

City of San Antonio



Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes - **DRAFT**

Monday, September 28, 2020

5:30 PM

Videoconference

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
Erik Sanden	District 1
Mary Kathryn Luna (Chair)	District 4
Alfred Rocha	District 5
Charles Saxer	District 8
Robert Bettac	District 9
Allison Cohen (Vice President)	District 10
Jeanette Honermann	Mayoral
Mary Jane Verette	San Antonio Parks Foundation

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
VACANT	District 2
Anthony Alcoser	District 3
Melinda Smith	District 6
Alejandro Soto	District 7
Patricia Seidenberger	San Antonio Conservation Society

STAFF PRESENT

Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks and Recreation
Nikki Ramos, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation
Melinda Cerda, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation
Ryan Evans, Executive Assistant, Parks and Recreation
Steve Whitworth, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office
Ross Hosea, Special Projects Manager, Parks and Recreation
Cathy Justice, City Forester, Parks and Recreation
Rodney Dziuk, Capital Program Manager, Public Works
Desiree Salmon, Sr. Landscape Architect, Public Works

SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT

Sabina Carr, Chief Executive Officer, San Antonio Botanical Garden

REGULAR BUSINESS**a) Call Meeting to Order.**

Chairwoman Luna called the meeting to order at 5:37 PM.

b) Approval of Minutes from the August 24, 2020 Parks and Recreation Board Meeting

Motion: Charles Saxer, District 8

Second: Jeanette Honermann, Mayoral

Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**1. Briefing by Parks Partner: San Antonio Botanical Garden**

Sabina Carr, Chief Executive Officer, of the Botanical Garden provided a presentation on the San Antonio Botanical Garden. 2020 is the Garden's 40th Anniversary, which was founded by 2 local women in 1980 with land gifted by George Brackenridge. While the property is now owned by the City San Antonio, the Garden has been privately operated since January 2019 and boasts annual attendance of 170,000 visitors; 30,000 of whom are children. Ms. Carr showed pictures of the completion of the Phase II Capital Campaign to include the Greehey Lawn, John L. Santikos Fountain of the Ferns and the Betty Kelso Event Center. Ms. Carr spoke about the Garden's response during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the facility was closed from mid-March until mid-May, over 250 pounds of vegetables were donated to the public and an additional 800 pounds of potatoes, tomatoes and beans were grown in the Children's garden that were also given to people who were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. On May 3, 2020, the actual date of the 40th Anniversary of the Garden, the Garden was able to re-open under State Orders. Ms. Carr highlighted several key events/programs that engage the public while also maintain safety protocols, including *Summer Nights* extended hours, Yoga in the Garden, and Storytime for Children. Finally, Ms. Carr highlighted the current exhibit on display called *Origami in the Garden*. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

2. Briefing on 2017 Bond Program Status

Rodney Dziuk, Capital Programs Manager and Desiree Salmon, Sr. Landscape Architect, both with the Public Works Department provided a presentation on the 2017 Bond Program. Mr. Dziuk stated that overall 2017 Bond Program was \$850 Million and consisted of Streets, Bridges & Sidewalks, Drainage & Flood Control, Parks, Recreation and Open Space, Library & Cultural Facilities, Public Safety Facilities, and Neighborhood Improvements. Mr. Dziuk stated of the 179 Parks, Recreation and Open Space Bond Projects - 23% are complete, 36% are in construction, 39% are in design, and 2% are in pre-design. Mr. Dziuk also stated that by January 1, 2021, 22 to 24 more projects are expected to be completed. Ms. Salmon went over which status each Park Bond Project is in. Ms. Salmon also highlighted several recently completed Park Bond Projects including: Capital Little League Baseball Fields, Zoo Parking Garage, Sports Facilities Near Potranco Branch Library, the addition at the existing Brackenridge Park/Witte Museum Parking Garage, and Mission Drive-In Marquee. Mr. Dziuk concluded the presentation with estimating that the next Bond Program (2022) could be around the \$650 million, but that no estimate could be made on the breakdown of the projects at this time. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

