



City of San Antonio

Parks Committee – 1/8/2007

2007-2012 Bond Program

Committee Comments/Questions

- Carole Abitz- Requested detail of the type of improvements/renovations/development that is being proposed for each project
 - Malcolm Matthews- The Parks and Recreation Department will provide that for the committee. He asked that the committee please remember that there will be community input for development of some of these projects, so the type of improvements recommended are general improvements and details will be determined at a later date once the projects are approved and coordinated with the community.
- Carole Abitz- On the website it states that citizens can send comments via the website through Jan 23rd, but this committee does not meet then—will another meeting be scheduled?
 - Peter Zanoni- All comments received will be sent to the chairpersons and they can then forward those comments to the committee.
- Leo Gomez – Are there copies of the UTSA sports complex proposal available? What about the Longhorn Quarry Complex?
 - Peter Zanoni- We have copies available of the UTSA proposal, but the Longhorn Quarry proposal was emailed directly to the committee members so we do not have a copy of that proposal. We will place a copy of that proposal on the website.

Citizen Comments/Questions

- Susan Blackwood- She is affiliated with the Sports foundation and presented a handout to the Committee. She then introduced George Block, the Facilities Chair with the Sports Foundation.
- George Block- The Sports Foundation has five projects that they are recommending to this committee. They all provide the opportunity to leverage public/private sector funds. It is important that we become partners in developing parks for our kids.
- Marco Barros- Associated with the Alamo Area Youth Soccer Association. They have looked at various proposals to increase the sports fields in the community. He wants to endorse the Hartman foundation project.
- Citizen, Name Not Given- Soccer is the #1 youth participant sport in America followed by baseball. Other communities have built soccer fields for their communities and they became a huge piece of that community. These facilities pay for themselves as soon as they are complete. Please give this strong consideration.
- Trey Thompson- He is a soccer dad and wanted to talk about the benefits of a soccer facility. It's not just about kids playing soccer; it's about getting families out there to play. San Antonio soccer is so much more expensive than in other communities because there are so few fields here. The community needs more fields. These will benefit the entire community.
- Reverend Buckner Fanning- Wanted to talk about handicapped children and their needs and support the Gordon Hartman Project proposal. There are 26,500 handicapped children and they have no special facilities available to them. Gordon Hartman has a great need and a desire to help those children. This would be a marvelous gift for the children and their parents. Please consider that proposal.
- Michael Bevcler- Here to speak in support of the San Antonio Sports Foundation. The city is in dire need of soccer and baseball fields. The SA Sports Foundation has a group of people who would like to put up money to construct and run the fields after they are operational. He would like the committee to open up their pocketbooks and hearts to help children in the City of San Antonio. He then introduced Scott Mayer who runs the South Texas Sliders- tournaments every weekend for kids ages 13 & up.

