

**NEIGHBORHOODS AND LIVABILITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, AUGUST 15, 2016
6:00 P.M.
MUNICIPAL PLAZA B ROOM**

Members Present:	Councilmember Roberto Treviño, <i>Chair, District 1</i> Councilmember Alan Warrick, <i>District 2</i> Councilmember Rey Saldaña, <i>District 4</i> Councilmember Cris Medina, <i>District 7</i>
Members Absent:	Councilmember Ray Lopez, <i>District 6</i>
Staff Present:	Maria Villagómez, <i>Assistant City Manager</i> ; Xavier D. Urrutia, <i>Director, Parks and Recreation</i> ; Melody Woosley, <i>Director, Department of Human Services</i> ; Mikel Brightman, <i>Administrator, Head Start Program</i> ; Melinda Uriegas, <i>Assistant City Clerk, Office of the City Clerk</i>
Others Present:	Brian Carter, <i>Vice President of Marketing, San Antonio Zoo</i> ; Thomas W. Christal, Jr., <i>Vice President, Brackenridge Park Conservancy</i> ; Mary Fisher, <i>Secretary, Brackenridge Park Conservancy</i> ; Justin Fletcher, <i>SAWS</i> ; Brendan Gibbons, <i>Express News</i> ; Jim Gray, <i>Principal, Rialto Studio</i> ; Sara Gruber, <i>Community Manager, Parks and Recreation Department</i> ; Olga Kauffmann, <i>Citizen</i> ; Jay Lounden, <i>Partner, Work5hop</i> ; John Mize, <i>Principal, Ford, Powell & Carson</i> ; Richard Moore, <i>President, Tobin Hill Neighborhood Association</i> ; Chris Villa, <i>District 3 Aide</i>

Call to Order

Chairman Treviño called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of Minutes for the June 20, 2016 Neighborhoods and Livability Committee Meeting

Councilmember Warrick moved to approve the Minutes of the June 20, 2016 Neighborhoods and Livability Council Committee Meeting. Councilmember Saldaña seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

Briefing and Possible Action on:

3. Briefing on the Public Input Regarding the Brackenridge Park Draft Master Plan.
[Maria Villagómez, Assistant City Manager; Xavier D. Urrutia, Director, Parks and Recreation]

Citizens to be Heard

Chairman Treviño called upon the Citizens to be Heard.

Former Councilmember Maria Barriozábal stated that the City needed to take great care of Brackenridge Park and that residents were concerned with the following portions of the Draft Master Plan:

- proposed road closures
- creation of a grand lawn resulting in the elimination of parking and the removal of trees
- construction of a People Mover (Tram)
- charges for parking, use of the Tram, and for Picnics
- omission of language within the Plan regarding Annual Easter Picnics

Mrs. Berriozábal stressed the importance of the creation of a Housing Policy that was cohesive, leveled the playing field, and mitigated the vulnerability to neighborhoods. She requested that future discussions regarding the Park Master Plan be open, transparent, and include working class Citizens. Mrs. Berriozábal noted that the community was willing to assist in protecting the City's unique history and culture.

Ana Ramirez, Chair, River Road Neighborhood Association, expressed concern that the Brackenridge Park Plan did not consider current residents and proposed eliminating parking and green spaces.

Gianna Rendon, Community Organizer, Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, stated that the Park Plan did not consider the needs of citizens; especially the disabled. She highlighted the deficiencies of the Communication Plan utilized by the City and requested that outreach efforts be enhanced.

Graciela Sanchez, Director, Esperanza Peace and Justice Center, voiced concern with the process utilized by the City to inform the community of proposed Brackenridge Park changes and reported that not all Stakeholders were included in discussions.

George Cisneros stated that Staff was rushing to action to develop the Brackenridge Park Plan. He spoke of the irony of the Brackenridge Park entrance facing Alamo Heights, Terrell Hills, and Olmos Park. Mr. Cisneros noted that taxes were not paid by surrounding Apartment Tenants or Owners.

