with the clear cutting that is being done by a volunteer group at Red Bud Isle. He is requesting that the group, Friends of Red Bud Isle, stop the clear cutting until there is a community meeting to discuss the issue. Director Hensley confirmed that the department is trying to organize a meeting of all interested groups to further discuss the issues.

Charlie McCabe, Executive Director, Austin Parks Foundation, reported on "It's My Park Day" which will be held March 7th and also on two major tree plantings in conjunction with TreeFolks.

Sharon Hamilton, ACWP, reported on the progress of the open cut method that replaced the trench-less cut option at Nicholas Dawson Park. She reported that, after completion, approximately 400 feet of pipe will have been installed. Board Member Chimenti thanked Ms. Hamilton for working with the neighborhood and completing the work with minimal impact to the park.

Jeff Jack, a longtime member of the Austin Neighborhood Council, reported that the Council is anxious to have phase III and IV of Town Lake Park completed. He requested that three main issues be addressed before proceeding with the design. They are: 1) the budget for the park must be fully funded; 2) an analysis to determine the impact of closing Riverside Drive must be completed and; 3) continue with the development of a city-wide off leash policy.

D. Briefs

2. Metz Advisory Board Advisory Board Presentation

Marie Martinez, Board President, reported that the mission of the board is to foster stewardship and provide strategic planning. She stated that their goals consist of supporting the community, providing financial support and be advocates for the center. They sponsor board retreats and innovative programming such as "Save the Trees" and "Yummy Tummy".

3. Town Lake Park Phase III and IV

Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager, reported that TBG Consultants along with the Parks Department held its first kick-off community meeting on Thursday, February 19, 2009. Approximately 70 interested persons attended and provided input on what improvements they envision for the park. Staff briefed all on the history of Phase I and II and the rest of the meeting was dedicated to soliciting input from those in attendance.

The major issues addressed were: 1) user conflicts; 2) preserving the park for off-leash use; 3) better maintenance of the park grounds and 4) the need for a pedestrian bridge over Bouldin Creek. Four more community meetings are likely within the next 3 months. Design drawings could begin in June 2009. Additional information will be provided at the next Land and Facilities meeting in March.

4. Long Range Plan for Parks and Recreation –

Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager, provided a handout that detailed the Department's effort to produce a long-range plan, covering the period from 2009 to 2014. The plan addresses future growth and development as well as citizen needs for parks, trails, programs, preservation of environmental and ecologically sensitive areas, park standards, best practices, land stewardship and national and department standards. The document is designed to produce 5-7 priority recommendations of each of the 27 planning areas. The next step is to take the plan to the public for input and to create a web site for public information.

Board Member Vane requested that the Board be given the opportunity to provide input into the prioritization of recommendations per each planning area and Board Chair Guerrero requested that additional public meetings be held to ensure total community input. Director Hensley emphasized that the department is in need of an asset management plan that would look at our current assets and assess them on a health and safety issue basis. Board Member Rivera added that she would like staff to add another column to recommendation and prioritization of needs page to include a staff assessment rating of each of the recommendations.

5. Norwood Park

Assistant Director Strong announced that the Norwood Posse, a neighborhood group, is interested in renovating the Norwood House and will assist the department by applying for grants to start the renovation process. Mr. Strong said that their 1st priority is to fix the roof and move the house to its original location. Once this is done they will apply to rezone the house historic.

6. Brief on resolution reducing the size of the parking lot at Brush Square.

Charlie McCabe, Executive Director, Austin Parks Foundation, provide a brief requesting Parks Board support to consider a resolution that expands the current footprint of Brush Square Park to remove approximately half of the current parking spaces for the central Fire Station #4. This effort would reduce the current number of spaces from 28 to between 13 and 15 and would increase the amount of useable space at the park and provide for greater visibility into the park. Mr. McCabe also said that a number of organized groups have made contributions to the park and that this proposal as met with favorable support from Council Member Martinez. The suggested resolution is as follows:

The parks board recommends to the Director and Austin City Council to accept and approve the proposal of the Austin Parks Foundation to reduce the size of the central fire station parking lot located at Brush Square in downtown Austin to approximately half of its current size, working with city staff at PARD, APD and others to remove the southern portion of the lot and restoring that area to park.

