



Parks and Recreation Department Board Minutes  
Tuesday, January 25, 2005  
Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Parks Board was held on Tuesday, January 25, 2005 at the Parks and Recreation Department Main Office, 200 S. Lamar, Blvd, Board Room.

Board members present: Board Chair Rosemary Castleberry, Board Vice-chair Linda Guerrero, Jeb Boyt, Jeff Francell, Leonard Lyons, Hector Ortiz and Clint Small.

Staff members present: Warren Struss, Cora Wright, Jay Stone, Stuart Strong, Randy Scott, Kevin Gomillion, Mendy Marshall, Lonnie Lyman, Robert Armistead, Raul Calderon and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Castleberry at 6: 42 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

Board member Francell moved to approve the minutes, seconded by Board member Boyt. Motion passed.

C. Citizen Communication

Jeff Jack addressed the board on the priorities of the City. He reminded everyone in attendance about the maintenance and program budgets reductions in the past. According to Mr. Jack, the City finds itself doling out small amounts of dollars to community asset programs and is too involved in the people coming to Austin tomorrow rather than thinking of the people living here today. Currently there is not enough money to sustain our parks, recreation facilities or to keep our greenspace in our neighborhoods.

Patty Sprinkle, Galindo Neighborhood Association, asked the board to reconsider expanding the South Austin Tennis Center and relocate it to another suitable site. The new planned expansion is a detriment to the neighborhood and ultimately to the City. The lack of roadway infrastructure and the addition of the eight new courts, parking lot and drainage will add 86,000 ft. of impervious cover. The new location should be a destination park, with ample parking and easily assessable from major traffic arteries.

Steven SeCoursen, Galindo Neighborhood Association, illustrated a map of the neighborhood. The issue he said, is the Galindo is a densely packed neighborhood and that the expansion of the tennis center would diminish the quality of life in the neighborhood. The additional 86,000 sq. ft. would add runoff to the West Bouldin Creek and across Oltorf street. The expansion of the tennis center would move the facility to less than 50 ft from several homes and 100 ft from several others. Since there are already some issues with the current site (environmental and traffic), the tennis center should remain as it currently is.

Sara Strandtman, Galindo Neighborhood Association, contrasted features of the current park with others in other cities. She cited the Waco Regional Tennis Center as an example of the destination park concept with a clustering of facilities and plenty of open area with good traffic access. The HEB tennis center in Corpus Christi, utilizes private and corporate monies in support of the tennis complexes. She cited other tennis centers with similar corporate and public funding venues. In summary, she said that tennis center should have clustering of facilities, easily assessable from major roadways and alternative funding sources.

Nate Blaneslee, Galindo Neighborhood Association, indicated that the current site for the expansion has none of the destination park amenities as indicated by the other City's tennis complexes. The neighborhood association has taken a position that the current site is not suitable for the planned expansion. He further suggested that consideration be given to 4 AISD high schools that currently have 8 court facilities.

Jessica Gordon, neighborhood resident, wants the board to reject the expansion of the tennis center. She reiterated that the proposed expansion does not serve the intention of Proposition Two that in fact it is in direct opposition to the goal of planned acquisition along West Bouldin Creek. If the park expansion is approved the neighborhood stands to lose the ecological benefits of the existing greenspace and will create other issues. She asked that members of the audience stand up to show the support against the expansion.

Charlotte Herzele, deferred to Sheryl Behne. Ms. Behne, pro manager of the South Austin Tennis Center, reminded the board that the bond package was passed in 1998. She indicated that the City needs more tennis courts, both in North and South Austin and that Austin is the only city in Texas without a large tennis center. She showed a petition of 86 tennis players that are in support of the expansion due to the fact that there is a need for more courts.

Jennifer Forrest, a tennis player who uses the facility, is in favor of the expansion of the tennis center. She informed the board that this center serves underprivileged kids by providing scholarships to children within the surrounding area.

James Humphrey, President, Capital Area Tennis Association is in support of the tennis center expansion. He cited three reasons: first, Austin needs more tennis courts, secondly, adding 8 courts to the existing facility is an efficient way to service tennis players and thirdly, it will not destroyed the park. Currently courts are not available during the evening, and there are very few lighted courts in Austin. Leagues cannot expanded because there are not enough courts in Austin.

Tommy Cox, AISD Athletic Director, informed the Board that a subcommittee was formed in an effort to partner with the City to look at providing additional tennis space. The money that is appropriated in the AISD bond package, is to partner with the City for the tennis project, which they consider the most appropriate site to be the South Austin project. An oversight committee of 22 citizens will have to approve the site change. \*It was noted the tennis proportion of the AISD bond package is between \$300 – \$400 thousand dollars.

Board Chair Castleberry opted to discuss the agenda item regarding the tennis center next before the remaining agenda items.

#### E. Items for Action

1. Make a recommendation to the Director regarding the South Austin Tennis Center.



Board member Boyt, reported that the Land and Facilities committee had reviewed this issue in November and December. At those meetings, staff was asked to provide a cost analysis to determine the amount of dollars needed to build the facility at another site. It was determined that it was not cost effective to build it at another site. Therefore the Land and Facilities committee recommends that the tennis center expansion be completed with the appropriate funds.

Board member Francell wondered whether the City Council could decide not to spend the money or to build the facility even though the recommendation is to proceed with the project. The answer was yes. Members of the audience were informed that there are several other opportunities to express their views on the issue, at the site plan review at the Planning Commission, and finally at City Council.

