

Parks and Recreation Department Board Minutes

Tuesday, April 27, 2004
Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department was held on Tuesday, April 27, 2004 at the Parks and Recreation Department Main Office, 200 S. Lamar, Board Room.

Board Members Present: Rosemary Castleberry, Linda Guerrero, Clint Small, Leonard Lyons, Jeb Boyt, Jeff Francell, and Hector Ortiz.

Board Members Absent: Marilyn Bostick and Joseph Hughes

City Staff Members Present: Warren W. Struss, Kim Jamail, Jay Stone, Randy Scott and Tino Garcia.

- A. Meeting Called To Order:
Rosemary Castleberry, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6: 30 p.m.
- B. Approval Of The Minutes, March 23, 2004
Board Member Guerrero made the motion to approve the minutes as corrected.
Board Member Francell seconded the motion. The vote passed 7-0.
- C. Citizen Communication
Ted Siff, Executive Director Austin Parks Foundation, reported on the success of the 2nd annual It's May Park Day which has held on April 24, 2004. Mr. Siff indicated that approximately 1,000 volunteers participated at 24 park sites assisting in litter pickup, weeding and planting, clearing trails and installing and repairing playscapes, benches and trails. Approximately 4, 000 volunteer hours were contributed to the Park System.
- D. Presentations
Jim Rhodes, City Arborist, Watershed Protection Department, addressed the Board on the Tree Replenishment Fund. Mr. Rhodes is responsible the reviewing proposals for compliance with the Land Development Code, erosion prevention and tree replacement. He explained that the City reviews approximately 50 development plans a week. He explained that for years the City did not have a replacement fund established to receive compensation for the loss/removal of trees. The new fund, started nine months ago so groups could receive the funds to plant trees primarily in public spaces, applies a formula based on the number of trees that are removed. Board Member Castleberry asked how was the formula was arrived at. Mr. Rhodes

replied that currently it is a moving formula. Board Member Castelberry asked if the formula is based on the inch of the tree. Mr. Rhodes replied that trees are broken down by factoring their specific category. For Example: a 24 inch dying Hackberry does not equal to a 12 inch healthy live oak. Board Member Small asked was criticism received for charging a fee for something that absolutely is the City's. He asked why is it necessary to charge a fee for a Hackberry which in most peoples eyes isn't worth much? What is the justification for the use of the formula? Mr. Rhodes explained that the cost to the City for development is in the neighborhood of millions of dollars. Council Member Small asked if there was ample data and research to support this and to make sure that developers are not seeing this as another money grab by the City. Board Member Lyons asked if Mr. Rhodes knew about federal regulations, to which he replied no. Council Member Boyt asked how much has been contributed to the fund in the last nine months? Mr. Rhodes replied that \$162,000 has been contributed but there has been no disbursements to anyone to date. Before closing Mr. Rhodes indicated that a committee would be developed to include PARD reps. Board Member Francell indicated that the Land and Facilities committee be involved in the decision making and Board member Castleberry indicated that the Urban Forestry Board be involved as well.

E. ITEMS FOR ACTION

1. Approve the resolution to the City Council on the Utility Bill Check-Off for Parks and Library Enhancement Fund.

Director Warren Struss reported a part of the previous parks board motion was for the Director to go back to see if there could be some consenses built on the issue. Director Struss elected to go back and review the issue keeping in mind that the council had already adopted the plan. Director Struss with Board member Lyons' assistance, drafted resolution to Land and Facilities for review and recommendation. Board Member Francell moved to approve the resolution. Seconded by Board member Boyt.

Ted Siff, Executive Director, Austin Parks Foundation, reiterated his concern about the idea of adding to the utility check-off, however is pleased that the Director came back with a better proposal. He indicated that you cannot fix a fundamentally flawed idea. The city should instead fund the operations and maintenance of the Parks and Recreation Department so it can be a first class dept. This way of financing will put trees, parks and libraries in competition with each other whether there is one check off box or three. Finally Mr. Siff indicated that tree groups and library groups are all opposed to this idea.

Joyce Basciano, Vice-chairman, Urban Forestry Board, agrees 100% with the comments Mr. Siff made. She indicated that the board had been asking for a written plan and are not familiar with the resolution and thinks that they should have seen the written plan. Verbal plans do not work because of different interpretations. She agrees that this resolution will cause competition between trees, parks and libraries.

Scott Johnson, the originator of the proposal, indicated that the Board had approved the resolution without knowing the full details regarding the funding. He indicated that he had talked with Library staff and they also support another funding mechanism. He agrees with the other speakers and would like to see a change to the base budget to increase the Tree Planting Fund. He passed out handout regarding statistics on material dollars per capita. The data indicated that none of the cities in Texas were excelling in this regard. Board member Lyons asked Mr. Johnson if he was familiar with Resolution 29, adopted August 1, 1991 in which the goal of the resolution was to plant 1 million trees by 2004. Mr. Johnson stated that that was an extremely ambitious goal. Board member Lyons is looking for details in something that is 12 years old.