- Scott Mayer- He represents a group who works with youth in developing baseball skills. They travel all over the state and the country to further their skills and to promote the children. He would like the committee to develop a baseball complex that would be open everyday for people from all parts of the community. The tournaments held at that complex would also generate revenue for the city with additional hotel nights, etc.
- Sybel Pici- Member of the Tri Perrin Revitalization Association. She is here on behalf of parents and businesses to support the Longhorn Quarry Project. They are citizens that desperately need a community area.
- Jose Martinez- He works with children. San Antonio needs sports/soccer facilities for its citizens so that they won't have to travel to Austin to play
- Brad Parrott- Associate Athletic Director from UTSA. He wanted to run through the criteria set by council and wants to show how this complex meets that criteria- #1 and #3 are met because UTSA would maintain the park; #7 and #9 would be met because the park would be built in the fastest growing area of San Antonio and it is also an area void of parks; #10 would be met because the facility would fully comply with ADA requirements and would also host the Special Olympics and other events for persons with disabilities.
- John Valenzuela- He is the Head Coach of Madison High School. The facilities in NEISD are better than the facilities at UTSA. We need to help them. Division 1 athletes deserve Division 1 facilities. UTSA does not have a place for those athletes to participate in. He wants to encourage this committee to help UTSA develop a competitive athletic park.
- Manuel Maldonado- Athletic Coordinator for UTSA Downtown Campus. The Campus participates in P20 initiatives to reverse the drop out rates of children in downtown schools and encourage those children to stay in school. 3,000 children have been touched by this program. They work with kids on both athletic and educational goals. He wants to encourage support of the UTSA Athletic Complex.
- Adam Cowdin- He is the Student Body President at UTSA. UTSA is the fastest growing public school in Texas and the 2nd largest school in the UT system. They do not have competitive athletic facilities. Each council district includes at least 250 UTSA students, so the support of the Athletic Complex would touch every council district. The legislature cannot allocate funding for athletic facilities, so they need this committee to support the Athletic Facilities. Parks are for decades to come and this Athletic Park will be a destination for all citizens as well as for other cities in the area.
- William Shea- He moved from San Francisco to San Antonio about 15 yrs ago. He went on tour of the Voelcker property and learned a lot about the history of the park and its topography. That park is a gem and a wonderful asset to the community and provides access to the outdoors. In the future, people will say they can't image San Antonio without the Voelcker Park, the same way New Yorkers feel about Central Park.
- Scott Smith- He lives in City Council District 1 and is here to support the purchase of the Voelcker property in its entirety. That is an opportunity to provide the region with a pristine park. This is an opportunity that the city should not pass up.
- Nydia Tijerina Darby- She is a licensed physical therapist who owns her own business. She moved to San Antonio in 1993 and is disturbed by the lack of green space available for San Antonio's residents. This city has been listed as one of the unhealthiest cities. Many residents risk their personal safety when they exercise along busy city streets. With the development of the Voelcker Property, recreational sports can be enjoyed by all residents.
- Chuck Saxer- Seldom do groups have an opportunity to influence history. That can be the group's legacy. This committee can make that happen. Voelcker will be a community park, the same as Brackenridge Park downtown. When you visit that park, you see people from all over the community. This committee should unanimously concur with the purchase of the Voelcker property.
- Ray Knox- San Antonio needs more parkland and more green space and more baseball and soccer fields. The parks are owned by the citizens of San Antonio. This committee needs to make sure

that bond money is not prohibitive- decisions should be made on behalf of all San Antonio citizens. He thinks that all people should have access to parks.

- Esteban Cruz- Wants to talk about Pearsall Park. It's already there on the map, but there's nothing on it; it has not been developed. It is a Southside park and it should look like a park. He would like to see some improvements made to that park such as benches, etc.
- Marie Stout- She lives in Government Hill. They have a park with nothing but bare land. They need a place for children to play. They would like to have some benches, play area, walking/jogging track, etc.
- Marlene Hawkins- President of Government Hill Community Association. She wants to talk about Persing Park. She presented a handout to the committee. 33% of the families in the neighborhood make less than \$18,000 per year and they won't travel to the Voelcker Property. To renovate Persing Park would be a small project. The park also serves Persing Elementary School. They use the park for recreation and PE activities. The principal has asked for a walking trail around the edge of the park for the students and the community to use for exercising. The park is also in need of more lighting for the basketball, baseball and soccer areas. The soccer field also needs leveling and the children's play area is unsafe because the slide is too high from the ground. They have a cost estimate of \$100k for the entire project and would like the committee to consider funding that.
- Otis Thompson- Presented a handout to the committee for Martin Luther King Park. They would like MLK park to be developed as a cultural and tourist destination. Currently, there is not a single tourist destination in District 2. MLK park has been a neglected park and it is very important. The annual MLK march starts there and around 100,000 people come to that march. If you build this as a cultural and historical destination, people will come and visit it.
- David Curtis- President of Tanglewood Residents Association. They are located off of IH10 and DeZavala and have 868 homes in the association. On the east side of University Industrial Park are 12 acres of land available for purchase where they could set up a family park. That land is currently owned by people in Idaho and they have tried but cannot get in touch with those people. The valuation of that property on record from Bexar Appraisal is \$1,000. He would like this committee to help the city get ownership of this property and develop a park there.
- Richard Peña- The children in their neighborhood and go to Springtime Park located at Babcock and Springtime. One child was going to the park and crossed the busy street and was hit by car. They want this park to be built at the end of the street where there is a dead end. District 8 needs a park in that area. Building a park there will make a contribution to our children- they need somewhere to play.
- Paul Morado- Provided a handout to the committee about Cool Alamo Puppy, a citizen's advocacy group. There is only one dog park in San Antonio and that is in District 4. Austin has 12 dog parks and they are smaller than San Antonio. There is a need for development of more dog parks in the San Antonio area.
- Carter Dennis- From the San Antonio Skate Park Association. Their goal is to get more public skate parks built. There are seven public skate parks in San Antonio and their goal is to have seven more. These could be funded with the May 2007 Bond Election. Skate parks provide a safe place and keeps kids off the street. It also provides a cardiovascular activity. San Antonio's skate parks are used every single day of the year. They can also add to tourism and can bring in events which will add to the economy.
- Lila Cockerell- Sent letter advocating support of the Japanese Tea Gardens.
- Olga Lizcano- Citizen from District 7 and a member of the Donaldson Neighborhood Association. There is currently no place to have meetings within the boundaries of the District. They can't use the rooms at the Joe Ward community center because the rooms are next to gym and are too noisy. The highest percent of activities in the center occur in that gym. They also suggest having senior activities, but they currently have none. She is asking the committee to soundproof the meeting rooms that already exist so they can be used by the community. She would also like to talk about hike/bike trails- Proposition 2 was supposed to improve the hike/bike trails at Salado Creek. Would like to see this expanded to other creeks.

