



Parks and Recreation Department
Tuesday, July 25, 2006
Meeting

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department Parks Board was held on Tuesday, July 25, 2006 at the Boards and Commissions Conference Room, 301 W. 2nd St. Room 1101.

Board Members present: Board Chair Linda Guerrero, Board Vice-Chair Jeb Boyt, Secretary/Parliamentarian Mark Vane, Rosemary Castleberry and Jeff Francell. Board Members Marilyn Bostick and Clint Small arrived shortly after the meeting started.

Board Members absent: Hector Ortiz

Staff Members present: Warren Struss, Cora Wright, Ricardo Soliz, Stuart Strong, Robert Armistead, Randy Scott and Tino Garcia.

A. Meeting Called to Order

The meeting was called to order by Board Chair Linda Guerrero at 6:06 p.m.

B. Approval of Minutes

Board Vice-Chair Boyt moved to approve the minutes seconded by Board Member Francell. Motion carried.

C. Citizen Communication: N/A

D. Discussion and Action Items

1. Brief on the National Agenda for Urban Parks and Recreation Initiative

Director Struss asked the Board to endorse and support a resolution for "The Implementation of a New National Agenda for Urban Parks and Recreation Initiative".

The resolution is premised upon four guiding principles and beliefs, as follows:

- 1) Urban parks must continue to *promote health and wellness*;
- 2) Urban parks must continue to *stimulate community and economic development*;

- 3) Urban parks must continue to *protect the environment*; and
- 4) Urban parks must continue to *educate, protect and enrich America's young people*.

Board Member Boyt moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Board Member Castleberry. Motion carried, 5-0. Director Struss thanked the Board for approving the resolution and indicated that he would be forwarding the resolution for Council adoption within the next few months.

2. Consider approval of Tom Herod Boat Dock at 1617 Westlake Drive

Board Member Small indicated that he had met with Mr. Herod and requested that the boat dock be constructed horizontal with the property. Trees, however, presented a concern with navigation. Therefore, it was agreed to construct the dock perpendicular to the shoreline, which will make it in compliance within the parameters normally allowed. Board Member Small moved to approve the construction of a two slip dock at 1617 Westlake Drive. Motion was seconded by Board Member Vane. Motion carried 6-0 with Board Member Bostick abstaining.

3. Make recommendation to Council to approve an Ordinance amending section 8-1-13 of the City Code relating to fees for park use and adding section 8-1-15 to the City Code relating to Park Film-Making Activity

Cora Wright, Assistant Director, reported that the City has begun a study of the economic impact of the film-making industry. Two recommendations evolved as a result of the study. The first was to appoint an initial point of entry for anyone seeking to film activity in the City of Austin and secondly, that the City identify certain process improvements. The intent is for Austin to become a film-friendly city by waiving certain fees such as parking and other fees. Board Member Vane asked for some clarity regarding the language of Park-Film Making Ordinance. Also, he had questions regarding why levied fees go back to the general fund instead of staying with the department and concerns about damages to the park with the department having no recourse but to pay for the damage. Director Struss explained that if damages are made to the park, the department would receive funds to repair the costs in the form of an expense refund. Questions as to why the City wants to waive the fees surfaced to which Jim Butler explained that the City is trying to bring in tax revenue from the film making industry. Board Member Boyt expressed initial support for approving a recommendation to Council, however, indicated that staff should address the issues with the language especially the wording "Film-Making Activity". Director Struss, sensing the Board was not supportive of the language as written, indicated that staff would bring back to the full Board in August a draft of the ordinance with new and clearer language.

E. Other Business

Briefings:

1. Austin Parks Foundation/Austin City Limits Agreement – Charlie McCabe, Executive Director

Mr. McCabe briefed the Board on the agreement reached between the Austin Parks Foundation and the ACL Music Festival. He provided an overview detailing tickets sales, proceeds to PARD to cover improvements and direct costs plus APF retaining 1/3 of the proceeds to fund other parks projects. Mr. McCabe also provided a history of the Neighborhood Parks Grants Program highlighting the 55 projects that have already been funded and the current 19 proposals already received for this year.