Kalpana Sutaria, project manager, informed the board that the bulk of the money is for the courts and the lighting (which will have visors and positioned in such a way as to cost the least disruption to the neighborhood).

Director Struss informed the board that this project is not dependent on AISD bond money. It does leverage funds to jointly improve the roof at the recreation center, build sidewalks and improve the trail at the park and playscape. There are 2.5 million dollars in the city's bond package for this project.

Board member Ortiz moved that the Board approve a recommendation to the Director regarding the South Austin Tennis Center. Seconded by Board member Boyt.

Discussion followed: Board member Small asked what is meant by the term large masses of people? Lonnie Lyons informed the board that large tournaments require 5 facilities with a minimum of 70 courts. The eight courts will handle an additional 4 people per court. Director Struss added that 26 new parking spaces will be added. A question was asked about the number of trees that would be lost. Ms. Sutaria, responded by saying that the majority of the trees are cedar, however, 5 protected trees will be lost. The motion passed 4-3 with Board members Ortiz, Boyt, Francell and Castleberry voting in favor of the motion and Board members Lyons, Guerrero and Small against the motion.

#### D. Staff Presentation

##### 1. Annual Concession Report

Acting Assistant Director Jay Stone reported on the annual concession report. The Department made \$8,000 less than last fiscal year. The Rowing Dock concession may be up for sale. Board member Small asked about the status of the skeet ranch and whether they should enter into a concession contract with the department. The Department will explore the possibility of this along with the archery range located at Emma Long Park.

##### 2. Town Lake Park Update

Stuart Strong, Division Manager, Planning division, reported that the lift station originally proposed for Town Lake Park will no longer be placed in the park. Director Struss indicated that the new proposed lift station will be relocated near Butler I, located on Toomey Road. Construction will not impact the playing of either of the two softball fields. Less than 20 parking spaces will be affected by the construction of the lift station and all the stakeholders have been apprised of the upcoming effort. The board will be asked to grant an easement request in the upcoming months.

E. Items for Action

2. Make a recommendation of the City Council regarding Standards of Care for Children's Recreation Programs.

Board member Guerrero reported that there are no changes to the current standards and it will go before City Council on February 3, 2005 for a public hearing. Since we are full compliance with the standards, Board member Guerrero moved to approve the recommendation to the City Council, seconded by Board member Small. Motion carried unanimously.

8. (moved at the request of Board member Small)

1. Make a recommendation regarding the Texas Rowing Center Dock Expansion.

Board member Small reported that the Navigation Committee has reviewed the request for expansion and have approved the proposal. Matthew Knifton, Owner Town Lake Rowing Center, is requesting to add two 20-foot sections to the TRC. The additional section would lengthen the dock to 160 feet. They provided the board with a list of justifications which included 1) greater public demand for access 2), increased public use and 3), reduced boat traffic across the Hike and Bike trail. Alvin Cantu, General Manager of the TRC, and Joe Kendall, Executive Director, The Chautauqua River School voiced the same sentiments as indicated earlier and requested that the Board approve the additional 40 feet of expansion. Board member Boyt moved approval to recommend the expansion regarding the Texas Rowing Center Dock. Seconded by Board member Francell. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Make a recommendation to the City Council regarding the Park Land Use Agreement for a Waste Water Line and Drainage Area to serve the Pioneer Hill TND Project.

Stuart Strong identified the area where the subdivision is located (adjacent to Pioneer Farm). The Austin Water Utility is requesting a permanent and temporary use agreement for the construction, and operation/maintenance for a 15 inch gravity wastewater line to serve the Pioneer Hill TND project. Documents were provided to the board for review. In exchange for the use agreements the Utility will assist the Department with future trail development. Board member Francell moved approval of a recommendation to the City Council supporting the Park Land Use Agreement for a Waste Water Line and Drainage area to serve the Pioneer Hill TND Project. Seconded by Board member Guerrero. Motion passed unanimously.

Note: Items 4, 5, and 7 were pulled.

6. Make a recommendation regarding the construction of a single-slip boat dock at 1612 Ski Slope Dr.

Board member Small reported that the Navigation Committee had reviewed their request and moved approval of permitting the construction of a single-slip boat dock at 1612 Ski Slope Dr. Seconded by Board member Boyt. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Items for Information

N/A

G. Director's Report

Director Struss reported the passing of Jorge Zapata, Program Manager, Senior Support Services and Gerald Ruiz, Operations Division. He asked for everyone's thoughts and prayers for the Zapata and the Ruiz family. Cindy Wade, Site Manager, Austin Recreation Center, has retired on a medical retirement. Also, Roberta Machado, Park Police Officer, is valiantly fighting a major



medical condition and thoughts and prayers for his recovery. An art exhibit, called Coexistence may be coming to Auditorium Shores and will be displayed for 30 days. The department is working with Rescue Austin Memorial Park stakeholders and for a possible transaction with the Covenant Presbyterian Church on a building of a parking lot. Details will be forthcoming. The department is working on improving trail damages due to the recent flooding. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the Roberta Crenshaw bridge enhancement as been completed with the dedication approximately 30- 45 days away. Director Struss also reported on the following: the status of Chestnut Park, the Mayor's Council on physical fitness and the forthcoming legislative breakfast.

#### H. Committee Reports.

Land and Facilities Committee: Nothing major to report

Navigation Committee: N/A

Programs Committee: Board member Guerrero passed out some brochures for all to see.

#### I. Items from Board Members

Board member Ortiz thanked the Director and all staff for the success of the Trail of Lights.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned at 8:54 p.m.