



## PARKS& RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

August 12, 2013@ 5:30 pm

Pat O'Rourke Recreation Center  
901 N. Virginia, El Paso, TX

### MINUTES

Members Present: 6

Dave Turner, Jennifer Barr-Ardovino, Ralph Cloud, Francoise A. Feliberti, Deanne De La Cruz, Theresa Welch Fordham, Adam Gurrola

Members Absent: 3

Frederick Caldwell and Ana Roush,

Member Vacancies:0

Staff Present: Tracy Novak, Interim Director; Paula Powell, Sports Manager; Steven Lunsford, General Services Land Management Superintendent; Victor Rivera, General Services Facilities Superintendent; Joe Rodriguez, Special Programs Manager; Monica Lara, Recreation Program Supervisor; Richard Garcia, Park Planning & Development Manager; Marci Tuck, Open Space, Trails, and Park Coordinator; Ana Quijano, Administrative Assistant.

1. Agenda Item #1. Meeting Called to Order  
Dave Turner, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.
2. Approval of Minutes: July 8, 2013  
Jennifer Barr-Ardovino made a Motion to accept the Minutes as written. Theresa Welch Fordham seconded the motion. Motion was carried unanimous.
3. Call to Public (for items no on the agenda)  
None
4. Agenda Item #4. Parks & Recreation Calendar and Newsletter: Tracy Novak, Interim Director, commented on the calendar of events for August. He noted the Art in the Park event that will be coming up in September and mentioned Melodies at the Park's two remaining events for the month of August. He also highlighted the Dog Day Swimming event scheduled for September 7 and 8 at Nations Tobin Pool. He explained that with the pool season ending, the water from the pool is saved for 1 day for this event prior to draining it. Tracy also commented that the San Juan Center is celebrating their 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Dave Turner, Chair, commented reading in the newspaper about the City's hiring freeze and inquired whether this will affect the director's position. Tracy explained that the City usually has a hiring freeze several months prior to the end of the fiscal year in order to stabilize the budget. Once the new fiscal

year begins, the departments are able to hire again. Tracy further explained that in reference to the Director's position, the funding for the full time director position has been withheld from the budget until the City Manager determines the process she wishes to follow to fill the position. Once the determination has been made, the funding will be restored however he has been given a time period of six months before recruitment or hiring happens.

Dave Turner also welcomed new board member Adam Gurrola, representing District 2.

5. Agenda Item #5 - Discussion: General Services Report on Maintenance Activities

Steve Lunsford, Land Management Superintendent provided the following updates:

- a) Land Management has finally been able to get caught up with the mowing vendor and they will be back on schedule this week. Mowing has been affected by the significant rain experienced in El Paso over the last month.
- b) Maxicom Software is currently being installed by IT, and all of the weather stations are able to communicate. Steve is still working with AgriLife to be able to view the weather stations on the ET Network and once the installation of the Maxicom Software has been completed, they will have the ability to see all of the weather stations' activities on-line.
- c) He also noted that they are at the end of this fiscal year so their funding is currently on hold as they close out this year's budget.

Victor Rivera, Facilities Maintenance Superintendent, reported that 100 feet of gas line had to be replaced at the Veteran's Recreation Center due to a minor gas leak outside of the building. He also commented that they replaced two 3" back flows at Armijo Center. Tracy thanked Victor for coordinating with the Parks Department to change out the back flows on a Sunday to minimize the impact on the public.

Victor also commented that they have a fulltime crew assigned to outside lighting repair, which has reduced the amount of complaints they were receiving. Jennifer Barr-Ardovino inquired on the process to report problems at parks and for handling customer complaints. Tracy informed her that when the Parks Department receives complaints, the staff will generate a work order and submit it to Victor and Steve via e-mail. They in turn will issue the work orders to their field crews for handling.

6. Agenda Item #6 - Discussion & Action: Appeal of Suspension: Abel Herrera for one year for violation of the City of El Paso Parks and Recreation Department's Behavior Management Policy

Jennifer Barr, Chair of the Grievance Subcommittee provided a brief summary and reported that the subcommittee upheld the one-year suspensions for both parties.

Dave Turner, Chair, called for a motion to affirm the Grievance Subcommittee's recommendations.

Jennifer Barr made a motion to uphold the one-year suspension for Abel Herrera for violating the City of El Paso Parks & Recreation Department's Behavior Management Policy. Motion was seconded by Theresa Welch Fordham. Motion carried unanimously.

