



MINUTES

PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, September 6, 2005
6:00 p.m.
Memorial Park Senior Center
1800 Byron Street

Members Present

Bernie Sargent, Chairman
Robert Gonzales
Eileen Karlruher
Alma Wilson
Daniel Delahaye
Kelly Duke
Salvador Quintanilla
Walt Phillips
Jose Luis Gutierrez
Sal Quintanilla
Alejandro Sanchez

Members Absent

Charlotte Johnson
Yolanda Cordova
Olga Holguin
Henry Stokes
Julio Norman
Cherilyn Dorsey
Mitch Doblado
Alice Davis

Staff Present

Dr. Norman C. Merrifield
Lucy Martinez
Doug Barnes
Joe Rodriguez
Pete Dunavant
Sandy Rodriguez
Paula Powell

Others Present:

Juan Contreras/P+3

1. **Meeting called to order** by Chairman, Bernie Sargent at 6:10 p.m.
2. **Motion to approve minutes of August 2, 2005; Motion made by Alejandro Sanchez, seconded by Walt Phillips; all in favor; motion passed unanimously.**
3. **Petitions & Communicatons from the Public Sector:**
 - a) Matt Carrol from the Friends of the Arroyo/Arroyo Park Partners updated the Board on activities at Arroyo Park. There is a great deal of unwelcomed vegetation due to the unusual amounts of precipitation. One of the concerns is the redesigning/rebuilding the intersection at Virginia and Robinson on the north side overlooking the area with the most diverse indigenous plant life. The Franklin Mountains Wilderness Coalition and Sierra Club have sent letters of concern. The south side of Arroyo Park was filled with tumbleweed and volunteers have cleared the area. Another area of concern is the El Paso Open Space Reserve at the junction of Fred Wilson Road and Alabama. It is being rebuilt and the work is on the side adjacent to the Open Space Reserve. Contractors may try to use the natural areas as a temporary staging site for materials and heavy machinery but the resulting damage could take nature decades to repair.
 - b) Walt Phillips, Park Board member, requested the Board's support to have the Park's Health Walk on Veteran's Day, November 11, 2005. The parade, Youth's Salute to Veterans, begins at 10 a.m. and ends by noon and features kids from 7th grade on up. Only youth are in this parade. Food will be served at noon. Joe Rodriguez, Recreation Services Manager agreed to coordinate with Walt Phillips, which was supported by the board.

- c) Bernie Sargent, Chairman of the Park Board, reminded the Park Board members that terms expire October 14, 2005 for the present board. Contact City Council to be renewed or make a suggestion for someone to replace you.
- d) Dr. Merrifield, Director for the Parks and Recreation Department announced that a letter was received from the Texas Forrester Service along with a \$10,000 Urban Partnership Grant. The grant will allow the parks department to hire forestry interns from NMSU for a comprehensive tree inventory.
- e) Mark Mattys, Executive Director for American Red Cross sent a letter requesting a waiver of fees for the Hilos De Plata facility to do CPR training for approximately 250 people. Dr. Merrifield asked the board for their support before presenting this request to City Council. Board supports this request.
- f) Dr. Merrifield commended the recreation staff and land managers for all their assistance and help with the New Orleans effort. The Department is providing indoor and outdoor recreation to both the youth and adults.
- g) Dr. Merrifield stated that the Master Plan team is in town and will be holding two meetings on sports with the community at Lincoln Center at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, September 7 and Thursday, September 8. This will be an organized meeting conducted by the consultants and will be an information gathering discussion to be incorporated into the whole master planning process relating to sports.
- h) Brian Kennedy, President and CEO of the El Paso Sports Commission addressed the board and stated that his organization runs the Coliseum for private corporations to generate money for sports tourism. The El Paso Sports Commission is working with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Convention Center on a National Bowling Tournament (USBC). Sports Tourism will become more important as gas prices go up because of regional travel rather than national travel. Events such as the National Junior College Cross Country Championship in 2006 could be drawn to El Paso. The Parks and Recreation Department has facilities for these tournaments and Paula Powell, Sports Operations Supervisor for Parks and Recreation knows how to obtain tournaments. Every sports tourist that comes to town spends \$90 a day in the City of El Paso.
- i) Walt Phillips, Park Board Member stated that Saturday, September 10, from 10-2 pm United Blood Services at South Mesa Hills will be holding the 9/11 Connect for Life Celebration. Honoring 9 local heroes for community service. The event will also have health services screening joined by EP Fitness, free pizza and entertainment. The 4th Annual Heroes Softball Tournament between Police, Firemen, Border Patrol, Sheriff and teams from Ft. Bliss will take place on Sunday at Cohen Stadium. The tournament starts at 5:00 pm.
- j) Joe Rodriguez, Parks Recreation Services Manager invited everyone to Park's last "Hearts and Parks" walk of the year at Memorial Park on Saturday, September 10th. Also, there will be a banquet on November 12th at Multi-Purpose Center at 2 p.m. Invitations will be mailed. Album/Eastwood Park will have the last concert of the year

at the center on Sunday, September 11 from 7 to 9 pm. A Mariachi group will entertain.