2. Summer Programs – Robert Armistead, Division Manager

Mr. Armistead briefed the Board on the 2006 Summer Programs highlighting the following:

- P3 Play Day, which included 35 playground sites, 5 teen sites, 17 recreation centers and 3 senior centers.
- Summer Playground Program, which involved 35 sites (2132 kids registered) and 5 teen sites (945 teens registered).
- Summer Lunch Program
- Track Meets
- Water Day (90 participants)
- Safety Camp (187 participants)
- Summer Day Challenge Camp (348 participants)
- Other Star Events such as Hillside Concerts, Rosewood Summer Jam and Intergenerational Juneteenth.

3. Softball Enterprise Fund – Stephen Kreger

Mr. Kreger briefed the Board on the state of the softball in the City of Austin. He explained that softball participation has not increased due in large part to PARD's softball leagues fees being the highest in the state and indicated that participation would increase if the fees were lowered. He provided a chart that pointed out that Austin's price per game is the highest in the state compared to 29 other cities that responded to a softball survey. The average price per game statewide is \$34.00 versus \$47.00 for Austin. The association is requesting that the Board support the transfer of the maintenance expense, approximately \$300,000 to the General Fund. This adjustment would allow league fees to be \$300 per session, commensurate with other state fees. After some brief questions from the Board, it was decided to bring it back to the full Board at a future date.

4. Brief on Off-leash Dog Parks – Ricardo Soliz, Division Manager and Dorinda Pulliam, Health

Mr. Soliz provided a list of the existing off-leash areas (11) and addressed current problems such as lack of well-defined policies, multi-use conflicts, environmental concerns, increasing demand by users and enforcement. A process has been established

to look into developing new or revising current policies and guidelines and to develop a stakeholder group to help create criteria. Three goals have been identified which include; 1) more off-leash recreational areas, 2) mitigate the severity of over use of existing parks and 3) enforcement. The next step is to put together a stakeholder group to help staff develop specific criteria. The groups identified are: PARD, Park Police, Health Department, WPDR, user groups and environmental stakeholders. There were several questions regarding fines to which Ms. Pulliam responded that each fine is considered a class C misdemeanor - \$200 per violation. She also indicated that there were 855 dog bites last year. Scott Johnson expressed some individual concerns and alluded to a Park Police survey that was taken several months ago. Board Member Boyt suggested that the issue as well as the survey be further addressed at the August Land and Facilities meeting.

5. Chapter 26 – Hwy 183 & Springdale to Martin Luther King Blvd. (Parkland) – Stuart Strong, PARD, Adewale Odufuye, Public Works Department.

The Department of Public Works, on behalf of the Austin Water Utility, is requesting the dedication of a permanent and temporary use of easements for the construction, operation and maintenance of a proposed 24 inch waterline as part of a relocation project within TX DOT US Route 183 Roadway Widening and Reconstruction Project, CIP No. 3960-227-7325. The permanent waterline easement contains a total of 0.212 acres and the temporary workspace easement of 0.092 acres, which will be returned to the Parks and Recreation Department upon construction completion. Tree mitigation, as part of the site restoration process, will also be paid for or be included in the construction work. Public Works and Austin Water Utility have agreed that the proposed alignment is the most feasible and prudent alternative to crossing the parkland. All construction and site restoration for the portion of the project within parkland will also be completed in accordance with PARD's Construction in Parks Specifications. They are requesting that the necessary documentation be prepared for consideration of this request by the Board. A presentation will be made to the Land and Facilities subcommittee in August for review and consideration.

F. Director's Report

Director Struss reported on the following; 1) the dedication of the Pedestrian Bridge over Shoal Creek for Janet Fish, 2) the department's current lifeguard shortage and the possibility of increasing salaries in the proposed budget for next year, 3) Skate Fest at Mabel Davis Park and 4) invited the Board to Rosemary Castleberry's Proclamation at City Council Chambers at 5:00 p.m. on July 27th. Board Chair Guerrero requested a brief on the consolidation of Park Police for the August meeting.

G. Items from Board Members

Rolling Stones Concert at Zilker Park, October 22nd.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:08 p.m.