Board member Guerrero, said the resolution was not enough of a safeguard and it is inadequate. Board member Ortiz, supports the plan the council had but he does support the new resolution with the changes the Board member Boyt made. Board member Lyons inquired about the position of the Electric Utility. Director Struss indicated that they want to move forward as quickly as possible, but no timeline was given. Board member Lyons indicated that Austin Energy needs to do more work, before we proceed. Director Struss indicated this is the way to secure the opportunity. A motion was made to keep the resolution but to amend it to read..... The detail plan will then be submitted to the Parks Board, Urban Forestry Board and Library Commission for review and recommendation. Motion pass with Board members Ortiz, Boyt, Francell and Castleberry in favor and board members Guerrero and Lyons opposed.

2. Make a recommendation on the Fred Kopec boat Dock, 2800 Rivercrest Drive.

Board member Boyt reported on the Kopec dock which is a 100ft. lot with an existing boat slip. The owner is proposing to reduce the 30 ft. dock and put in a 22 ft boat dock, 2% over the 20% rule. Board member Boyt moved to approve the recommendation, seconded by Board member Ortiz. Motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

3. Make a recommendation on the Blake Ehlers Boat Dock, Case Number SP-04-0129DS

Board member Boyt reported that if owners are willing to build the smallest dock necessary, their proposal would be approved, therefore Board member Boyt moved that the Blake Ehler Boat Dock be approved. Seconded by Board member Francell. Motion was approved by a 5-0 vote.

4. Make a recommendation on the Use Agreements on Boggy and Onion Creek Austin Clean Water Program Projects

Julie Hastings with the Austin Clean Water Program (ACVP), on behalf of the Austin Water Utility requests four separate permanent and temporary use

agreements for the rehabilitation of a 30-inch and 36-in wastewater lines, CIP No. 4570-237. In conjunction with the project the ACWP is requesting authorization to rehabilitate portions of the wastewater lines in the following City of Austin parklands: Dittmar Park, South Boggy Creek Greenbelt, Onion Creek Greenbelt, and the Onion Creek Metro Park. The project is being accomplished under an administrative order of the USEPA in order to eliminate the occurrence of sanitary sewer overflows the presence of which threatens human health and the surrounding environment. Short term effects during construction will be minimal and no trees within the parkland areas are being identified for removal at this time. As with all City construction projects, the Contractor will be required to provide a one year warranty of his work including restoration or revegetation and tree replacement. Bid will be let in mid October and will take 6 to 8 months for completion. Board member Boyt move to approve the recommendation and was seconded by Board member Francell. Board members Ortiz, Boyt, Francell and Castleberry voted in favor. Board member Lyons abstained.

F. Director's Report

The Director reported that Tino Garcia is the new liaison to the Parks Board. Tino will attend the parks board meeting and will be responsible for the minutes and the agenda. Kim Jamail will be retiring the end of May and may not be able to attend the next board meeting. Regarding the budget: The City is facing a 19 million dollar shortfall. The department will be looking for possible reductions at a 5% rate. The Director will keep the board apprised as developments on the budget are known. Board member Francell indicated that the drop in the sales tax is due partly as a result of people buying on line, thus not paying the sales tax.

The Director also reported on the Bun Run with approximately 4,000 runners participating.. The Young Men's Business League will assist in raising between \$70, 000 to \$80,000 for the Sunshine Camp. The association for Volleyball professionals will have a tournament at Auditorium Shores. This is a return from 15 years ago. There is a contract and the money will be deposited into the general fund.

Regarding St. Tropez there is dialogue with city council now and it may be up for council action. Board member Boyt asked if it had hit the media. The Director indicated that he was not aware of this issue. Board member Boyt indicated that there are many citizens of Austin that do not want to see this precedence.

There will be a ribbon cutting at the pavillion at Fiestas Gardens for Cinco de Mayo on Wednesday, May 5th. Kim is meeting folks from CableVision to discuss parades and the kick-off. Parking can be an issue but the board members may be accommodated by parking in the yard. Pan Am ribbon cutting will held in June. Board members will be apprised as soon as details are known. The Quarterly staff meeting was held and the Director's Excellence award was presented to Robert Armistead in recognition of being named the outstanding park professional in the state. Also recognized was Jeanne Henry for the Arts in Humanities Award and Mary Gant from the Park Police Unit.

Jay Stone reported on WI FI which allows citizens of Austin with free wireless Internet Access in four downtown parks. The parks are Republic Square and Auditorium Shores and later in the year at Brush Square and Wooldrige Square. May 18th is the kick off at Republic Park. Partners in this endeavor include Downtown Austin Alliance, Austin Parks Foundation, Scholotsky's and the City of Austin.

The Director reported on the Zilker Loop and that it was approved by council last week. Public Works may help fund it because of some of the drainage resulted from the new construction on Barton Springs Road. The Parks and Recreation Department has been nominated as one of the final four departments for the best park system in the nation. We will be competing with Miami Dade County, Fort Worth and Fort Myers. The kids at Camacho Activity Center will be developing the required video.

G. Committee Reports

Programs Committee- No report

Land and Facilities –

Navigation Committee – Board member Boyt announced that there is a large project named River Place on Lake Austin that has 1 mile of lake frontage. They have a plan to put in 90 boat slips in a Marina type situation. In the mile the project covers 20% of the shoreline, the total of 36 lake lot lots and they need from the board approval for a small marina with 12 boat slips on one lot. This is within the 20% across the aggregate. Other suggestions have been made and the developer has taken in account. They will be coming to the board for the 36 lake front lots plus the 12 boat slips.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.