

RESOLUTION NO. 20210930-109

WHEREAS, the 351-acre Zilker Metropolitan Park is considered Austin's most beloved park, attracting visitors from across the City and beyond; and

WHEREAS, Zilker Park is home to a variety of recreation opportunities, facilities and special events, including a beloved miniature train traditionally enjoyed by thousands of individuals and families per year; and

WHEREAS, the twelve-passenger Zilker Park Eagle miniature train made its first trip in Zilker Park on April 22, 1961, and was subsequently named the Zilker Zephyr after the City facilitated a City-wide naming contest; and

WHEREAS, in February 1997, the 72-passenger family amusement ride known as the Zilker Zephyr, operated by Texas Special Company, began its route around a defined path within Zilker Park; and

WHEREAS, in June 2018, Resolution No. 20180628-072 created the Zilker Park Working Group, which recommended to City Council in June 2019 that the City begin a Vision Plan process for Zilker Park, which may consider the family amusement train ride path; and

WHEREAS, in May 2019, a rainstorm caused severe erosion to an embankment supporting part of the train's track, causing it to close temporarily; and

WHEREAS, in January 2020, the Parks and Recreation Department was not able to come to an agreement with Texas Special Company for a new contract for the continued operation of the train; and

WHEREAS, in February 2020, Resolution No. 20200220-046 directed the City Manager to negotiate and execute an agreement between the City and the Austin Parks Foundation (APF) to allow APF to procure a new train vendor and to oversee the operations of the train; and

WHEREAS, the Resolution also directed all net proceeds were to be distributed to non-profit organizations operating within and around Zilker Park via a transparent financial reporting process developed by APF and PARD until such time as the Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan recommendations for future train operations could be implemented; and

WHEREAS, in September 2020, APF launched a contest to name the train, resulting in the selection of the historic Zilker Eagle name; and

WHEREAS, the Austin Parks Foundation will operate as the temporary concessionaire of the Zilker Eagle for the term specified in the agreement or until such time as the Zilker Metropolitan Park Vision Plan recommendations for future train operations are implemented, whichever occurs sooner; and

WHEREAS, the planning process for the Vision Plan is underway and is anticipated to continue through 2021, with possible plan adoption in 2022; and

WHEREAS, erosion repair and the resulting train track realignment are underway, with Zilker Eagle operations expected to begin in the final quarter of 2021; **NOW, THEREFORE,**

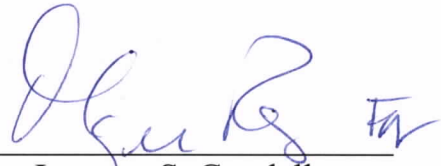
BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The City Manager is directed to include language in the PARD/APF Zilker Eagle agreement that APF will distribute all net proceeds from the Zilker Eagle to nonprofits supporting parks across the City in a transparent and equitable manner,

such proceeds to be used for park system improvements, upgrades, amenities, and maintenance. Funding distribution should ensure sufficient funding is available to support what is needed for Zilker Park to ensure the Zilker Eagle is sustainably maintained and is able to generate funds to serve the overall City parks system.

ADOPTED: September 30, 2021

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk