

MINUTES
PARKS COMMUNITY BOND COMMITTEE
MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2007
5:00 P.M.
DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS SERVICES CENTER
TRAINING ROOM
1901 SOUTH ALAMO

Commission Members Present: Bonnie Connor (Co-Chair), Doug McMurry (Co-Chair), Brett Codd, Hector Cardenas, Joan Korte, AJ Garcia, Alex Saucedo, Tim Reznicek, Charles Pope, Hiedemarie Flannery, Carole Abitz, Ken Palacios, Amelia Valdez, Joseph Cruz, Leo Gomez, Manuel Garza, Margaret Tovar, Randy Murdock, Francine Romero, Julia Diana, Lynn Hickey, Art Downey, Jr., Paul Vaughn, Scott Price, Doris Brown, Gordon Hartman and Jeff Webster

Commission Members Absent: Lloyd Rawson, Jaime Aguillon, Robert Rodriguez, Roy Botello and Toni Cadena

City Council Members Present: Chip Haass, Councilman District 10 and Art Hall, Councilman District 8

City Staff Present: Sheryl Sculley, City Manager; Pat DiGiovanni, Deputy City Manager; Frances A. Gonzalez, Assistant City Manager; Malcolm Matthews, Director of Parks and Recreation; Peter Zanoni, Director of Management and Budget; Edward Benavides, Executive Assistant; Steve Whitworth, Assistant City Attorney; Scott Stover, Parks Projects Manager; Blanca Lozano, Executive Assistant; Rodney Duke, Park Design Superintendent; Brian Orebaugh, Architect Assistant; Carlos Mendez, Landscape Architect; Richard Hurd, Park Operations Manager; Scott Wudel, Senior Public Information Officer; Christine Patmon, Public Information Officer; Krystal Strong, Management Analyst; Elizabeth Flores, Sr. Management and Budget Analyst; Kevin Ayarzagotia, Sr. Management and Budget Analyst, Chad Tustison, Budget Manager

1) Call to Order

Bonnie Connor and Doug McMurry, Co-Chairs, called the meeting to order at 5:12 pm.

2) Review and Approval of Minutes – Bonnie Connor, Doug McMurry

Minutes from the January 8, 2007 meeting were approved.

3) Citizens to be Heard

Joan Gaither- from the Conservation Society; read a letter to the committee explaining the Society's support of the following projects: La Villita, Hemisfair Park, Spanish Governor's Palace, Voelcker Property Acquisition, Miraflores, Japanese Tea Gardens, Sunken Gardens Theater and the San Antonio Natural Area System Development

Claire Alexander- Chairman, Board of Directors of the San Antonio Botanical Gardens; submitted a letter to the committee requesting allocation of \$900,000 which would be used to make long deferred repairs to the Lucile Halsell Conservatory at the San Antonio Botanical Gardens.

Steve McCusker- San Antonio Zoological Society; Submitted a letter to the committee requesting \$1.5 million from the Bond program. This money would be used to help fund Africa Live, Phase II. He reminded the committee that the Zoo has more than 930,000 visitors per year, 40% of those are from out of town and more than 100,000 students visit the Zoo every year. These tourists help to generate revenue for the city.

Alejandro Soto- Woodlawn Lake Community Association; He saw on the web page that the bridge proposal by the committee has now been turned into a pedestrian/biking bridge. The homeowners do not want that bridge. Instead, they want the bridge closed. He reminded the committee that he passed out a traffic plan at the December 8, 2006 meeting and would like the committee to review that plan.

Jeff Hicks- Wanted to speak about the Denman Property. He supports the acquisition of that land. There are 10,000 apartments in the precinct and a new elementary school will be within 300 ft of the proposed park. Currently there is no park in that area and the development of the park would be consistent with what Mr. Denman had in mind for the property. The loss of this property would be catastrophic. The committee would lose a great opportunity for San Antonio if they pass this up.

Carter Dennis- San Antonio Skatepark Association; Presented a letter to the committee. Explained that skate parks attract tourism from cities that do not have those kinds of parks and they provide a safe haven for kids. They don't want kids skating on the public streets where they could get hit by cars. Skate parks are used everyday, unlike ballparks/swimming pools which are seasonal facilities. They are low maintenance and skating is great sport that provides a cardiovascular workout and can quell childhood obesity. Please consider skate parks for funding.

Betty Eckert- Kenwood Park; The committee needs to be sure to consider innercity parks. The committee needs to make sure that those parks have lighting, sidewalks, and that they are ADA compliant. She hopes that the small parks have been considered by this committee.

Ray Knox- Friends of the Parks; They endorse the list of projects presented by the Parks and Recreation staff. Those projects have gone under great deliberation from council, staff and the public. Also supports the Japanese Tea Gardens.

Cynthia Spielman- Beacon Hill Neighborhood Association; She provided a presentation to the committee explaining the need for linear parks and asking for support of the Beacon Hill Linear park. She asked the committee to recommend \$10,000 for a survey of the storm water culvert to analyze the effectiveness and longevity of the culvert.

Paul Morado- Spokesman for Cool Alamo Puppy, an association for San Antonio Dog parks; He explained to the committee that San Antonio needs a second dog park. Asked the committee to please take into consideration the group's previous presentation and add this project to the list of bond projects.

Chuck Saxer- He wanted to thank everyone who supports the Voelcker property acquisition. He wants to encourage everyone on the committee to come together after this process to

really support the bond to make sure it passes. He wanted to remind the committee that supporting the bond package once they submit their recommendation is very important.

Lilly Harris- She would like the committee to consider Dorie Miller Community Center.

