



PARKS & RECREATION

**City of San Antonio
Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes**

Monday, September 25, 2023

5:30 PM

City Tower Concourse

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
Erik Sanden	District 1
Jennifer Ramage	District 2
M. Kathryn Luna	District 4
Agapita Jaramillo	District 5
Bert Pickell	District 6
Charles Saxer	District 8
Collen Waguespack	District 9
Allison Cohen	District 10
Mary Jane Verette	San Antonio Parks Foundation
Patricia Seidenberger	San Antonio Conservation Society

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
Philip Ryan Garza	District 3
Laura S. Luna	District 7
Jeanette Honermann	Mayor

STAFF PRESENT

- Homer Garcia III, Director, Parks and Recreation
- Nikki Ramos, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation
- Melinda Cerda, Assistant Director, Parks and Recreation
- Michael Baldwin, Manager, Parks and Recreation
- Reena Gonzalez, Executive Assistant, Parks and Recreation
- Ross Hosea, Manager, Parks and Recreation
- Michael Holinsky, City Forester, Parks and Recreation
- Meredith Tilley, Assistant Manager, Parks and Recreation
- Alfredo Garcia, Horticulturist, Parks and Recreation
- Ruby Zavala, Project Manager, Parks and Recreation
- Luis O Campo, Senior Horticulturist, Parks and Recreation
- Shanea Allen, Manager, Parks and Recreation
- Steve Whitworth, City Attorney, City Attorney’s Office
- Cynthia Uribe, Executive Secretary, Parks and Recreation

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Allison Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES**1. Approval of Minutes from the July 24, 2023, Parks and Recreation Board Meeting.**

Motion: Colleen Waguespack, District 9

Second: Mary Kathryn Luna, District 4

Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Ms. Angelica Ramos a member of the San Antonio Pickleball Association spoke about the Fairchild Park new construction and stated that they have proposed for a deck to be built over by the drainage area shaded by the existing trees with gate access to all three banks.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION**2. Briefing Regarding the San Antonio Soil Carbon Project & Using Parks to Reduce Climate Change Impact – Michael Baldwin, Parks and Recreation and Debbie Reid, Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance**

The Topics of Discussion were:

1. **Concept of using parks as a climate change mitigation strategy.** It is documented how trees mitigate urban challenges including air and water quality. The 2021 released SA Urban Forest Inventory and Analysis states that each year, our urban forest:
 - Removes more than 6,500 tons of air pollution, saving \$63 million in health care.
 - Reduces stormwater runoff by over 380 million cubic feet.
 - Saves resident \$22 million in energy cost.
2. **The San Antonio Carbon Soil Project** – Project was initiated to implement a recommended mitigation strategy within the SA Climate Action and Adaptation Plan to “actively use public green spaces for sequestering atmospheric carbon dioxide and determine current soil carbon levels”. Demonstration was done at 13 Parks; the soil testing process was explained.
3. **Results of Baseline Sampling** – Overall results indicate that park soils are healthier than soils under conventional cultivation – except for those at the Medina River Natural Area and Pearsall Park partially due to their previous land uses.
4. **Recommendations for Future Action:**
 - Modify mowing practices.
 - Install features and implement practices that will slow stormwater runoff and allow for more infiltration when feasible.
 - Develop and provide additional training for Parks staff and contractors involved in
 - vegetation maintenance.
 - Continue to monitor soil health and impact of modifications.
 - Educate the public through signage and/or programming when applicable.

Goal 3 of the SA Parks System Plan 2019- 2029 includes:

- The benefits of the urban forest are maximized inside and outside of parks.
- Ecologically sensitive landscape design throughout the parks system supports biodiversity, pollinators, local fauna and flora, and decreases resource – intensive landscape maintenance practices.
- Programming that increases knowledge and stewardship of natural and cultural resources for individuals and groups of all ages.
- Stormwater is slowed, reused, and allowed to recharge the aquifer as much as practical through low-impact, ecologically sensitive design.
- Policies and practices that model a holistic view of sustainability.

3. Briefing Regarding the FY24 Tree mitigation Fund – By Michael Holinsky, Parks and Recreation. Mr. Holinsky presented a video on why Urban Forest is so important:

- There are over 138 million trees that make up San Antonio Urban Forest trees are a big community with important jobs.
- Research shows that trees decrease stress, increase property value, protect pedestrians from traffic and makes our neighborhoods look beautiful.
- Trees also help with air purification. In a big city like ours exhaust from industry and traffic produces carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, etc. that's not good to breathe. Trees traps airborne gluten and take in carbon dioxide through photosynthesis. Urban Forest removes more than 65,000 tons of air pollution saving us 63 million in health cost.
- Urban Heat Island problem – Urban areas have a lot of hard dry surfaces; buildings, sidewalks, roads these surfaces absorb the sun heat and re- admit the heat back to us. This is called the urban heat island effect. The Urban heat island can be about 14 degrees hotter than the surrounding areas. This affect increases energy cost, air pollution levels, and heat related illnesses.
- Trees help us keep cool because of their shade; but on sunny days trees release water out to the atmosphere cooling the air around us. This process is called evapotranspiration; this cooling affect is critical to our city and the more tree canopy that we can get in our urban heat island the cooler those areas will become.
- Trees also help with storm water runoffs. The roots of the trees soak up the water when it rains reducing the storm water runoff, flowing and erosion by over three hundred eighty million cubic feet of water.
- Trees also need help in taking care of them. Our planting division goes around town planting new trees, our care division helps our young trees grow and maintenance division keeps tree healthy by trimming; part of urban forest management means removing trees that are sick or dead or to make room for healthy trees. Tree care is very important because we want them to grow and reach maturity because bigger trees mean more air purification, more cooling effect and more flood reduction.
- Trees also have saved San Antonio twenty -two million dollars in energy cost.

4. Parks and Recreation Director's Report – General Departmental Updates.

Mr. Homer Garcia III, Parks and Recreation Director, provided updates on the following items:

- New Positions – 11 Position for Operations and Maintenance and 5 positions for Wheatley Heights Sport Complex.
- Enhancements – Green Space Activation and Installation of Playground Shades.
- Capital Improvements – Futsal at Bonnie Connor Sports field lighting, Perimeter Fencing at SA Zoo and Scheduled Maintenance at Historic City Cemeteries.
- Tropical Pool Party Reopening at Roosevelt on Saturday, August 12, 2023.
- Mexican Independence Day with Folklorico Dances – Arneson River Theatre at Historic San Antonio Riverwalk on September 16, 2023.
- 2023 Pride Parade – Parks and Recreation Department won Best Float.
- Public Meeting Notices –
 - Wildwood West Trail Connection to the French Creek Greenway Tuesday, September 26, 2023 at the YMCA at O.P. Schnabel Park
 - Wednesday, September 27, 2023 for Martin Luther King Park held at Copernicus Community Center
 - Thursday, September 28, 2023 for Classen-Steubing Ranch Park held at Christ Community Church.

Nikki Ramos, Parks and Recreation Assistant Director, provided updates on the following items:

- TRAPS South Region Workshop will be on September 25, 2023.
- Upcoming Events –
 - 2023 San Antonio Neighbors together will be on October 3, 2023 at Community Centers.
 - Doggie Poolooza – Saturday, October 7, 2023 at Lady Bird Johnson Pool.
 - Camino Verde – Mayors Trails Activation – October 14, 2023 Southside Lions Park Trailhead.
 - Dia Del Arbor – November 4, 2023 at Mission Marquee Plaza.
- 5K Halloween Hustle at Lady Bird Johnson Park on October 28, 2023.

ADJOURNMENT

Board adjourned the Parks and Recreation Board meeting at 6:37 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Homer Garcia III, Director
San Antonio Parks and Recreation

DRAFT