

City of Alpine
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting
May 12, 2021
5:30 PM in a Virtual Zoom Meeting

Minutes

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM.

2. Determination of Quorum and Proof of Notice of Meeting

PAB members present were Kirsten Moody, Darin Nance, Leticia Carrillo, Ben Struthers, and Estella Vega. City staff present were Erik Zimmer and Marci Tuck.

3. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting

Darin moved that we approve the minutes from the last meeting and Ben seconded. All members were in favor.

4. Announcements from Board Members

Kirsten announced that Estella Vega is the new PAB member for Ward 4.

5. Citizen Comments

Chris Ruggia discussed the possibility that he, Maggie Rumbelow, and some others are thinking of painting drawings at the skate park in memory of Maggie's partner Tommy, who was an avid skater.

Information and Discussion Items

a. Update from Big Bend Parks and Recreation for Kids (Letty Carrillo and Marci Tuck-Havlik)

Discussed BBPaRKs renewing their annual movie license and using the Alpine Civic Center as a venue for future movie showings. BBPaRKs is looking for more volunteers to start movie nights again. Sul Ross raised approximately \$1,000 during their movie nights but they are currently unsure what percent of that goes to BBPaRKs, as the revenue was going to be split between the two programs. Also BBPaRKs does not want to compete with the Alpine Public Library's summer movie night program so they'll work together to not interfere with the APL's showings.

b. Update from Parks Crew (Robert Llanez)

Robert was unable to be at the meeting but let Kirsten know they are cutting back on some watering. The parks workers are also getting the pool ready for summer use.

c. Discuss any comments or complaints about parks that board members or parks crew have heard from citizens.

A citizen asked who trims and manages the trees along Holland Ave. They are needing maintenance but it was discussed that they are managed through TxDOT and not the city. Discussion on if these could be beautified before Viva Big Bend.

- d. Update on Kokernot Lodge / Poet's Grove project with Sul Ross (Adelina Beall and Ben Struthers).

Ben asked if this project is on the city's radar for future budgeting and it was verified that it is. An MOU will be needed between the city and SRSU since much of the project is on university property. The city will pump effluent water southwest from the treatment plant back to a primary pond in Kokernot where it will then flow down to 3 other ponds. SRSU did some clean-up of the area of debris in the last month. Chris Ruggia is working on a Q&A so citizens will be able to know what the project entails. The city should be able to promote eco-tourism such as birding once this project completes. Ben learned at the previous meeting that grassland restoration acreage may decrease. The project group is getting quotes and may start planting native grasses in June. Two blinds will likely be installed with one looking towards the ponds and the other looking towards the grasses. They are estimating around 180,000-200,000 gallons per day flowing into the ponds but they are unsure how much will sink into ground and how much will remain standing. Discussion on how much water can be shared with the golf course if needed. The city will run the pipe soon then test for 60-90 days to see what changes need to be made.

- e. Update on Dark Skies / Night Sky ideas (Chris Ruggia).

Chris has worked with people at the observatory and West Texas Friends of the Night Sky and all are working towards making the area a dark sky reserve. The tri-county with parts of Reeves or Pecos Counties, if approved, will be the biggest night sky reserve in the world. The parks board can work to identify the best city park to use for a night sky viewing area. An ordinance change at the city level could then designate certain spots in a park as permissible to go after hours; currently all parks are closed at night. Signs can also be created using HOT funds for this purpose. Ideas for the viewing area include a concrete pad, low power telescopes, or chaise concrete furniture by local artists. Discussion on the possibility of using Alpine as a more semi-urban location for dark skies since Big Bend State Park is so remote. Baines Park and Kokernot Park are primary spots for further investigation.

- f. Discuss 2021-22 budget (Erik Zimmer).

Erik discussed the budget and stated the parks operational budget doesn't change much. There are 5-6 employees for city parks. Last year they budgeted around \$20,000 for capital improvements. Much of the budget is taken up by the push to fix streets. Marci Tuck has been hired over the last year to focus on pursuing grants to materialize capital projects, such as the one to develop Pueblo Nuevo Park. Department heads work on a 5-year plan in June that is then sent to the city manager. A draft budget is made in July to be presented to the city council. The city budget is approximately 14 million dollars, but requests are usually \$800,000 to 1.2 million over this amount. The two enterprise funds (water & sewer, and gas) both provide revenue, but the proceeds can only be used for certain projects. The gas fund (Fund 8) has been used in the past to redirect funds to other community needs. Street work has come from this fund. Parks have limited revenue coming in. Pool admissions bring in \$10,000-12,000 annually. In 2013 Erik believes there could be \$300,000-500,000 available for CIP in future years if city council approves, but this is dependent on police department needs as well as paving. Parks projects would come from matching grants to alleviate costs. Discussion of 2

mowers to be purchased. One in 2021 and a Kubota in 2023. Robert Llanez is looking at how long the current mower will last before these options are considered. The final recommended budget from the PAB will go to Megan Antrim, Erik Zimmer, Robert Llanez, and Eddie so they can look it over before sending it back to the PAB. It will then be forwarded to the city for the budget workshops in July. Discussion about using HOT funds for infrastructure and if there is a possibility for this purpose. Chris Ruggia has wanted to do an inventory of Alpine sports so we can see what we would need to bring in tournaments and what our current resources are. Estella Vega is going to bring back information on how many fields are needed to get Alpine listed as a tournament facility for baseball and softball. Estella mentioned adding other events such as boxing matches or other community events to the city parks calendar. Discussed moving some play equipment from Baines over to Centennial; unsure of logistics on this.

The board discussed the proposed parks budget spreadsheet, which showed a few thousand dollars to be spent at several parks. The board members said they would rather allot more funds to fewer parks.

Painting and cleanup are possible volunteer projects to save costs in the budget. Discussed a possible future meeting at American Legion Park to get community feedback on that project. Discussed updating Nopalitos Park but this has been put on hold to get community feedback first. Consensus was received to budget for improvements at American Legion and Centennial Parks.

- g. Discuss board members' selection of work areas from the parks master plan. Postponed until the next meeting.

6. Action Items

- a. Discuss and consider recommending that Council approve a grant application to the Texas Department of Transportation / Transportation Alternatives Set-Aside program (Marci Tuck-Havlik).

Marci discussed the overview of the 3 phases of this grant project. She discussed estimated costs for the project. The city will cover 20% of the project which will be approximately \$400,000. Darin makes a motion to make a recommendation to city council to approve a grant application to the TxDOT set-aside program. Ben seconded and all approved.

- b. Discuss and consider making a recommendation to Council to approve the proposed changes to Chapter 74, Article I of the city ordinances, with amendments based on discussion at the May 4, 2021, city council meeting.

Changes are to only allow beer or wine and not all alcohol. Also included that you have to hire security for these events. Ben made a motion to recommend to Council to approve the proposed changes to Chapter 74, Article I of the city ordinances with amendments with Darin seconding. No discussion and all approved.

7. Items and locations for coming meetings.

- a. Next meeting will be online on April 14th, 2021.