They need an enclosed gym because it is too hot on the asphalt for the children to play in the summertime. It would cost \$450,000 to buy land and build an enclosed gym. She also wanted to discuss Copernicus Park. She cannot get out there and VIA Trans won't let her off because they can't get into the park when cars are double parked. They need to do something about that.

4) Alternative '07 Bond Project Presentations

Each speaker was allotted ten minutes to present their proposals.

a) Leo Gomez

Proposal B

He respects what the Parks Board and City Staff put together and also respects their recommendations. He included Voelcker in his package because it is an incredible opportunity that the city cannot afford to pass up. Now is the time to begin prioritizing projects for future bonds as \$14 million is not nearly enough. He picked parks based on their usage and the ability to leverage other sources of funding. Investing \$14 million in this way is better than choosing 1-2 small projects per council district. The parks in this proposal do not just serve their council districts; they serve entire quadrants. The city needs Voelcker. Culebra Creek at the corner of Culebra and 1604 is also important. This is an opportunity to begin a trailhead process for a linear park which could follow Culebra Creek. The Brooks City Base Complex needs money to develop the park into the park it has the potential to become.

b) Randy Murdock

Proposal C

The Priority # was determined when the Parks Board was originally presented with 99 projects for consideration in May. Those projects were ranked and the number of the ranking is shown on his proposal. The gym at Lockwood Park is boarded up. They can change that. There are also a lot of ADA issues within the Parks system and those need to be corrected.

c) Art Downey, Jr

Proposal D

The majority of this proposal are master plan and parks board priorities. Twenty-two of the projects the same as in Randy's plan. They suggested allocating \$600,000 to Culebra Creek Park. They also put in \$1 million for development of Voelcker Ranch in addition to the acquisition cost of the land. They felt they needed to develop a master plan for the property and provide some type of access to the property, although the amount proposed is less than the amount requested by the Parks Department. They propose \$500,000 for the Japanese Tea Gardens and placed \$1.5 million towards the Regional Sports Soccer Complex (the Gordon Hartman proposal). Their priorities were the renovation and improvement of existing parks. We really need to make sure that the parks we have can perform the function they were described to do. Elmendorf Park was also recommended as part of this proposal.

d) Julia Diana

Proposal E

Recommends following the original staff proposal. She asked staff for an update on the County bond projects. The Sports Foundation (UTSA) also received \$1.5 million from County Bonds.

e) Bonnie Connor/ Doug McMurry

Alternative to Staff Proposal A

Open space is becoming more valuable in the city. There are many needs in the city and not enough dollars so they asked staff to come up with another proposal. Bonnie then asked Pat DiGiovanni to come up and say a few words about the alternate proposal. Mr. DiGiovanni explained that the alternate proposal includes an allocation of \$1 million per year for each of the next five years. This money would be placed in a fund which would be used for specific park maintenance and renovation. Those parks have been outlined on the proposal. Mr. DiGiovanni reminded the committee that this was a proposal and no new fund could be created without City Council approval. This plan would allow the committee to recommend specific projects for the unallocated \$5 million.

5) Review Project Lists to be Used by Bond Committee in Developing Recommendations /

6) Develop Final List of Projects that the Parks Committee will Recommend to City Council

Agenda items 5 and 6 were combined. Questions by the committee were heard.

Francine Romero asked Mr. DiGiovanni to clarify one point in his presentation. Is he confident of \$5 million in funding for those identified parks?

Mr. DiGiovanni replied that he is not. The \$5 million is just a recommendation to the committee. They would then need to take to the City Council for approval, once all the specifics had been decided.

The committee members then discussed their opinions of each of the proposals.

A vote of each proposal was taken. The results were as follows:

Proposal B— 1 vote
Proposal C— 3 votes
Proposal D— 11 votes
Proposal E— 4 votes
Alternate to Proposal A— 8 votes

No proposal had the required majority number of votes.

Proposals B and C were removed from consideration due to the low number of votes.

The committee then took another vote.

Proposal D received 16 votes, which was the majority of committee members present.

There was a discussion and some committee members explained that they did not understand the voting process. They thought there would be more discussion and that the last vote was simply to get an idea of where the committee members stood; not as a final vote.

Jeff Webster submitted a Motion to reconsider the vote. The motion passed.

The committee decided to vote only between the two options with the most amount of votes- Proposal D and Alternate to Proposal A.

It was requested that each proposal be considered as a complete package. The Alternate to Proposal A has \$5 million in unallocated funds. These should be allocated before the committee votes so they know exactly what they are voting on.

Art Downey Jr. explained that there is money that is now unallocated on Proposal D (a little more than \$2 million) if those same projects identified in the Alternative to Proposal A are placed into the Park Maintenance rolling five year plan. He amended Proposal D to remove those parks and then included Hausman Park with \$500,000 proposed funding and the Denman Estate with \$1.25 million in proposed funding. He also wanted to add \$525,000 to Voelcker and \$500,000 to the Regional Sports Complex.

There was a discussion on what improvements could be completed on the Voelcker property with a little over \$1 million proposed for development. Staff has originally requested \$4 million for improvements. Malcolm Matthews answered that a design competition could be held and they could begin developing a strategic plan for the land.

Another vote was taken on Proposal D and the Alternate to Proposal A. Proposal D received 17 votes, a majority of committee members present.

7) **Closing Remarks/Adjournment**

Bonnie and Doug thanked the committee for all their hard work. They reminded the committee that a survey about the Bond process would be mailed to them and asked that the committee members complete and return the surveys in a timely manner. The meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.