7. Agenda Item #7 - Discussion & Action: Appeal of Suspension: Robert Mata for one year for violation of the City of El Paso Parks and Recreation Department's Behavior Management Policy

Jennifer Barr made a motion to uphold the one-year suspension for Robert Mata for violating the City of El Paso Parks & Recreation Department's Behavior Management Policy. Theresa Welch Fordham seconded the Motion. Motion carried unanimously.

8. Agenda Item #8 - Presentation and Discussion: Eastside Sport Complex (presentation by Richard Garcia, Planning and Development Manager)

Richard Garcia reported that in April, City Council approved the site for the Eastside Sports Complex. The site is located at Montwood, John Hayes, and Rich Beem Streets. He showed a map of the land study and highlighted the site boundaries and project areas. He also commented that the site is located outside the City limits and the developer has initiated the process for annexation. He further commented that a bond of \$10 million was issued for development of the site.

Discussion ensued regarding the rapid growth and development of the eastside and areas outside the city limits. Richard commented that one of the areas of concern is that all of the development occurring outside the city's limits and annexation plan are not subject to City Ordinances. There is concern that the County has no Ordinance or design standards for their parks and as a result, a lot of the development going in does not include sufficient park and recreational areas. If the City is requested to take over a county park, the City has to renovate the parks to meet City Codes. He recommended placing an item on the agenda of a future Park Board meeting to discuss a resolution between the City and County on the coordination of park design standard.

Dave Turner, Chair, agreed that this issue should be placed on the agenda for discussion at a future Parks Advisory board meeting.

Francoise Feliberti requested information on the Annexation agreement for the park. She expressed concern that since the public and Park Board were not involved in the Annexation agreement process, the neighborhood parks were going to disappear from the residential development. Richard noted that City Council had decided on this site because they would not need to purchase the land and agreed to other concessions, ultimately directing the Parks Department to build a regional park on this site,

Francoise also inquired on the number of turf fields the complex would have, and Richard informed her that they are currently still working on the Annexation process and this could take between 5 to 6 months. Once this has been completed, they will also need to work on the street infrastructure prior to working on the design.

9. Agenda Item #9 -Discussion: Independent League Rule Violation-City Reciprocity (Tracy Novak, Interim Director) Tracy reported back to the Board on a question that was brought forward during last month's Board meeting on whether the City could honor the Independent Leagues' suspensions for rule violations by not allowing these individuals to participate in City leagues. He reported that he checked with the Legal Department and confirmed there is a due process that the City follows for violation of city rules and there is a penalty matrix in place. Since the Independent Leagues have their own set of rules for violations and penalties, the City does not have a due process for handling their violations. Therefore, the Legal Department advised that the City is not able to reciprocate in honoring their suspensions because the City has no jurisdiction over independent league rules.

10. Agenda Item #10 Presentation and Discussion: Analysis on Recreation Classes and Cancellation (presentation by Joe Rodriguez, Recreation Manager) Tracy Novak explained that an issue was brought

up during last board meeting in reference to the cancellation of recreational classes. Joe Rodriguez and Monica Lara were present to provide an analysis of the recreational classes offered.

Joe Rodriguez presented an overview of the leisure services offered at the recreation centers and emphasized their motto “for fitness, for health, for life, and for fun.” He named a few of the leisure instructional classes (karate, Zumba, and guitar) that are offered. He also commented that the purpose of these classes is to enhance the quality of life for citizens and to provide neighborhood based recreational options. The activities are done by structure (clubs meeting at the facility), volunteer based, partnerships (community college), and fee based. Joe went on to give a breakdown of the fee based classes. He also commented that class cancellations occur due to lack of participants, instructors, space availability, or classes taking place at EPCC. He also noted that prime time is also an issue because it is difficult to plan different classes between 5:30 pm to 7 pm, which is when parents and children can attend.

He also discussed several initiatives underway for 2014: Changing the operation of the leisure classes from a one person operation to involving the recreation center directors to plan and set up classes at their centers; changing classes to a monthly basis vs. per session, which will help to keep instructors and to negotiate better instructor fees; reinstating the BTOP classes and charging a small fee; increasing the promotion of the classes offered at centers.

Theresa Welch Fordham commented that her grandson has an outstanding karate instructor at Marty Robbins Park; however no ballet classes were available for her granddaughter to take at this center. The only class she found was at the Gary Del Palacio center however the class was being taught in Spanish even though she was guaranteed that it was a bilingual class. She noted that there seems to be a limited amount of recreational classes on the eastside for children. She recommended that more classes be offered because it helps to keep children out of trouble when their involved in activities. She inquired on whether there was a way of having some of these classes offered as an after school program at the schools. Joe informed her that they do offer free after school programs at the recreation centers and in several schools.

