

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday, October 21st - 6 pm
CenterPoint Energy Community Center
7001 Fifth Street, Bellaire, Texas 77401

1. Call To Order: by Neil Verma at 6:04PM

Attendance: *Board:* Neil Verma, Todd Blitzler, Susan Hawes, Denise Leisten, Kevin Sisk and Travis Crabtree

Council Liaison: Mandy Nathan

Parks & Rec Department: Karl Miller, Cheryl Bright-West and Shadae Martin

Guests: David Montague, Candidate for Council Position 6; Kevin Newman, Candidate for Council Position 6; Alide Drewes, West University Resident

2. Announcement of a Quorum by Neil Verma at 6:04PM

3. Approval of Minutes from August 26, 2015 Meeting

- Edits incorporated; Denise Leisten moved and Kevin Sisk second, minutes approved.

4. Visitor Comments

- Alide Drewes expressed concerns about BLIFE's decision to not allow citizens under fifty to attend program trips.
- Kevin Newman introduced himself as a Bellaire Resident and Candidate for Council Position 6. He expressed interest in sitting in to learn more about the board.
- David Montague introduced himself a Bellaire Resident and a retired engineer, who is a Candidate for Council Position 6.

5. Reports

a.) Liaisons to/from other Bellaire Boards or Commissions

- No reports

b.) Council Liaison Comments

- Mandy Nathan provided the following updates: Council approved budget - \$18 million in General Fund; new tax rate was approved reduced to 0.3805 though revenues increasing. The Comprehensive Plan was adopted including the Park Master Plan. A presentation was given on a suggested fastest timeline of Municipal Buildings Project. Council approved implementation of police body camera program. Staff was asked to study and report back on a plan for compensation incentives for police, firefighters. Council voted to allow beer and wine to be sold at Evelyn's Park, both in the café and events center. The contract with our City engineer was renewed. The contract for work on Holly Street was approved. Council approved the Cultural Arts Board utility box project. Board vacancies were filled.

c.) Staff Comments and Upcoming Meetings

- Karl Miller introduced newest board member Travis Crabtree, Bellaire resident and lawyer. He provided an overview of the department's monthly report highlighting the following updates: Lafayette Park playground installation is complete. Fencing around the playground and near soccer field has been installed. Bench, picnic table, trash can, and drinking fountain installation will be occurring during October. Funding was given for holiday lighting and seasonal banners. Concession Stand and Gazebo Renovation projects have been awarded and awaiting projected start and end dates from contractors. Multiple rooms, interior doors, door frames and window frames inside the Recreation center have been repainted since the conclusion of

summer camps. Currently considering Police Station & City Hall's aesthetics and structural need due to the delay of the Municipal Facilities Project. Karl made mention of several upcoming special events.

- Cheryl Bright-West provided an update on the Communications Team efforts to develop a community calendar for events throughout the City. Currently reaching out to Bellaire organizations to join in the effort to co-exist and to avoid the overlapping of events throughout the City by utilizing a collective community calendar. Encourage any board members who are a part of any Bellaire organizations to spread the word to those groups and help with the initiative.

6. Review & approval of the Bellaire Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Rules of Procedure

- A brief overview of the recommendations and revisions given in the previous board meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Rules of Procedure was given to the board by Karl Miller. The board decided to adopt the document with Susan Hawes making the motion to adopt and Denise Leisten, second.

7. Discuss request for public input regarding Evergreen Park Master Plan, January 20, 2016

- **Neil Verma** opened the floor for suggestion on the public meeting date and options for it to be during regular session board meeting or a separate meeting. Suggested were as follows:
 - Susan Hawes suggested that the meeting should be held at a location near the park; possibly Nature Discovery Center.
 - Mandy Nathan suggested that it be held in the Civic Center so that it can be recorded and to give residents an opportunity to view it from home with the session beginning at 7PM.
 - Denise Leisten suggested that it would bring more attendance if scheduled on the same night at regularly scheduled board meeting.
 - Travis Crabtree suggested that there be signs and/or banners put up near the park & outlets to promote the event and gain more attendance.
 - Todd Blitzer suggested that the board holds its regular 6PM board meeting with the public session beginning at 7PM and table any agenda item not covered for the following meeting.
- Board decided to hold the session on January 20, 2015 with regular meeting starting at 6PM, public session starting at 7PM and table agenda items if necessary.

8. Discuss rescheduling Nature Discovery Center Operations and Tour

- **Neil Verma** suggested that this decision is tabled until the November meeting to give members a chance to take into consideration the daylight savings hours, scheduling and to coordinate with NDC for possible dates.

9. Review and discuss Event Banner and Sign Guidelines

- Cheryl Bright-West presented and gave an overview of the Event Banner and Sign Guidelines which was created to establish a consistent set of guidelines as it pertains to the display of event banners and signs on City property.
- Feedback was given by several board members as it pertained to the verbiage, specificity of groups and geographical areas within the document.
- Staff will consider recommendations and revise document to present to board in the next meeting.

10. New Business and Board Comments

- Neil Verma expressed the need for new ideas to be birthed within the Parks and Advisory Board. He encouraged each member to express any ideas or concerns that each would like to see take place within the City parks. He also made the suggestion that members be assigned parks to basically check in on and report back to the board with an update.
 - Kevin Sisk – suggested that the department looks into each quadrant of the City to determine what the priorities are in each. He mentioned that it will be a good strategy to tackle some of the needs in the parks.
 - Denise Leisten – Expressed concern for the poorly lit areas in the City with emphasis on the Newcastle/NDC area. Suggested the board research the possibility of installing emergency stations. These stations would offer a “push-a-button” feature which would directly alert police in efforts to increase safety and offer a peace of mind.
 - Todd Blitzer expressed concern for the Chimney Rock esplanade which covered in concrete with grass protruding through the cracks. Made suggestions of ways to get area landscaped and made more attractive.
 - Travis Crabtree – expressed concern for the need of additional water fountains in the City especially along heavy traffic walking/running routes.
 - Susan Hawes – Provided positive feedback on the updates to the Mulberry Park tennis courts. She suggested that more recycling cans be added on or closer to the tennis courts because of the great amount of water bottles, tennis ball containers, etc. being used.
- Mandy Nathan reminded members of the Nov. 3rd election and encourage everyone to vote.

11. Adjournment Todd Blitzer moved, Denise Leisten, second. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shadae A. Martin

November 18, 2015: Next Meeting