

A Parks and Recreation Board Minutes February 9, 1999

A regularly scheduled meeting of the Parks and Recreation Department was held on Tuesday, February 9, 1999 at 200 South Lamar Blvd. Board members present: Mary Ruth Holder, Elaine Carter, Rosemary Castleberry, Rocky Medrano, Jeff Francell, Carol Kim, Erma Linda Cruz-Torres, Louise Nivison, Member Emeritus.

Staff members present: Jesus M. Olivares, Stuart Strong, Randy Scott, Jay Stone, Farhad Madani, Mary Ybarbo.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Rosemary Castleberry.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

With one correction noted, the minutes of January 26, 1999 were approved.

CITIZEN COMMUNICATION

Matt Knifton, co-owner of Texas Rowing, approached the board with a procedural question regarding people attending the next board meeting for a particular item. He was informed he could bring a small number of speakers.

Chris Riley, President of Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association informed the board he is opposed to the possible installation of a pipeline across Shoal Creek Trail at 3rd Street. The City wants to place a six-foot diameter pipe across the lower trail. Not below it, not above it, but across it, with the bottom of the pipe sitting where the trail is now. Once the pipe is in place and 3rd Street becomes a throughway for cars, a busy street will separate the trail from every other part of the Town Lake trail system. Mr. Riley is urging council members to consider replacement of this pipe.

Janet Gilles, Vice-President of Downtown Austin Neighborhood Association urged the board to consider relocation of the pipeline on Shoal Creek.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Ted Siff, board member of the Austin Metropolitan Trails Council informed the board The Shoal Creek Greenway Action Plan is a project of the Shoal Creek Greenway Partnership. City departments (PARC, Drainage Utility, Transportation and Public Works, Water and Waste Water) along with private businesses (GSD&M, House Park BarBQue, Randalls, Whole Foods, Inc. etc) and non-profit organizations (Save Barton Creek Assn., Austin Neighborhood Council, Austin Metro Trails and Greenways, etc.) all participated in the development of this plan. The purpose of this action plan is to provide recommendations for the future redevelopment and management of the Shoal Creek Greenway. These recommendations included design recommendations for reconstructing portions of the existing greenway so that it provides an environment more conducive for public use; and management recommendations that provide a progressive strategy for maintaining the greenway. The scope of the study area includes greenway lands and facilities (trails, signage, bench seating, bridges, etc) extending from Town Lake to 45th Street. A total distance of approximately 4.5 miles. Signage along the trail will show history of trail and important elements of the trail. GSD&M sent a letter to the Parks Board showing their commitment to the Shoal Creek Greenway Partnership and in April will host a 'volunteer clean up' with Whole Foods Market.

The adoption of the Shoal Creek Greenway Action Plan will be presented at the Land and Facilities Committee on February 16, 1999 and then to the full PARKS Board.

ITEMS FOR ACTION

Pass a Resolution Regarding the Cleaning of Barton Springs Pool

A draft copy of a resolution regarding the cleaning of the Barton Springs Pool was presented to the board. It was drafted at the request of the Land and Facilities Committee. Pam O'Conner, Dorothy Richter and T.A. Vasquez were introduced as members of the Aquatics Board.

Farhad Madani, Aquatics Supervisor, showed a short video tape of a machine called the Armada Systems "Algae Killer" which would do underwater cleaning in the shallow end of the pool. Cleaning would be done on a daily basis, the area to be cleaned does not have salamanders and the noise level is very low. PARD is contemplating purchasing two of these machines, which can be used while people are swimming in the pool.

Robert Hansen with Watershed Protection, Roger Duncan with Austin Energy but attending the meeting as the Environmental Officer for the City and George Oswald with Watershed Protection briefly explained to the board and the assembled citizens the City has been issued a 10-A permit by U.S. Fish and Wildlife for the cleaning of the pool. As a result the City would be required to make improvements to the pool, changes to the pool cleaning processes and water quality monitoring for the watershed. This would include purchase of underwater cleaning equipment, installation of a concrete underwater sidewalk on the west side of the pool, excavating existing beach material and installing rock fill and installing an improved hydraulic gate system for downstream dam.

The following people signed up to speak on this issue.

Michael Polacheck, 2926 Higgins spoke about concerns with the method of constructing the proposed sidewalk. Piers would be detrimental and cause fractures in the limestone.

Karen Kreps, 1741 Spyglass Drive spoke about the swimmers not being included in the planning of any improvements. Moving the habitat would be detrimental to the salamander especially during March and April which is flood time in the Austin area. Open the project up for discussion.

Al St. Louis, 810 Christopher (Peggy Armstrong gave her time), recalled that 10 years ago he helped to prevent the state from putting trout into the lake. The salamander has done well for himself. The project has not been thought through. Don't close the pool.

Francis Fisher, 3208 Harris Park Avenue, is a daily swimmer who is sympathetic to the board on ADA issues and the salamander issue. Does not favor the sidewalk construction. Demands of the swimmers should be considered.

Patsy Jimenez, 2926 Higgins, concrete sidewalk is not solution. Study the project for a year.

Stewart White, 1507 West 43rd Street, a 5 day swimmer and former construction project manager does not favor the demolition to the area. Suggest artificial reefs and create an area that small fish would inhabit.

Helga Williams, 1502 West 5th opposes the Barton Springs Pool sidewalk project. 800 cubic feet of concrete with 59 piers and vibration from the jackhammers will cause too much damage. She has written a letter to Bruce Bobbitt requesting a halt to the project. A copy of the letter was distributed.

Heather Heneman, 4215 Ramsey asked that other alternatives be considered.

Amy Babich, 4507 Red River, suggested that the Parks Department ask U.S. Fish and Wildlife for a delay until November so the pool can stay open.

DRAFT

Bill Adorno, 4158 Steck Avenue proposed doubling the area for swimming, tripling the salamander habitat, doubling the area for hike and bike trail, reduce flood problems and increase swim possibilities by harvesting Town Lake. He introduced a substitute material for concrete as a long term solution.

Helen Besse, 703 Loma Linda, a year round swimmer and advocate of the salamander wants other alternatives to be considered. A meeting has been scheduled between Roy Minton and Roger Duncan.

Dorothy Richter, 3901 Avenue G spoke about the flooding of the pool not being addressed especially about cleaning the pool after a flood.

At this time Mary Ruth Holder read the copy of the draft resolution into the minutes.

WHEREAS, portions of Barton Springs Pool must be cleaned periodically to ensure the safety of the public using the pool; and

WHEREAS, in the past, the cleaning methods used by Parks and Recreation Department staff required draining Barton Springs Pool and closing the pool to public use for a significant time during cleaning; and

WHEREAS, in the past, the cleaning methods used by Parks and Recreation Department staff that required draining Barton Springs Pool were called into question by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in that federal agency's efforts to enforce the federal Endangered Species Act, 16 U.S.C. S 1531 et seq., with respect to the Barton Springs Salamander; and

WHEREAS, the City of Austin has obtained a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allowing, among other things, the Parks and Recreation Department staff to clean Barton Springs Pool by using cleaning methods and equipment that will protect the habitat of the Barton Springs Salamander; and

WHEREAS, the Parks and Recreation Department has located diver-operated, water-powered underwater cleaning equipment (the Armada Systems "Algae Killer") that:

- *can be used without draining or dropping the water level of Barton Springs Pool;
- *does not use chemicals, lubricants or additives;
- *can be operated while the public is using the pool; and
- *will protect the habitat of the Barton Springs Salamander,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Parks and Recreation Board recommends that the Austin City Council approve the purchase and use of the Armada Systems "Algae Killer" cleaning system equipment for the purpose of cleaning Barton Springs Pool.

This resolution will be for consideration at the next board meeting. A resolution on the construction of the sidewalk for the Barton Springs Pool will also be for consideration.

Recommend Approval of Construction of Leonard Boat Dock and Deck at 2801 River Hills Drive, File No. SP-99-0023DS.

Recommend Approval of Construction of Swisher Boat Dock at 1216 Bruton Springs Road, File No. SP-99-0022DS

Recommend Approval of Construction of Furgerson Boat Dock and Deck at 3011 Brass Buttons Trail Drive, File No. SP-99-0024DS

Jeff Francell informed the board these three boat docks were reviewed by the Navigation Committee and all meet the requirements of the Land Development Code. With this serving as a motion Rocky Medrano seconded. The vote in favor was 5-0-1 (Holder, Medrano, Francell, Kim, Cruz-Torres) (Carter)

Make a Recommendation Regarding Gas Pipeline Access Across Bull Creek

Make a Recommendation Regarding William Cannon Drive License Agreement

Elaine Carter informed the board that both items were reviewed at the Land and Facilities meeting on February 1st. The gas pipeline project is a 3' deep trench across the Bull Creek Greenbelt and a 25' wide use area. Revegetation will be required.

Stuart Strong informed the board the license agreement would raise the road and bridge out of the floodplain, increase the width from two to six traffic lanes and extend the road from Pleasant Valley Rd. to Scenic Loop. The project crosses the Onion Creek Greenbelt east of the Onion Creek Bridge. Sidewalks will be placed on both sides of the road. The new road will provide improved access to a tract of land planned for acquisition for a soccer complex.

Elaine Carter moved that the board recommend to Council to approve the William Cannon Drive License Agreement and the Gas Pipeline Access Across Bull Creek. The vote in favor was 6-0-0 (Holder, Carter, Medrano, Francell, Kim, Cruz-Torres).

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The 1997-98 Annual Report was distributed for review.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs Committee will meet Tuesday, February 16, 1999.

ITEMS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

The Parks Department has won the TRAPS Texas Gold Medal Award for having the finest park system in a Texas city with a population of 400,000 or more.

A supplement to the original bid for the Riverboat concession has gone out.

Construction on the Carver Museum is scheduled within the next two years.

The Aquatics Advisory Board supports the concept of a future diving well.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.