Francoise Feliberti commented that the problem is that the recreational centers on the eastside are too far from some of the schools. Joe responded that they are working on providing more classes on the east side and they are also working with the schools to allow them the use of their facilities for afterschool programs. He also noted that they do have agreements with EPISD and YISD however they don't have an agreement with the SISD other than the use of their facilities.

Tracy Novak commented that the Parks Department and the school districts have established better working relationships in allowing each other the use of their facilities. He also commented that the department was recently contacted by Del Valle Elementary School in the YISD about setting up programs at their school. He noted that it will take time to normalize the relationship between the City and the school districts. Soon both entities will recognize the importance of each other for delivery of services.

Tracy also announced that Monica Lara will be leaving the City next week and recognized her for her dedication and commitment in handling the recreation programs.

11. Agenda Item 11 Discussion and Action: Project Implementation Plan for a) Open Space, b) Trails and c) Trailheads (3 separate listings) using the 2012 Quality of Life funds designated for those categories. (Presentation by Marci Tuck, Open Space, Trails and Park Coordinator)

Tracy explained that Marci is going to give a presentation for recommendations on the project lists for Trailheads and Open Space.

Marci Tuck explained that the 2012 QOL bonds provide funds within the Parks and Recreation projects for trail related projects. Once the bonds were passed, these funds were divided into 3 categories: \$5 million for open space, \$2 million for trailheads, and \$6 million for trails. She was tasked with creating a project list and priority list for each category. Funding for these categories were divided over 10 years so the trailhead projects would receive \$200,000 per year for the next 10 years.

Marci commented that she has already gone before the Open Space Advisory Board (OSAB) for their approval and recommendations on the trailheads and trails project lists since they were key in establishing the trailheads at Franklin Mountain State Park. She noted that the project lists and the OSAB recommendations were included in the Park board packets and the next step is for the board to approve and make their recommendations. The final step is to present these lists, along with both board's recommendations, to Mayor and Council for their approval.

Marci also showed a map of the 3 targeted areas for purchasing land for open space projects:

- 1) East Franklin Mountain properties from Honda Pass south to the tip of the Franklin Mountains.
- 2) Avispa Canyon near the quarry on the northwest side of the Franklin Mountains
- 3) General properties along the Rio Grande River from the central area downtown all the way to Socorro, which is the Mission Valley area.

Dave Turner inquired whether other areas of space would be considered should they become available for purchase. Marci responded that there is flexibility in considering other sites outside the targeted areas.

Marci briefly went over the Trailheads project list, the trails project list, and the map that showed the trail/trailhead plan. She noted that the projects on the first tier of the trailhead projects list (subtotaling \$210,000) were the projects determined by City Council and the state park to be primary key projects. She also noted that the Roundhouse Trailhead project in Northeast was added to the list by OSAB. In reference to the trails list, she highlighted the paddling trail project along the Rio Grande River and Valley Creek.

Theresa Welch Fordham made a motion to approve the Project Implementation Plan for Open Space, Trails, and Trailheads funded by the 2012 QOL bonds. Motion was seconded by Deanna De La Cruz. Motion passed unanimously.

12. Agenda Item 12 - Reports on Recent Activity: Tracy Novak, Interim Director, commented that the information for the items listed below was included in the board's packet. No further comments were made.

- a) Recent City Council Agenda Items List
- b) Upcoming Committee Meeting Lists
- c) Land Acquisition List
- d) Parks & Recreation Construction Project List

13. Discussion and Action: Subcommittee Assignments (as needed). The board proposed the following changes to the subcommittees:

Park Naming Subcommittee: Nominated Theresa Fordham Welch as the Chair, and appointed Adam Gurrola as a regular member.

Grievance Subcommittee: Nominated Jennifer Barr-Ardovino as the Chair, appointed Adam as a regular committee member, and appointed Theresa Welch Fordham and Deanna De La Cruz as alternate members.

Jennifer Barr-Ardovino made a motion to approve the changes to the subcommittees as stated. Theresa Welch Fordham seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

14. Discussion: Identify Items for Future Agendas:

- 1) Election of Officers to appoint a vice chair for the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
- 2) Discussion regarding design guidelines for park projects outside the city limits

Adam Gurrola inquired on the protocol for notifying individuals that are suspended from playing sports due to rule violations about the Grievance Subcommittee meeting. He explained that he found out that only the coaches are notified and not the individual. He asked that these individuals be notified so they have an opportunity to attend the Grievance Subcommittee meetings.

15. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:19 pm

Theresa Fordham Welch made a motion to adjourn. Jennifer Barr-Ardovino seconded the motion.

Minutes prepared by Ana Quijano, Administrative Assistant