E. New Business and Action Items

7. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding Menn Boat Dock.

The applicant is requesting to exceed 20% shoreline width, to extend further than 30 feet, and to construct within 10 feet of the side lot line. Board Member Francell moved to approve the committee's recommendation to exceed 20 % shoreline width at 15 feet, to extend further than 30 feet, and to construct within 10 feet of the side lot line, seconded by Board Member Rivera. Motion carried 6-0 with Board Member Bostick abstaining. Note: Board Member Vane requested that more backup information be provided in the future. Board Member Francell added that in the past along with the memo there was a small site plan included in the backup.

8. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding 3011 Westlake Drive.

The applicant is requesting extending the boat dock further than 30 feet due to very shallow water. Board Member Francell indicated that approving the request would be consistent with other slips with similar shallow water and would pose no navigational hazard. Board Member Vane move to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Marler. Motion carried 6-0.

9. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding 12319 Selma Hughes Park Road.

Board Member Francell reported that Watershed Protection Department recommended building the construction of a biolog wall instead of a serpentine wall. The wall would be built parallel to the shore, is designed to diminish waves and biodegrades within 3 years. Board Member Chimenti moved to approve the proposed shoreline modification, seconded by Board Member Rivera. Motion carried 6-0.

10. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the use of parkland at Metz Park.

John Driscoll, Watershed Protection Department, indicated that WPDRD is requesting permanent and temporary use of parkland on the west and the south side of Metz Recreation Center. The project is needed to install a storm water line to correct flooding and drainage issues surrounding the area. The project will start in February 2010 and will be completed a year later. Mitigation has been agreed in return for the use of the parkland. Board Member Francell moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board Member Vane. Motion carried 6-0.

11. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the Low Water Crossing of Bull Creek.

Stan Evans, Watershed Protection Department, indicated that WPDRD is requesting permanent and temporary use of parkland adjacent to the low water crossing at Bull Creek Park. They are requesting a narrow strip of land to construct a bridge. The bridge will have two lanes with a pedestrian walkway. The start of the project will begin in February 2010 and will be open for public use in October 2010. Mitigation has been agreed in return for the use of parkland. Board Member Vane moved to approve the request, seconded by Board Member Marler. Motion carried 5-0.

12. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the use of parkland for the extension of Westgate Boulevard.

Annie Van Zant, Project Coordinator, Public Works Department indicated that they are requesting the use of over 9,000 sq. ft of parkland to construct a roadway (West Gate Boulevard Extension). The Board had questions regarding how the property value per square foot is calculated and why the roadway is not constructed on the property owners land instead of parkland. After more discussion, Board Member Vane requesting that this item be sent back to the Land and Facilities Committee for further review.

F. Director's Report

Director Hensley reported on the following:

- The Lake Austin boat study would be coming before the Board in April.
- Jim Roberson will brief the Board on Waller Creek and the Downtown Tunnel in March.
- The Department will host the Texas Recreation and Parks Society annual conference (TRAPS) and added that the Town Lake Trail Foundation will receive an award for partnership and contributions.
- Future briefs to the Board will be staff updates on the Boardwalk, drain covers on our swimming pools and a brief on the Event Closure Task Force.

G. Future Agenda Items from the Board Members

Board Member Vane reported that there are still lots of questions regarding the Downtown Tunnel such as access points, construction and mitigation amounts. Board Chair Guerrero reported on the upcoming Navigation 101 training for the Board and also requested that the Watershed Protection Department report on water quality issues on: 1) Barton Springs; 2) Lady Bird Lake and 3) Waller Creek and 4) Lake Austin, if possible.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8: 45 p.m.