4. **Introduction of Barry Russell, new Assistant Director for Parks and Recreation Department:** Barry Russell, the Assistant Director, stated that he has been in the business for 30 years, practicing his profession in Europe, Canada, East Coast and West Coast. Mr. Russell stated that Dr. Merrifield has him hard at work and is very happy to be in El Paso, Texas.
5. **Recognition and Award for Rosie Martinez, Aquatics Life Guard: Item Tabled TFN**
6. **Recognition and Certificate for Al Fuller, Volunteer for the Private and Public Summer Swimming Program:** Joe Rodriguez, Parks and Recreation Service Manager introduced Al Fuller who volunteered for the summer swim leagues and tournaments. He worked 5 to 6 days a week at the Armijo Swimming Pool with 50 teams and thousands of kids. He did an excellent job of organizing activities for the kids and parents. Dr. Merrifield, Director of Parks and Recreation recognized Al Fuller as the son of Karen Fuller, Superintendent of Aquatics.
7. **Information and Discussion on Status Report of QOL Projects being managed by P+3:** Juan Contreras, Program Manager at P+3 stated that the Pavo Real Pool has selected the architect, the contract is at the legal department and will be presented before City Council the end of September. P+3 will hold a meeting on September 6 to review the preliminary design plans for the Westside Sports Complex that will be located near EPCC and Canutillo High School. The project will then move forward to be presented to public for input. There are 4 combined park project packages in the design stage that will be complete and ready for bid by late September or early October. Bids are due September 14 for the Westside Community Park and Recreation Center. Results will be reported next month. Memorial Pool's completion date is the end of September with soft opening the end of October. Ponder Park and sports field lighting will be discussed at the BOAC meeting. The issue of Ponder Park was in the presentation for the Bond election. The Optimist Club that manages a couple of the fields stated that in some of the community meetings there was an indication that sports field lighting was going to be provided. It came out as an alternate in the design drawing but it was not approved because of insufficient funds. The question now is whether the City wants to put lights on those facilities. There is also an ongoing discussion about the Miracle League upgrading one of those fields for the handicapped and including lights. City will provide a status report. They will discuss what items have not been completed based on the original proposition and whether the city wants to backtrack and try to implement some of the things that were not done based on the current contingency.
8. **Status Report on CIP Projects: Item Postponed**
9. **Presentation on Keystone Heritage Park:** Bernie Sargent, Chairman of Parks Advisory Board stated that the next fundraising event is the artist rendering of the Chihuahuan Desert Experience. The Chihuahuan Desert runs roughly from Mexico City to Socorro, New Mexico and into a little of Arizona, New Mexico and Texas. They are trying

to immitate the different types of vegetation found throughout that desert so you can literally walk from Mexico City to the hills of Socorro, New Mexico. In effect, taking a quick trip through the largest desert in the world. It will all be displayed in English, Spanish as well as braille. Another project this year is for the museum and interpretive center. Four million dollars have been raised for this project so far.

10. Information on World Hispanic and Law Enforcement/Fire Softball

Tournament: Paula Powell, Sports Operations Supervisor for Parks and Recreation, stated that the Sports Commission donated \$10,500 for the World Hispanic Tournament. The tournament is scheduled for September 16, 17 and 18 , 2005. The World Hispanic for Law Enforcement is October 21-23rd, 2005. These tournaments have 178 teams with 28 teams from all over the globe. About 130 teams are from areas other than El Paso. Opening ceremony will be at Cohen Stadium at 3 pm on September 16. The games will be played at Blackie Cheshire Park, Marty Robbins Park, Veterans Park and Skyline Park. Support from the community with contributions and support from the players has been tremendous. This softball tournament also includes non-Hispanics. There are teams from Puerto Rico and Mexico. The Law Enforcement League, made up of approximately 100 teams, includes teams from Australia and New Zeland. Brian Kennedy, President and CEO of the El Paso Sports Commission stated that this tournament will bring approximately 2000 people to El Paso and an estimated quarter of a million dollars to the local economy. This year's tournament brought in 178 teams, last year's tournament in Aurora, Colorado only had 76 teams. All the people working these events are volunteers including the scores keepers. Everyone was invited to the opening ceremonies and tournament.

- 11. Information on Youth Football Sports Survey:** Dr. Norman Merrifield, Director of Parks and Recreation, stated that the partnership with the Extenstion Service continues and they are helping with recreation programs along with sports programs. They recently completed a sample study to see how people generally felt about sports and what could be done to strengthen the programs. Every youth football team, about 90, in our league is also being surveyed. The information coming in is positive. When data is completed an full report will be brought before the Board.

10. Meeting adjourned by Chairman Bernie Sargent at 7:31 pm