

MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF UNIVERSAL CITY, TEXAS
Regular Meeting, Tuesday Evening, 25 April 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Harry Westerfield at 6:06 p.m.
2. QUORUM CHECK: Chair Harry Westerfield

Commission Members present:

Harry Westerfield, Chairperson
Alexis Adams, Member
Mary Eddy, Member
Judy Schindler, Former Member

Also Present:

Randy Luensmann, Public Works Director
Maribel Garcia, Deputy City Clerk
Brent Luck, Luck Designs

Not Present:

Nick Ferguson, Member
Janet Tennis, Member

Chair Westerfield noted a quorum was present.

3. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

Bernie Rubal, 635 Balboa, addressed hazards at the disk park including an irrigation tube. He also commented on graffiti and painted rocks in the same area. He noted there may be coral snakes. He asked about surplus Snowfest promotional money and if it would be allocated to next year's Snowfest or other parks; he worried about allocation of a budget surplus reported in an audit from the prior year. He reiterated his want for an intern program for the parks department and suggested a troubled-youths summer program.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING:

Ms. Eddy moved to approve the minutes of previous meetings. Ms. Adams seconded the motion.

Motion approved unanimously.

5. BUSINESS:

A. Discussion and approval on the City 2023-2033 Parks Master Plan.

Mr. Luensmann explained the approval process and stated this would be a Council agenda item on May 2nd if passed in this meeting.

Mr. Luck gave a brief overview of the plan and noted edits from the prior meeting.

Ms. Adams pointed out an error in the Median Age of Universal City.

Mr. Luck stated he would fix it prior to the Council meeting. He continued his overview and mentioned he borrowed from prior Plans and Plan objectives.

Mr. Luensmann, after Mr. Luck went over the Inventory section of the Plan, asked Mr. Luck to distinguish Athenian Dog Park from Athenian Park, as they are separate establishments.

Mr. Luck said he would look to prior Plans to see the description and distinction between the two parks because there may have been a reason for their combination.

Ms. Adams asked for clarification of “accessibility.”

Mr. Luck clarified that “accessibility” meant wheelchair accessible and not what would be considered “total” accessibility. He continued with his presentation, stating that Randy would provide the number of benches to him for the Inventory. He gave an overview of parks that were new from the 2013 Plan.

Ms. Eddy asked whether the pickleball court should be mentioned in the Inventory.

Mr. Luck stated he would amend the Plan to distinguish between a pickleball court and a basketball court. He explained his inclusion of other items in the Inventory, namely the consideration of undeveloped land, conservancy land, and independent school district facilities.

Ms. Eddy asked why school facilities would be counted as part of City Parks inventory.

Mr. Luck explained that, though independent school facilities may be officially closed to the public, they often do not act in this way. They can be considered through the lens of providing a parks service, therefore being included in consideration of underserved areas. He said many schools allow communities to use their parks and playgrounds after hours and on weekends, making them function as community parks.

Mr. Luensmann clarified for the Committee that this is only a consideration and that the City is not promoting the use of independent school parks and playgrounds by residents.

Mr. Luck explained the exclusion of a radius of service map in this Plan, stating it no longer made sense for demonstrating need. He explained that many parks serve multiple purposes at the same time, such as community and neighborhood parks, making the radius map fully covered. He added that the report notes accomplishments and developments from the prior Plan.

Mr. Luensmann asked to correct a section of the park map, stating that Section 13 of the map was no longer dedicated park land. He said he would give Mr. Luck the estimate of available park land in that area for purposes of the Inventory section.

Mr. Luck went over the survey portion of the Plan, showing the needs assessment and demographic results. He noted that though there is a high percentage of residents who rent, the majority or residents who responded to the survey are homeowners.

Ms. Adams said this may be due to less personal stake from renters.

Mr. Luck noted the acreage of neighborhood parks decreased because of some parks being moved into the community parks category.

Ms. Adams asked him to define an ornamental park.

Mr. Luck defined an ornamental park as a small park that is only for looks and does not function as much else than that. He stated that according to national standards, Universal City has a healthy ratio of parks to population. He said when it came to improvements, trails were the top priority.

Ms. Eddy asked to clarify the difference between trails and paths.

Mr. Luck said paths are usually paved but for the Plan's purpose, paths are trails too. He also said nature conservancy land would increase the number of trails. He stated that a recreation center was not within the ten-year plan as well as skate parks or soccer fields. He did not include fishing docks in the Inventory as they are forthcoming projects. He said senior amenities were likely to increase due to exercise stations. The last section of the Plan was Implementation, which included the reorganization of the priorities list based on the survey. He showed the difference between empirical results and reprioritization, noting that this was strategic to make the City more grant competitive. He said that if the process of reprioritization was transparent, they are okay to reprioritize.

Ms. Eddy asked how parks improvements would affect HOA fees, referring to Copano and Remington.

Mr. Luensmann stated fees would not be affected as those parks are the responsibility of the HOA.