Additional Committee Comments/Questions

- Doug McMurry- because the committee is running short on time, let's go around the table and spend about 30 seconds talking about what each member likes and does not like about the staff recommendations discussed during the December 18, 2006 meeting.
- Jeff Webster- It's obvious that there are more needs than money; would like to look at projects on the list that have leverage opportunities- turn the city's dollars into more money
- Paul Vaughn- Japanese Tea Gardens need to be worked on; Northside park in need of facilities work; has a hard time committing large amount of funds available to something like soccer fields; Pearsall Park and Tanglewood park seems like bargains
- Amelia Valdez- MLK park; Boys and Girls club located nearby
- Margaret Tovar- Need to consider the maintenance of existing parks; there are several pools that need to be taken care of and if we don't do it, we will be looking at closing public pools because they will no longer be safe or useful; Voelcker Park
- Alex Saucedo- Would like to know what phases some of these parks are in; would like to try and complete some of these phases; Longhorn Courts are a great idea for the whole city
- Francine Romero- Voelcker, Japanese Tea Gardens; These are not on list--McAllister Park, Spanish Governor's Palace, La Villita; Would like to see an item for District 8 for at least one more Proposition 3 property to be open to the public; strong concerns about the UTSA proposal-lacking information about plan
- Tim Reznicek- need to maintain parks and provide upkeep/equipment; we also need green space as well; need to know the amount we can leverage from the Voelcker Property
- Lloyd Rawson- Finish what you started at Brooks and other similar parks; finish first and then continue on to other properties
- Scott Price- Would like to take a look at projects leveraged with other money and projects that benefit the most children; The Brooks Complex; The Culebra complex; tournament play draws people nationally
- Charles Pope- He is from District 3 and only sees one project from that area; involved in little league in Stinson Field Park; they need lights on that field and he has been fighting for those for 17 years; There are a lot of kids out there and they are kicked out when it gets dark because there is no light; it is also not ADA compliant; the concession stand needs to be repaired
- Ken Palacios- Question on the Voelcker Property- Can we buy Voelcker and not put Phase 1 development in that cost?
 - Malcolm Matthews- Yes we can, but feel that it is a very important project. If we do not fund improvements, then there will only be a fenced, vacant piece of land. It is approximately \$4 million for the development and \$32 million for the acquisition of the land.
- Randy Murdock- Voelcker Ranch may help us leave a legacy but we will also be remembered for closing 10 pools because of the need for repairs; We need to address serious infrastructure problems; Voelcker Ranch is in District 8 and they will get 65% of the total funding; no matter how you slice it, he thinks that the funds should be spent equitably among all districts
- Joan Korte- Maintenance of parks we already have; Riverwalk needs ADA improvements; walkways, lighting, electric, utilities and amenities and if we don't take care of it, it will deteriorate; HemisFair Park- a plan was put into writing 2-3 years ago and nothing was ever done
- Lynn Hickey- We need to balance; the list is overwhelming and difficult to balance; we need to look at what can have the most impact with the most meaning for citizens; what are we doing for kids?- we need to also consider the developing needs or else you will end up with empty land
- Gordon Hartman- It is our job to look at the entire city and community; we should place some focus for funding for children with disabilities- there are 25,000 kids in San Antonio who cannot play in our current parks; they have to watch other kids swing and play; we can leverage \$2 million to build a park to deal with the issue of children with special needs and to bring soccer fields to San Antonio
- Leo Gomez- Supports Voelcker Park, but then that only leaves the committee with \$14 million; should they spread that out among the city or for 2-3 projects with greatest impact; he is leaning towards projects that will have the leverage to help more children