Antonia Castañeda stated that the Park Plan did not take into consideration the systemic inequalities of residents. She noted that the proposal to charge for using park amenities and the prohibition of certain events would limit patronage by specific segments of the population and requested citizen involvement in future discussions.

Lynn Bobbitt, Executive Director, Brackenridge Park Conservancy, spoke in support of the Partnership with the City and noted that the Park was open to all individuals. She noted that the

organization would proceed in a very cautious and deliberate manner to ensure that citizens were included in discussions.

Jennifer Martinez, District 1 Board Member, Parks and Recreation Board, noted that public comments made at the meetings fell into the following 3 Categories:

- Sense of Place – Parks and amenities were free to the Public
- Commitment – Dedication to having a diverse and authentic Community
- Sense of Action – Desire that process served as a Model of Constituent Engagement by including the Community in decisions

She highlighted current amenities and uses of the Park and noted opportunities for improvement.

Councilmember Saldaña spoke of the importance of community buy-in. He highlighted the benefits of slowing down the process in order to capture the importance of the Park to the Community and its uses. He recommended following the same process utilized for Pearsall Park which gathered public input from the beginning.

Councilmember Warrick highlighted the passion and engagement of the public regarding Brackenridge Park. He noted how the Committee could learn from the process utilized in order to ensure that future projects include Community Engagement from the start.

Councilmember Medina spoke of the history of Brackenridge Park and the need to ensure that future projects include public participation.

Chairman Treviño thanked Mr. Xavier Urrutia and his staff for their hard work, dedication, and assistance in facilitating the meetings held to gather public input on the Draft Plan. He reaffirmed to the public that Committee Members were listening.

Mr. Urrutia presented the Brackenridge Master Plan and highlighted approved Professional Service Agreements, Master Plan Issues, the Engagement Process, Meeting Data, and Strategies utilized for the development of the Master Plan.

He noted that Issues not supported by the Public included the following:

- Perception that Park was a collection of parts
- Diminished natural habitat and water quality
- Dominance of impervious cover
- Poor Pedestrian connectivity
- Limited free public spaces
- Costly Park Maintenance activities

Mr. Urrutia provided a timeline of actions regarding the Engagement Process and noted the following:

- Stakeholder Meetings started in June 2015

- Presentation of Brackenridge Plan to the Neighborhoods and Livability Committee in March 2016
- Public Presentation of Brackenridge Plan at the SA Garden Center in April 2016
- Additional Public Meetings held in June and July 2016

He noted that 384 Individuals attended the Meetings and reported that Attendees represented 59 City Zip Codes.

Mr. Urrutia reported on Areas of the Draft Master Plan receiving Public Support:

- Restoration of Natural Features
- Restoration of Cultural and Historic Features
- Increase in Park Visibility
- Increase in Neighborhood Connectivity and Pedestrian Flow

Areas of the Draft Master Plan not receiving Public Support include:

- Installation of People Mover (Tram)
- Reduction of Parking
- Road Closures
- Reduction in Impervious Cover

Mr. Urrutia reported on Next Steps to include presentation to the Mayor and Council without the following Items of Concern:

- Installation of a People Mover (Tram)
- Reduction in Parking
- Road Closures

He noted that Staff was recommending that the Final Plan include language that allowed for the inclusion of these items into the Brackenridge Park Plan after additional Community Engagement was received.

Citizens to be Heard – Continuation

Art Trejo spoke on the willingness of Committee Members engage minority segments of the population in Park discussions. He voiced concern with the proposal to charge for parking and cautioned that residents would not be able to afford housing costs as area rental fees were likely to increase.

Tim Morrow, CEO & Executive Director, San Antonio Zoo, spoke on efforts made by the Zoo to increase parking. He voiced concern with accessibility and parking issues and highlighted signs posted around that Zoo that prohibit parking and were designated as Tow-Away Zones.

Mr. Urrutia highlighted Park Improvements outlined within the Plan to include methods for handling Storm Water Run-off, restoring Historic Features such as the Pump House, and the creation of signage along the Park Perimeter.

Ms. Villagómez addressed Brackenridge Park Deferred Maintenance efforts and reported that the City spent \$500,000 repairing retaining walls. She noted that the FY 2017 Budget allocated \$500,000 for additional wall repairs as well as another \$300,000 for Miraflores Park Improvements. She stated that the City was proposing the allocation of \$7.5 Million in the 2017 Bond Program for Brackenridge Park Improvements and that said Funds would be used to make structural repairs and to remove invasive vegetation within the Park.

Mr. Urrutia noted that temporary repairs were being made to address retaining wall failures as they occurred. He reported that Brackenridge Park was designated as a Historic Site and that repairs needed to be made in a deliberate and purposeful manner. He highlighted instances in which historical features were covered in order to protect their significance and noted that Archeological Teams assisted with ensuring that the integrity of historical features were retained. He provided an overview of items that the public did not support which included the development of a tram, the reduction of parking and impervious cover, and road closures. Mr. Urrutia highlighted Public recommendations made at meetings to include using portions of Brackenridge Golf Course to mitigate concerns. He noted that the Golf Course, which was also designated as a Historic Site, was managed by a Third-Party and suggestions made by the public to use the Golf Course would be difficult to implement.

Chairman Treviño highlighted comments submitted at Public Meetings which addressed the significance of Brackenridge Park to the Community and noted that trust needed to be earned. He recommended that the City proceed slowly and continue to include Park Patrons in future discussions.

Mr. Urrutia reported that the Department planned to continue public discussions with a focus on improving areas that did not receive community support. He spoke of the importance of holding meetings at the Park in order for the public to conceptualize paper renderings.

Ms. Villagómez reiterated the Plan of Action reported by Mr. Urrutia and highlighted the benefits of having future meetings take place at the Park.

Councilmember Saldaña highlighted the importance of transparency and the inclusion of the community in discussions. He spoke of instances in which decisions on Public Projects were made without input from the public and voiced his support for including the community in future Brackenridge Park Plan Meetings.

Mr. Urrutia described the manner in which future Park Meetings would be held and noted that this would be the first time the City would hold discussions on the development of a Plan at the site itself. He spoke of the importance of having community support in the development of the Brackenridge Plan.

Councilmember Medina spoke in support of obtaining input from Park Users and having discussions at the Park.

Councilmember Saldaña moved to confirm Staff's Recommendation to present the Draft Brackenridge Park Plan without the areas that did not receive community support to the Mayor and Council for approval and continue discussions with the public on items not receiving community support. Councilmember Medina seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

2. Briefing on a Council Consideration Request by Councilman Treviño, Council District 1, for Translation Services. [Maria Villagómez, Assistant City Manager]

Ms. Villagómez reported that the proposed FY 2017 Budget included the hiring of a Full-Time Staff Member that would provide Spanish Interpretation Services to the Public at City Council A and B Sessions. She noted that the Staff Member would also be responsible for translating specific Council Related Documents to include Council A and B Session Agendas, backup Memos, and Press Releases.

Chairman Treviño highlighted the benefits of said item to include transparency and inclusivity.

At the request of Councilmember Saldaña, Ms. Villagómez clarified the duties of the Staff Member and reported that said employee would be part of the Government and Public Affairs Office.

Councilmember Medina spoke in support of said item as it would engage the Public.

Councilmember Saldaña moved to forward the item to the Mayor and Council for approval. Councilmember Medina seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously by those present.

3. Briefing and possible action on Head Start Program Items. [Maria Villagómez, Assistant City Manager; Melody Woosley, Director, Department of Human Services]

In the interest of time, Members of the Committee were presented with monthly financial documents and student attendance records. Ms. Villagómez reported that Action would be taken at the next Committee Meeting.

Adjourn

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.



Roberto Treviño, Chair




Melinda L. Uriegas,
Assistant City Clerk

Respectfully Submitted,