Mr. Luck presented the rest of the Plan including the appendix. The appendix included free responses, a conceptual design of a recreation center from 2013, which would be corrected by Mr. Luensmann, and plans for Summit Park (formerly Gothic Park). Mr. Luck received a consensus regarding amendments to the Plan to be made before being presented to Council.

Chair Westerfield asked if they would have enough time to have the Plan amended before the May 2nd Council Meeting.

Both Mr. Luck and Mr. Luensmann responded yes.

Ms. Eddy moved to approve the Plan with the aforementioned changes. Ms. Adams seconded the motion.

Motion approved unanimously.

Mr. Luensmann listed the following steps including the May 2nd City Council Meeting. They requested all Committee members to attend in support of the Plan and to answer questions.

Mr. Luck stated once the Plan was approved, it would be sent to the Texas Wildlife Commission to review, and then it would be sent in applications to grants.

B. Update on Cimarron Park Improvements.

Mr. Luensmann stated all corrections to equipment have been completed. He reported progress at the park, saying next steps would be pouring concrete, which would have to be coordinated with the concrete pour at Veteran Park. Then landscaping would be finished. His goal is May completion of the park.

C. Update on Veteran Park playground improvements.

Mr. Luensmann shared that contractors were scheduled to pour concrete on April 26th, then they would complete the ramp and the flooring company would pour rubber. His goal is late May or early June completion.

Ms. Schindler noted that last time she attended the park, there were 14 cars there in curiosity about the project.

Mr. Luensmann added that many trails go through that park and add to its interest.

Chair Westerfield asked for the status of the playscape.

Mr. Luensmann reported the playscape was almost finished.

D. Discussion on upcoming Red Horse Park Phase 1 parking lot rehab.

Mr. Luensmann shared the Bid opening for this project was that morning. There were 11 bidders with Yantis being the lowest one. He reported next steps would be an engineer review of their bid and then a presentation of the bid recommendation to Council. He said work left after this project includes the larger parking lot and the alleyway of Red Horse Park. In the bigger picture, there would be a trail connecting Red Horse with the alleyway connecting roads to provide access.

E. Discussion on future park improvements for FY-2024.

Mr. Luensmann stated Staff are tasked with putting together a budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024. He asked the committee what they would like him to focus on when budgeting.

Ms. Schindler wanted trail improvement around Athenian noting it was dangerous.

Ms. Eddy wanted continued playscape updating, focusing on older playscapes.

Ms. Adams asked for clarification on what was being prioritized at Universal City Park.

Mr. Luensmann stated the larger field was being prioritized.

Ms. Eddy asked for the large sewer tubes toward the back of the park to be addressed, as they are being used by the public for dubious purposes.

Ms. Adams and Ms. Eddy asked for water fountain updates, noting a water bottle filling station would be ideal.

Mr. Luensmann went over the details of that sort of renovation that would make it expensive, including whether existing water pipes are there or have to be placed.

Ms. Eddy asked for more trail lighting and more parking at Veteran Park.

Mr. Luensmann stated the parking may be difficult as they may max out the land soon.

Chair Westerfield stated that if Mr. Luensmann is looking for big projects to tackle, please look at the Summit Park project progress.

Ms. Adams asked for another basketball court that is a dedicated basketball court and not split as a pickleball/basketball combination court. She stated both sports are popular, making all the courts busy.

Mr. Luensmann stated he would like to do something with the lot hoop in Red Horse Park. He also said there was an online schedule residents could check to see if a court was available, but there will always be walk-ups, making this unreliable.

Chair Westerfield asked what Staff would like to do with the budget.

Mr. Luensmann stated they would like to continue updating older parks before focusing on building new parks. He noted Staff must still have money to maintain existing parks. He said that UC Park's volleyball court received a contract for doubles volleyball tournaments. He stated that there was a grant that could be used for a parks project such as upgrading the volleyball courts but noted that grants cannot be used for parking.

Ms. Eddy asked whether the current parking occupancy limited hosting events.

Mr. Luensmann responded that the parks would use overflow parking and usually have two police officers directing traffic toward the overflow parking when other parking is full. He noted that when overflow parking is used, it is usually not required by regular attendants and the users are residents outside of Universal City. He stated that with recent contracts, the parks department needs to focus on UC Park. He said these improvements cannot be done through the operating budget and must be done through grants. He cautioned that as parks improve, those parks would max out in capacity, including UC Park. He said some improvements that would be easier to make and less expensive are trail improvements, which can be done with in-house equipment and labor. This would help with trail expansion.

Ms. Eddy asked whether they would gather money donations again.

Mr. Luensmann clarified that this was a Parks Partners initiative.

6. COMMISSION MEMBER ITEMS:

Ms. Eddy asked whether there would be a ribbon cutting to open playgrounds.

Mr. Luensmann answered yes for both Cimarron and Veteran Parks.

Ms. Schindler asked when applications to be on the Commission would be open.

7. ADJOURNMENT:

With Ms. Adams moving to adjourn, Chair Westerfield adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Harry Westerfield
Chairperson