- Joseph Cruz- All parks that need maintenance are also important; we need to concentrate on balance; need to focus on what is best for the city
- AJ Garcia- Of the four projects with the highest cost estimates, 3 of the 4 are just for the acquisition of land; they need to consider fixing up land that the city already owns; also 3 of those 4 are on the Northside and that is a concern; need to continue with renovations at HemisFair Park
- Heidemarie Flannery- Agree with AJ 100%; look at small parks in the neighborhoods and the need to have these available for people to use; don't want to see citywide projects take over at the expense of neighborhood parks
- Art Downey, Jr.- The Voelcker acquisition is key and has already been approved by city council, but unfortunately it takes a big part of the funds; would like to know what is the percentage of maintenance budgeted for O&M of these parks
- Julia Diana- Prioritize projects that benefit all citizens, not special interests; we could have sports parks in Voelcker—need to act on this once in a lifetime opportunity; maintenance should also be an on-going thing, but should not be included with bond money
- Manuel Garza- Upgrading and improving existing parks
- Brett Codd- Undevelopment of parks- Persing, MLK Park- parks should be maintained and developed for all children; development of underserved areas and undeveloped parks
- Hector Cardenas- Caracoal Springs, Perez—could not find these in the strategic plan; would like a skate park at San Pedro; sees acquisition of land only in District 8 and \$36 million is quite a bit of money; maybe we should hold back on some of that money; if there are master plans for some of the parks, maybe we should address those instead of picking up new stuff; should do an inventory of all pocket parks; if you can pick up something like that cheap, we should do that; should include Spanish Governor's Palace, Japanese Tea Gardens; need to do something for San Pedro Park; the only things older than that park are the Alamo and Mission San Jose; things need to be done there; spend money where it will have the most effect- I don't see anything for San Pedro Park on the list and they do have a master plan for that park
- Toni Cadena- Voelcker Park acquisition- should go ahead with that; inner city parks- need to improve them; really need to concentrate on inner city parks
- Doris Brown- Get Voelcker and other land acquisitions before the developers get in there and pour concrete on it; neighborhood parks cannot be ignored- need to be fixed and brought up to ADA standards; we need more places where kids can play and practice; Japanese Tea Gardens
- Roy Botello- Collins Garden Park- would like to concentrate on that; let's finish what we started; need to make a commitment- this is what it is and this is what it is going to be
- Carole Abitz- Do not like Voelcker Property acquisition and lopsided cost; the Council Districts do not relate to the Parks Strategic Plan; in the southwest sub-area there is only \$525,000; if you remove Pearsall Park, that leaves only 2.7 acres in that entire sub-area; wants to have a chance to speak and discuss as a committee
- Jaime Aguillon- never heard of Voelcker Park and can't justify spending 72% of the total budget on one park; he lives by Pearsall Park and now sees a sign, but the gates are always closed—need to finish what we started—nothing has been finished there; he can't find a place for the CYO team to practice- there are not enough facilities on the Southside at all; developers should be responsible for developing parks when they build new houses; feel strongly about not spending 72% of budget on one park