

City of San Antonio



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

Monday, October 26, 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
Melinda Smith	District 6
Alejandro Soto	District 7
Charles Saxer	District 8
Robert Bettac	District 9
Allison Cohen (Vice President)	District 10
Jeanette Honermann	Mayoral
Mary Jane Verette	San Antonio Parks Foundation
Patricia Seidenberger	San Antonio Conservation Society

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
VACANT	District 2
Anthony Alcoser	District 3

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
Cynthia Uribe, Executive Secretary, Parks and Recreation
Connie Swann, Marketing Manager, Parks and Recreation
Brandon Ross, Manager, Parks and Recreation

SPECIAL GUESTS PRESENT

Tim Morrow, President and CEO, San Antonio Zoo

REGULAR BUSINESS

a) **Call Meeting to Order.**

Vice-Chairwoman Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:35 PM.

b) Approval of Minutes from the September 28, 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 Zoo**

Mr. Tim Morrow, President and CEO, of the San Antonio Zoo provided a presentation on the San Antonio Zoo. Mr. Morrow provided a brief overview on the Zoo highlighting that the Zoo receives 1.2 million visitors annually, hosts nearly 100,000 field trips, has the largest nature-based preschool in the US, and employees over 700 staff and 600 volunteers. Mr. Morrow provided updates on nearly \$50 million in upgrades at the Zoo to include: The Savanna, Elephant Rain Garden & Expansion, Big Cat Valley, Animal Health Center, Flamingo Mingle Feeding Experience, Amphibia Remodel, the Great Lawn, Southern White Rhino Habitat, Zoo Parking Garage and Kiddie Park. Mr. Morrow shared significant recognitions and highlighted that the San Antonio Zoo was named Best Zoo in Texas by Reader's Digest, Named Top 10 Sightseeing Tickets Sold in World by TripAdvisor and Named Best Social Media by San Antonio Magazine.

Mr. Morrow transitioned to providing information on the Zoo's response to the COVID-19 pandemic which required the furlough of many employees – mainly customer service/front-of-house staff. Mr. Morrow followed up with several unique ideas that the Zoo implemented to bring in revenue and bring back staff that were furloughed including Drive Thru Zoo, Zoo Gift Baskets, Emergency Fund, and Virtual Experiences for At-Home Learning including Zen Zoo, Zoo It Yourself Crafts, and Pawsitive Chats. Mr. Morrow went over a robust post opening event line up that will be taking place starting in September through the remainder of the year and highlighted events such as Wild Connection, Zoo Boo!, and Whataburger Zoo Lights!. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

2. Briefing on Parks Community Engagement: Introduction of Upcoming Trail Use Survey

Mrs. Connie Swann, Marketing Manager, with Parks and Recreation Department provided a presentation on an upcoming Departmental community engagement effort – the release of a Trail Use Survey. Mrs. Swann highlighted how the trails are a popular amenity to the public and the many residents that utilize the trails and that the department would like to engage both trail users and non-trail users to gather input. Ms. Swann provided information on the mechanics of the survey including that the survey is in English/Spanish, has questions on demographic data, trail usage, future trail expansion and development, and some safety-related questions. The survey is expected to be released in October/November and will be open for approximately 6 weeks. Following the closure of the survey, an analysis will be performed in December and final report will be ready in January 2021. Mrs. Swann highlighted various survey distribution efforts including: SASpeakUp's website, a link from the Parks and Recreation website, Parks' social media channels, and signs posted at select trailheads that will have QR codes to the survey. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

3. Action related to November/December Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Dates:

Due to the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays, the Board took the following action related to upcoming Board meeting dates:

- November – Cancelled
- December – Moved from December 28, 2020 to **Monday, December 7, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.** via videoconference

Motion: Charles Saxer, District 8

Second: Jeanette Honermann, Mayoral

Motion Carried.

DIRECTORS REPORT

- Mr. Homer Garcia III, Parks and Recreation Director, provided an update to the City's Phase III Re-Opening Plan which includes:
 - Playgrounds, basketball courts, fitness equipment, skate parks, etc. are currently open
 - Ron Darner reservations counter & Barrera Fitness Center opening on October 26
 - Parks Adult & Senior Centers opening on November 9 with reduced capacity in conjunction with Department of Human Services' Senior Centers
 - SA Natatorium opening on November 16 with reduced capacityMr. Garcia mentioned that our reopened facilities will have a registration process to ensure proper capacity as well as temperature checks and COVID-19 symptom screenings
- Mr. Garcia provided an update on programming at community centers and highlighted the Virtual Learning Hubs as well as select community centers that are now open for after-school and evening programming.
- Mrs. Nikki Ramos, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director spoke about the Halloween Hustle Virtual 5K that will be held on October 30 – November 1. Participants will need to submit a picture of them running or walking on a treadmill, in a park, etc. to receive completion of the virtual 5K. Mrs. Ramos stated that there will also be a costume contest and prizes will be given. Pictures will need to be submitted by November 2 to be eligible for prizes.
- Mr. Garcia concluded the Director's Report with a mention of a Halloween Event held at Southside Lions on Saturday, October 24. Mr. Garcia mentioned that the park was turned into a drive-through event with 8 different stops along the way with Halloween-themed sets, and staff in costumes. Participants at the event received pumpkins and were able to adopt a tree. Additionally, the department was able to get creative and link up with local radio station that participants could put on in their vehicle as they drove through the event adding Halloween-themed music to the experience. Mr. Garcia estimated that there were approximately 2,000 participants and it was a unique, creative event that had participation from multiple divisions within the department.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chairwoman Cohen 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 6:38 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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