

**COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY  
MEETING MINUTES**

February 24, 2016

THE AUSTIN CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY CONVENED IN A REGULAR MEETING ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016 AT 2PM IN THE BOARDS & COMMISSIONS ROOM, FIRST FLOOR, ROOM 1101, CITY HALL 301 W. 2<sup>ND</sup> STREET.

**Chair Leslie Pool called the committee meeting to order at 2:11 p.m.**

**Committee Members in Attendance:**

Chair Leslie Pool  
Vice Chair Delia Garza  
Mayor Pro Tem Kathie Tovo  
Council Member Don Zimmerman  
Environmental Commission Chair Mary Gay Maxwell  
Parks & Recreation Board Chair Jane Rivera  
Water and Wastewater Commission, Annie Kellough

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes from the January 27, 2016 meeting were approved on this 24<sup>th</sup> day of February on Garza's motion, Zimmerman's second on a 4-0 vote.

**2. CITIZEN COMMUNICATION GENERAL**

Scott Johnson

**ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION**

3. Briefing and possible action on what other cities have done to implement neighborhood food-bank co-ops and mobile farmers markets and recommendations on what the City of Austin can do moving forward to be able to incorporate them.

No action taken.

4. Briefing and possible action on the status, scope of work, and deliverables of the Parkland Events Task Force.

In a unanimous 4-0 vote, Zimmerman moved, and Garza seconded, a motion to extend the deadline for the final report with recommendations to be completed by August 31, 2016 and presented by the Parkland Events Task Force to the committee on September 28, 2016.

5. Briefing on measures to improve the care, maintenance, and planting of public trees.

No action taken.

6. Briefing and possible action on Parks and Recreation Department's revised proposal for expenditure of FY16 block grant funding, and funding options for park improvement projects.

No action taken. Chair Pool directed PARD staff to return to the April 26, 2016 committee meeting to present best practices in regards to lighting in parks.

7. Discussion and possible action regarding a resolution directing the City Manager to convene stakeholders to develop a conceptual plan that identifies a vision for the streets, parks and plazas around the MetroRail Downtown Station.

In a 3-1 vote with Zimmerman off the dais, Chair Pool moved, and Garza seconded, a motion to send to City Council with changes presented by MPT Tovo a resolution directing the City Manager to convene stakeholders to develop a conceptual plan that identifies a vision for the streets, parks and plazas around the MetroRail Downtown Station.

## 8. FUTURE ITEMS

Discussion of future Items.

## ADJURN

Chair Leslie Pool adjourned the meeting at 4:40 PM.

THE CITY OF AUSTIN IS COMMITTED TO COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT. REASONABLE MODIFICATIONS AND EQUAL ACCESS TO COMMUNICATIONS WILL BE PROVIDED UPON REQUEST. FOR ASSISTANCE, PLEASE CALL (512) 974-2805 OR RELAY TEXAS #711.



## **COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT**

### **OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE**

**Date:** February 24, 2016

**Agenda Item #:** 3

**Agenda Item:** Briefing and possible action on what other cities have done to implement neighborhood food-bank co-ops and mobile farmers markets and recommendations on what the City of Austin can do moving forward to be able to incorporate them.

**Vote 3-1**

**Sponsors/Department:** CM Garza/ Office of Sustainability

#### **Summary of Discussion**

- Edwin Marty, Food Policy Manager with the City's Office of Sustainability began his presentation by explaining the FY15-16 Health and Human Services Department (HHSD) funded initiatives, which include healthy food retail, community and school-based farm markets, and mobile farm markets.
- Funding has been allocated in the 2015-2016 budget to support a continuum of efforts to fresh health food.
- The Office of Sustainability is currently working on writing RFPs to support a healthy food retails, otherwise known as healthy corner stores. Staff is also negotiating a contract with a local non-profit to collect definitive information about the impact of the funding of access to healthy food. Contracts would be executed no later than April 2016.
- The Office of Sustainability is also expanding the pilot community and school-based farmers markets with multiple markets throughout Austin to provide access to a fresh and affordable food product.
- Staff is also working with local non-profits to develop a module farm stand that would go to various locations throughout south Austin along with a feasibility study from Texas Tech University that's identifying where the best locations would be. This program is scheduled for implementation by summer 2017.
- CM Garza asked about the prioritization of communities. Marty explained that staff is working with local non-profits, such as Go Austin! Vamos Austin!, to identify where the needs are.
- CM Garza asked for public-private examples of grocery store partnerships in the U.S. Staff explained that Philadelphia hosts a successful example but reminded the committee that what works in other cities may not always work for Austin. Some of the challenges in Austin is understanding what the barriers and assets are and how the city can build on

those.

**Public Comments**

None

**Direction**

The item was scheduled for the Council meeting on February 25, 2016.

**Recommendation**

None



**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**Date:** February 24, 2016

**Agenda Item #:** 4

**Agenda Item:** Briefing and possible action on the status, scope of work, and deliverables of the Parkland Events Task Force.

**Vote** 4-0

**Sponsors/Department:** Parks and Recreation Department,

**Presenters:** James Russell and David King, Co-chairs of the Parkland Events Task Force;

**Summary of Discussion**

- The Parkland Events Task Force was created in March 2015 but a quorum was not appointed until much later and as a result the Task Force did not begin meeting until August 2015.
- The Task Force now consists of 17 members who are quite diverse and include citizens and neighborhood representatives from all over the city.
- The objectives of the group in relation to parkland events are inventory, number, size, fees, policies, and scope of events that impact neighborhoods, businesses, and infrastructure.
- Thus far the Task Force has created an inventory of events at parks including the number of events, participants, and days that each park is unavailable for general park use. A subcommittee has been created to better address costs and fees of these needs, including post-event issues and road closures.
- The Task Force has also analyzed alternative public and private venues along with identifying four existing publicly owned potential park sites; developed inventory of public and private venues; and created an additional subcommittee to develop specific recommendations for each potential site.
- The Task Force plans to bring forth recommendations regarding the limits of events in terms of the quantity and size; the impact on surrounding areas and infrastructure; fees and policies; alternative public and private venues; and new and legacy events. The

recommendations within the final report will consist of a combination of recommendations from the subcommittees and input collected from public meetings.