3. Briefing on FY 2021 Tree Program

Cathy Justice, City Forester, presented on the Tree Mitigation & Preservation Fund and associated FY 2021 Budget Initiatives. Ms. Justice spoke about why the Urban & Community Forest matters - how trees are important to the city because it beautifies, gives shades, lowers energy cost and it helps the environment along with making communities desirable, keep public trees safe, efficiency in tree care and community involvement. Ms. Justice talked about the Tree Canopy Preservation & Mitigation Fund itself through development revenues from Development Services Department which aids with tree planting and maintenance, education and outreach and special projects in the City. Ms. Justice discussed Department strategies of tree canopy preservation and mitigation to include tree planting in parks and local communities, tree adoption events, and strategic tree partnerships with stakeholders.

Ms. Justice highlighted the FY 2020 accomplishments including: CPS Energy Green Shade program, Woodlawn Lake Area Tree Planting in response to damage-causing Summer storm, Forestation efforts along the Westside Creeks, Neighborhood Tree Program, and MGA-SA Golf Course Tree Plantings. Ms. Justice went over the FY 2021 Programs in which many of the same programs did very well in FY 2020 and will continue in FY 2021. Ms. Justice stated that 108,000 trees have been planted/adopted since 2006. Ms. Justice went over program strategies and adaptation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the ways they adapted was by having drive-through tree adoption events and highlighted an example in which Parks and Recreation partnered with Pre-K 4 SA and the San Antonio Food Bank, where families drove through for food and were able to also obtain a tree. This modification was safe for everyone because there was less contact, but still able to interact with the public and give away trees, providing a sustainable food source while also helping the environment. Ms. Justice focused on the Citywide Tree Program, an expansion of the Neighborhood Tree Program. Census tracts were identified in each Council District based on scores from the City's Equity Atlas and Matrix, to reach areas of great need. The program is expected to begin this fall with door hanger distribution targeting 9,000 single family residences. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

DIRECTORS REPORT

- Mr. Homer Garcia III, Parks and Recreation Director showed a video on Summer Food and Fruit Tree Distributions during the COVID-19 pandemic and highlighted how two divisions within parks came together and assisted the public with the Grab and Go and the Tree Give Away programs. The Grab and Go Program was held over the summer at 37 sites and served 35,000 lunches, 40,000 snacks and 5,000 suppers. The department's Urban Forestry division partnered with 3 of the Grab and Go food sites and held tree adoption events – which was a great opportunity for these families because the trees they received were fruit trees which they could plant in their homes and have for years to come. The partnership was able to adopt out 240 fruit trees
- Mr. Garcia provided an update on City Council's approval of a land swap with Northside ISD that was going to effectively transfer Meadowcliff Community Center which is next door to Anson Jones Middle School and in exchange for some property that we received to be utilized for a trail connection behind TimberWilde Elementary School. The trail will connect with the Tezel Rd. Facility which is a bond project located in CD 6. Mr. Garcia stated that the School District agreed as part of the contract that Parks and Recreation would be able to utilize the facility for an annual Back to School backpack giveaway event as well as our Summer Youth Program.

- Mr. Garcia discussed the department's Phase 3 Re-Opening Plan. Virtual Learning Hubs would be opened at 8 community centers to assist with internet access for distance learning. Additionally, Mr. Garcia mentioned that playgrounds, basketball courts, fitness equipment, skate parks, etc. as well as outdoor facilities are now open and that by October 31, the Barrera Fitness Center and the Reservations Office at Ron Darner will open, and Fitness in the Park Programming will resume. On November 9, Parks Adult & Senior Center will open with reduced capacity by November 16, the Natatorium will open with a modified schedule along with reservations with a maximum capacity of 50 people for indoor facilities such as the Roosevelt Clubhouse and the PHP Urban Ecology Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairwoman Luna accepted a motion to adjourn the Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Motion: Charles Saxer, District 8

Second: Erik Sanden, District 1

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 7:00 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Homer Garcia III, Director
City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation