

City of San Antonio**Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes****Monday, July 26, 2021****5:30 PM****Videoconference****BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
Erik Sanden	District 1
Carla Walker	District 2
Mary Kathy Luna (Chair)	District 4
Alfred Rocha	District 5
Melinda Smith	District 6
Alejandro Soto	District 7
Charles Saxer	District 8
Allison P. Cohen (Vice-Chair)	District 10
Jeanette M. Honermann	Mayoral
Libby Day	San Antonio Parks Foundation
Patricia Seidenberger	San Antonio Conservation Society

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Member Name	Council District/Agency Represented
Anthony Alcoser	District 3
Robert M. Bettac	District 9

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
Phillip Covington, Special Projects Manager, Parks and Recreation
Brandon Ross, Manager, Parks and Recreation

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

Chairwoman Luna called the meeting to order at 5:33 PM.

b) Approval of Minutes from the May 24, 2021 Parks and Recreation Board Meeting

Motion: Erik Sanden, District 1

Second: Allison P. Cohen, District 10

Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/ACTION

1. Action Related to Approval of Parks and Recreation Board Representative to the Conservation Advisory Board

Phillip Covington, Special Projects Manager, presented on the Parks and Recreation Board's appointment to the City's Conservation Advisory Board (CAB). Mr. Covington provided background on the CAB and stated that it oversees the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program and reviews and approves property acquisitions and demonstration projects as part of Sales Tax Funding. Staff recommended Dr. Francine Romero as the Parks and Recreation Board's appointment to the CAB. Mr. Covington provided background information on Dr. Francine Romero who has served on the CAB for over 10 years and is the current Chair of the CAB. Dr. Romero has a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, has been with UTSA since 1998, and teaches in the MPA and MSURP programs. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

Motion for Appointment of Dr. Francine Romero, as Parks and Recreation Board Representative to Conservation Advisory Board Member.

Motion: Erik Sanden, District 1

Second: Allison Cohen, District 10

Motion Carried.

2. Briefing on Edwards Aquifer Protection Program General Updates

Phillip Covington, Special Projects Manager, provided an update of the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP). Mr. Covington gave background on the Program by stating that the Edwards Aquifer is the City's primary source of drinking water and how in the 1970's, interested stakeholders began campaigning for funds to protect the Edwards Aquifer due to the development that was occurring around the Aquifer. The purpose of the EAPP is to protect the quality and quantity of water recharging into the Edwards Aquifer by land acquisition and conservation easements on privately-owned property. The EAPP is overseen by the Conservation Advisory Board (CAB), whom are Council-appointed members. Mr. Covington highlighted funding information for the Program which was first approved by voters back in 2000 and continued for 3 additional sales tax issuances, for a total of \$325 million. To date, \$305 Million has been expended with the remaining balance expected to carry through 2022. A new 10 year, \$100 Million funding program through the San Antonio Municipal Facilities Corporation was approved by City Council in September 2020 and will begin in FY2023 with no changes in program administration.

Mr. Covington explained the make-up of the Contributing and Recharge Zones of the Edwards Aquifer and highlighted their importance in western Counties such as Medina, Uvalde, and Bandera for water protection. Mr. Covington discussed how conservation easements work, in that they are perpetual once acquired and 95% of property interests acquired by the EAPP are conservation easements. Additionally, landowners retain ownership and certain land use rights, but give up future development rights and the

City secures development rights of protected acreage. Finally, all acquired properties are monitored on an annual basis by the City and the Edwards Aquifer Authority staff under and Interlocal Agreement. Mr. Covington talked about the Demonstration Projects and stated that the 2015 Sales Tax issuance provided \$10 Million dedicated for water quality projects in urbanized areas of Bexar County. Qualifying projects must be located over the Recharge and Contributing zones in Bexar County. To date, \$10 Million have been committed for 11 projects; with all projects anticipated to be complete by Spring 2025.

Mr. Covington stated that to assist with EAPP with land identification and acquisition, two groups were established: the Scientific Evaluation Team which is a science based advisory group and Land Acquisition Team which are members that assist with negotiation of acquisitions and help coordinate due diligence. An overview of the EAPP Property Evaluation Process was provided to the Board as well as future strategies for the Program. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

3. Briefing on Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System General Updates

Brandon Ross, Parks and Recreation Manager, provided an overview of the Howard W. Peak (HWP) Greenway Trails System. Current accomplishments to date include approximately 82 miles of trails completed, 15 miles of trail under construction, 15 miles of trail in planning and design phase, and over 1,600 acres of creekway lands acquired. Mr. Ross highlighted recent major trail system connections including the connection of Leon and Salado Greenway Systems located at Eisenhower Park, which was expected to be complete in late September/early October, with a large ribbon cutting event to follow. Another major trail system connection highlighted included the Medina River Greenway to San Antonio River Trails at Mission Espada. Mr. Ross highlighted the Westside Creeks to San Antonio River Trails connection, focusing on the Alazan Creek project, which is 2.9 miles and starts at Woodlawn Lake Park and continues south to tie in with Apache Creek and then to San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River Trail south of Downtown.

Mr. Ross went over some other recent accomplishments including Maverick Creek Greenway at Dan Markson Park. The highlight of this area is that there will be a park built on Babcock Road (Dan Markson Park) and will include a fully inclusive playground for children and adults with special needs. Other recent accomplishments include the E. Commerce Street Trailhead and the Wilshire Terrace Trailhead Connection – both serving Salado Creek Greenway.

As the City spends down the remaining portions of the collected 2015 Sales Tax issuance to complete more trail projects, Mr. Ross spoke about potential future funding options for the Greenway Trails System. Through the Bexar County/SARA Rives and Creeks Program, \$83.7 million for 8 projects were identified along the HWP Greenway Trail System, with Commissioners Court approval scheduled for September. Additionally, the City partnered with the County, SARA, and VIA to apply for a Federal RAISE grant for \$25 Million to fund 7.1 miles of trail along Zarzamora Creek and Ingram Road to connect the Westside Creek Greenway System to the Leon Creek Greenway System. The City is also working with the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) through the Transportation Improvement Program to fund \$3 Million for 3.7 miles of trail to connect Salado North and Salado South at Ft. Sam Houston. Finally, Mr. Ross explained that the Department was also working with Public Works for possible inclusion of trail projects as part of the City's 2022 Bond Program. Full presentation was provided to the Board via email and shown virtually for the public's viewing.

4. DIRECTORS REPORT

- Mr. Homer Garcia III, Parks and Recreation Director provided information on the upcoming budget process. The City Manager presented a Trial Budget on June 16, which guided Council conversations during their Goal Setting Session on June 25, in which they set their budget priorities for the coming fiscal year. The City Manager met with City Departments throughout July to go over proposed improvements and efficiencies. Next steps include the proposal of the FY2022 budget on August 16, with Council Budget Worksessions held shortly thereafter. The FY2022 Budget will be formally adopted on September 16.
- Mr. Garcia talked about updates to Aquatics Programming and highlighted the operating hours of the 9 pools that are currently open, with a modified scheduled beginning on August 9. Five splash pads will remain open from 9am-9pm through early Fall.
- Mr. Ryan Evans, Parks and Recreation Executive Assistant sought Board input regarding the desire to hold future Board meetings virtually or in-person. Overall Board consensus was to move back to in-person meetings with meeting location to be determined. Mr. Evans also confirmed if the Board still wanted to meet on the 4th Monday of every other month, which the Board agreed, and provided an upcoming schedule of Parks Board meeting dates. Mr. Evans also highlighted that Parks Board members are encouraged to reach out to the Department regarding any specific topics they would like to add to the agenda.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion: Erik K. Sanden, District 1

Second: Carla D. Walker, District 2

Motion Carried.

Meeting adjourned at 6:53 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

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