

MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION REGULAR ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

May 20, 2019 (Monday) at 12:00 PM

Wright Cuney Recreation Center

718 41st Street

(409) 797-3715

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT 12:08 PM BY CHARLYN VAIANI.

PRESENT: Rose Tejerina (Mayoral), Charlyn Vaiani (District 1), Shane McDermott (District 4)
Marlee Williams (District 5), John Listowski (Council Member)

ABSENT: Tad Lewis (District 2), Jami Durham (District 3), Dyann Polzin (District 6),
Amy Bly (Council Member Ex-Officio)

CITY STAFF: Mario Rabago, Director of Parks & Recreation
Clarence Swannegan, Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation
Sheila Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Recreation
Megan Pierce, Administrative Manager & Special Events Coordinator
Erica Peace, Aquatics Manager
Dudley Anderson, Architectural Project Manger

Review and Approval of Board Minutes: No minutes available from March Park Tour. No Meeting held in April 2019.

Discussion / Action Items:

Welcome and Introduction of the Wright Cuney Recreation Center Facility, Park Amenities, Programs and Staff

Mario Rabago and Sheila Smith welcomed everyone to the Wright Cuney Recreation Center. Wright Cuney Recreation Center was described as more of a community center than a fitness center. Mario mentioned numerous repairs and upgrades needed at the facility, but indicated that over \$150,000.00 from the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) as well as some additional CDBG funding may soon be available to help and that “good things are on the way”.

Presentation of Jones Park Conceptual Plans & Discussion / Feedback

Dudley Anderson, the City’s Architectural Project Manager, began his presentation on conceptual plans for the renovation Jones Park by displaying the current overhead view of the Park area. He described the park area as very low which impacts the design and drainage potential. He explained that water tends to pond towards the center of the park and that currently drainage and flooding has historically been an issue at that park. One concept that began to be discussed by Upper City Management involves digging a large hole in the center of the park in an effort to create a retention pond. Around the retention pond could be walking trails and park benches. There could also potentially be a fairly large dog park (separated by small and large dog areas), small playground area, restrooms, and a tree farm area in which the City could grow their own trees. He stressed the concept is just an idea, and has not yet been discussed with the public. Ms. Vaiani mentioned that the retention pond could potentially need to be enclosed as it could be unsafe for small children or a liability. Mr. Anderson mentioned that was a good possibility as dogs would also likely try to jump in and out of it. The retention pond would have to be aerated but there is potential for growing plants inside of it and having fish inhabiting it to make it more viable. There is follow up feedback from members of the group noting that Jones Park has been in need of attention, and that residents living on the West End would likely appreciate a dog park in that area but additional outside public input would also be a good avenue to explore.

Update on Aquatics and Swim Team Subcommittee

Erica Peace began by discussing a recent visit to San Antonio where the City and School District work well together with each other and outside entities on a Swim Team. This allows access to more resources, including additional pools. She stated she would like to see Galveston go that way as well, with the City working with GISD and any other outside entity interested in participating. She is working to facilitate a meeting with all the “players” in a room to align goals and agendas for a Swim Team. Because it’s the busiest time of the year for the Pool, the process is still ongoing. Mr. McDermott would also potentially like to see lifeguards staffed from an older Swim Team to help solve a lifeguard shortage concern. He mentioned the current lack of available facilities is placing a strain on the School District and the sooner something can be completed the better. Erica explained that the process could take until September or October to begin because of items like lease agreements, council approvals, current available resources, and communication with outside entities being needed to unite and move forward. Safety

is always their biggest priority, but Erica also wants to see the Pool succeed and offer numerous activities at a high level, as well as bring in more revenue opportunities.

Update on Recreation Center Programs

Mario Rabago stated Swim Lesson and Summer Programs have begun and are moving along. McGuire-Dent Recreation Centers hours have increased. They now open at 5:00 AM, rather than 6:00 AM and had about 10 people show up the first day at the new time. Feedback on opening earlier has been positive from facility users. Memberships are currently at 313 Adults, 172 Seniors, 12 Military, 364 Youth, and 21 Daily Users. Initial projections on Memberships were conservative estimates, but after only charging for 2 weeks, initial projections have already been exceeded.

Update on Special Events

Megan Pierce provided those in attendance with literature on the previous and upcoming events. She mentioned that a lot of events have occurred since the Park Tour concluded in March as Spring is a very busy time of year for Special Events. The next major ones that are being processed are for the Juneteenth Parade & Picnic, as well as the big 4th of July Parade on the Seawall. She detailed a few of the components related to the Juneteenth Parade as far as location (North of Broadway) and schematics. Once Spring events are completed, Special Events generally slow down in the summer due to heat. During this time, there is still an immense amount of planning taking place for Fall events, as well as post-event reconciliations from events that have already occurred. Mario Rabago mentioned that due to the increase in the number of events, and components involved in the process, Megan will be taking on a larger role in Special Events and will be moving over to City Hall in the near future to work directly for Barbara Sanderson. Megan mentioned she would still attend board meetings and continue to participate in and assist the Parks and Recreation Department with various activities and projects.

Update on Maintenance Division

Mario Rabago introduced Clarence Swannegan as the new Assistant Director of Parks & Recreation over the Park Maintenance side. Clarence was born and raised in Galveston and has worked in several departments at the City, most recently with the Public Works Department. He described himself as having a “Get it done” mentality and he is currently working to get things together on the Maintenance side with personnel, equipment, and resources to get a good grip on everything.

Public Comment: N/A

Council Report: N/A

Director’s Report:

Mario Rabago mentioned that additional fitness equipment for McGuire-Dent would be on Council’s agenda to approve at their next meeting. He also announced that the Official Ribbon Cutting for the Lindale Dog Park Agility Course would be May 31, 2019 at 4:00 PM.

Board Member’s Reports / Comments

N/A

Discussion Items for Inclusion on Next Agenda:

After Hour Use of the Pool (Shane McDermott)

Next meeting:

12:00 noon on Monday, July 15, 2019 at McGuire Dent Recreation Center, 2222 28th Street

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:31 PM