



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Special Meeting

April 27, 2011

5:30 p.m. 10th Floor Conference Room
2 Civic Center Plaza, El Paso, TX

MINUTES

Members Present: 5

David Turner, James Tolbert, Jennifer Barr-Ardovino, Frederick Caldwell, Janet Selzer

Members Absent: 3

Brian Wickstrom, Carlos Bombach, Ralph Cloud

Member Vacancies: 1

Staff Present: Nanette Smejkal, Parks and Recreation Director, Richard Garcia, Parks Development Manager, Shamori Whitt, Smart Growth Planner, Fred Lopez, Comprehensive Plan Manager, Planning and Economic Development Department, Lucy Calderon, Recording Secretary

1. Agenda Item # 1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair at 6:00 p.m.

No quorum until Janet Selzer arrived at 6:00 p.m.

2. Agenda Item # 2. Call to the Public (for items not on the agenda)

None

3. Agenda Item #3. Discussion and Action: Review proposed changes to the Landscape Ordinance, El Paso Municipal Code 18.46

Fred Lopez, Comprehensive Plan Manager for the Planning and Economic Development Department, presented a PowerPoint on existing Ordinance, proposed changes and recommendations made by several departments and Open Space Advisory Board and Tree Subcommittee.

Discussion ensued on the differences between Albuquerque, Tucson and El Paso ordinances. Further meetings will be held with commercial developers, stakeholders, Chamber of Commerce, and City Plan Commission before being presented to City Council. A chart will be drafted showing the recommendations made by the different departments and/or advisory groups.

Nanette Smejkal, Parks and Recreation Director, emphasized the importance of the Tree Subcommittee and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board endorsing or recommending tree issues as charged by City Council.

Jim Tolbert stated that the Tree Subcommittee had two meetings to review the proposed changes. The Tree Subcommittee had suggestions which have been incorporated into the PowerPoint. Recommendations by the Tree Subcommittee meeting on April 26, 2011 and recommendations by the Open Space Advisory Board are similar.

Fred Lopez discussed other upcoming ordinances that relate to the Landscape Ordinance such as Sign Ordinance based on Smart Growth. The Ordinance would reduce size of signs on neighborhood roads and small roadways. Shopping center signs would not be affected. Planning is working on modifying the design of roadways and parkways for street trees, pedestrians and cyclist. Scenic Corridor Ordinance would be a new Ordinance that would identify roadways that merit additional standards such as more landscape requirements or more native vegetation, example would be Transmountain. Water Harvesting is in preliminary stage with Engineering Department taking the lead along with the Water Utility.

Nanette Smejkal asked what was the reasoning in the definitions and recommendations to only go with deciduous trees with the exception when it's a tree project. Street, frontage and parking lot trees are drafted as only deciduous. Fred Lopez stated that after looking at the approved tree list there are some evergreens that are appropriate. Deciduous reference will be removed and will be replaced by reference to tree list.

Fred Lopez clarified that the landscape changes affect only frontage areas not residential back yards.

Jennifer Barr-Ardovino asked for clarification on commercial property and even residential property with curb cuts on driveways where 1-tree every 30' are required. Ms. Ardovino suggests wording should say in landscape areas or permeable areas excluding curb cuts or driveways. Fred Lopez stated that it would exempt driveways but clarification needed for curb cuts. For 10' area, not required to be on center, trees can be placed within 20' area.

Planning will show the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board how the changes will be presented to City Council on the next meeting on May 9, 2011, or when available.

Nanette Smejkal pointed out Article VI. Street Trees, paragraph B, recommended edits to say "Street trees shall be selected from the species on the approved plant list" because there is only one list. Second sentence repeats. Maintained by, should be eliminated because definitions make it clear. Deciduous under definitions should be clarified. David Turner suggested "Street trees shall be selected from the appropriate column of the approved plant list." (Everyone agreed)

Jennifer Ardovino asked Fred Lopez to go over 75% item, why was that included. Fred stated that Albuquerque believes it is a good standard and the industry learns how to calculate, setting standards. Plans examiner at the City spoke against the 75%, feeling the designers would have a problem meeting the regulations. Mr. Lopez stated that the community can be educated and applications can be changed. In Albuquerque, landscape plans are submitted drawing calculations based on x number of years at the maturity level of plant. Making sure at the end the plant covers 75% of area. Issue hasn't been resolved. Jim Tolbert stated that the Tree Subcommittee had no consensus on this item other than go ahead with 75% and later tweak the wording.

Shamori Whitt stated that there will be a round two for ordinance amendments at a later date.

Motion by Jim Tolbert to accept changes as recommended by Tree Subcommittee. Second by Jennifer Barr-Ardovino.

Fred Lopez asked if there were any amendments that needed to be made by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Jim Tolbert stated that he would like to go with recommendations made by the Tree Subcommittee.

Nanette Smejkal questions the PowerPoint columns; are the recommendations a combination of staff and committee. Fred Lopez states that the last columns of recommendations are both staff and committee recommendations.

David Turner stated that the Tree Subcommittee decisions were unanimous.

Motion rephrased by Jim Tolbert to accept changes as recommended by Tree Subcommittee and to recommend changes to City Council by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Second by Jennifer Barr-Ardovino. Motion passed (unanimous).

Fred Lopez asked if this board would like a representative of the Tree Subcommittee to work on the Water Harvesting Ordinance on a regular basis as the Ordinance is drafted. David Turner would like to discuss at the next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board as an agenda item about representation. Shamori Whitt explained that it is uncertain if a new group will be developed with the Tree Subcommittee as an addition or Planning will be working directly with the Tree Subcommittee itself assisting in the new ordinance. This Ordinance will be Water Harvesting/Low Impact Development as per water utility.

4. Agenda Item #4. Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Minutes submitted by Lucy Calderon, Senior Secretary