- In a unanimous 4-0 vote, Zimmerman moved, and Garza seconded, a motion to extend the deadline for the final report with recommendations to be completed by August 31, 2016 and presented by the Parkland Events Task Force to the committee on September 28, 2016.

### **Speakers**

- None

### **Direction**

The Committee directed staff to submit their recommendation to full Council for approval.

### **Recommendation**

The Committee recommended an extension of the deadline for the Parkland Events Task Force's final report with report recommendations to be completed by August 31, 2016 and presented to the Open Space, Environment and Sustainability committee on September 28, 2016.



**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**Date:** February 24, 2016

**Agenda Item #:** 5

**Agenda Item:** Briefing on measures to improve the care, maintenance, and planting of public trees.

**Vote** No vote was taken.

**Sponsors/Department:** Development Services Department

**Presenters:** Michael Embesi, Division Manager, Development Services Department, and Emily King, Acting Urban Forester, Development Services Department.

**Summary of Discussion**

- In 2013, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) worked with the Texas Forest Service and selected The City of Austin to have an Urban Forest Assessment performed. This assessment has been completed and included the urban forest in its entirety.
- In June 26, 2013, City Council adopted a resolution (CR 20130627-070) directing the City Manager to assess the value and benefits of public trees; evaluate the current level of care for public trees; consider tree-related service delivery issues; and report findings and recommendations.
- Findings discussed included the value, benefits, and replacement value of public trees; level of care for public trees and identified gap in funding; and tree related service delivery for continual maintenance.
- Recommendations discussed included organizational placement of the Urban Forester; inter-department alignment for city-wide urban forestry coordination; and develop a plan to close the funding gap.
- Functions and responsibilities of the City Arborist program and the Urban Forester program were created in the early 1980s and the programs use to be in two different departments. As a result of the recent analysis, both programs have been combined under the Community Forestry Division within the Development Services Department.
- Ms. King shared that the Austin's Urban Forest Plan: A Master Plan for Public Property has been adopted and implementation is ongoing. The Forestry Leadership Team has

been created to implement plan, update analysis that pertains to level of service, develop recommendations, formalize metrics to report forestry activities, and coordinate with other tree related programs within the City.

- The Interdepartmental Tree Working Group has also been created and is primarily used as a communication tool amongst various programs to share what they are doing and challenges they are facing.
- The Imagine Austin Green Infrastructure Priority Program has also been created and this group looks at the broader spectrum in regards to public land management. This group is tasked with developing and implementing a unified, comprehensive management of all City of Austin lands.
- Lara Schuman, Urban Forestry Program Manager with the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) explained that the Cemetery Master Plan has been adopted and a comprehensive inventory of trees in the cemeteries has been completed. Further adding that the current budget for cemetery tree care is not sufficient enough to maintain the trees to the level of care outlined in the master plan.
- Marty Stump, Assistant Director with PARD explained that PARD has funding in place this fiscal year to begin a city-driven master plan for the Walter E. Long Park.
- CM Zimmerman stressed the importance of including the Balcones Canyonlands Preserve (BCP) when looking at the entire urban forest canopy to better manage the possible dangers with wildfires.

### **Speakers**

- Ross Smith

### **Direction**

### **Recommendation**

There was no recommendation to the full Council.



**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

**Date:** February 24, 2016

**Agenda Item #:** 6

**Agenda Item:** Briefing and possible action on Parks and Recreation Department's revised proposal for expenditure of FY16 block grant funding, and funding options for park improvement projects.

**Vote** No vote was taken.

**Sponsors/Department:** Parks and Recreation Department (PARC)

**Presenters:** Marty Stump, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation Department

**Summary of Discussion**

- \$1.15M added to CIP funding as “Block Grant” for park improvements in FY16. PARC proposes Block Grant funding to design and construct innovative nature-inspired play environments at multiple sites as continuation of on-going playscape replacement and enhancement program.
- The 2015 Playground Assessment report completed in 2015 has become a guiding set of projects as PARC moves forward. Additional supporting policy documents include the 2012 Imagine Austin Plan and the 2011 Urban Parks Workgroup reports.
- The revised project list includes improvements to the following parks: Odom School Park, Lucy Read School Park, Kealing School Park, Parque Zaragosa Neighborhood Park, Perry Neighborhood Park, and Mountain View Neighborhood Park. Pending formal approval from The Austin Parks Foundation, they have agreed to fund \$200,000 of park improvements. If this is approved, Joslin, Norman School Park, and Onion Creek Metro Park will be added to the project list.
- PARC’s project selection criterion was extensive. Some stakeholder recommendations will be addressed in some of the projects. For recommendations received from stakeholders that will not be addressed due to budget constraints, PARC plans to continue to work with their stakeholders to address concerns in the future.

**Speakers**

Angelica Robles

Mariano DiVincenzo  
Cynthia Rodriguez

**Direction**

Chair Pool directed PARD staff to return to the April 26, 2016 committee meeting to present best practices in regards to lighting in parks.

**Recommendation**

There was no recommendation to the full Council



**COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT**  
**COMMITTEE ON OPEN SPACE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**

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### **Speakers**

- None

### **Direction**

The Committee directed staff to submit their recommendation to full Council for approval.

### **Recommendation**

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