

MINUTES

FEBRUARY 2, 2022 6:30PM

IN PERSON, CITY HALL

TYPE OF MEETING	Parks and Recreation Board Monthly Meeting
CHAIR	Will Bertron
SECRETARY	Evan Mintz
ATTENDEES	Members Present: Will Bertron, Richard Cunningham, Manish Agrawal, Evan Mintz, Stephen Damiani, Laura Turley, Brett Bingham Staff: Susan White Council Liaison: Mayor Pro Temp John Montgomery
VISITORS	Additional Attendees: Melanie Bell, Jennifer Weitzel, Catherine Weitzel, Harry Weitzel, Lauri Lankford, Barbie Horowitz, Bob Kelly, David Piwnica-Worms, Dan Reid

- I. **Call to Order:** Will Bertron called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.
- II. **Citizen Comments:** Kenneth Gullett wanted to speak about the Edloe Street Pathway, which terminates near his house. He proposed that the path stop at Sunset.

Dave Piwnica-Worms also lives near the termination of the proposed Edloe Street Pathway and doesn't want it to extend past Sunset. He says there is a gravel pathway for one part of the sidewalk, which would be bad for walking and biking. It will also send more people down a dead-end street, which he thinks is unsafe. He also thinks there is a safety concern of crossing the Sunset intersection.

Barbie Horowitz wants to eliminate the tennis backboard at Judson Park. She is excited about the Judson Park plan, including the addition of the pickleball and gaga ball amenities. However, she has concerns about the backboard on the tennis court and wants to eliminate it. She says it is loud and rarely used, and it simply does not look good. She proposes we try to donate it if possible.

Jennifer Weitzel says the proposed Edloe Street Pathway terminates at her driveway. She opposes the project because it changes the nature of her family property on a dead-end street. She also thinks it is redundant and replaces green space with hardscape, and that it is mostly just to benefit nearby commercial properties.

Harry Weitzel also wants the city to reconsider the Edloe Street Pathway and instead install plants – or that it at least terminate at Sunset. He doesn't see a need or purpose for the project.

Larry Lankord says she doesn't understand the purpose of the path going north of Sunset and compared it to the David Byrne song Road to Nowhere. She thinks that crossing Sunset is unsafe and that the street is already crowded.

Catherine Weitzel opposed the pathway. She thinks black rubber is not beautiful and will

eliminate green space, and that crossing Sunset presents a safety issue.

Bob Kelly was involved in city government for decades and says that all plans have some kind of opposition, but once-controversial plans are what turned West University into our city today — the parks, the recreation center, the swimming pool, the streets, the streetlights, the sewer system. He thinks this is an opportunity to take this stretch of land and turn it into something new. He thinks there should be a green space. He also wants to address the safety concern at Sunset.

Dan Reid has a petition of 21 names opposing the continuation of the Edloe Street Pathway past Sunset. He says his daughter was hit by a car a couple years ago, and that it is a blind turn with lots of cars going down a dead-end street and turning around.

III. **Meeting Minutes:** Minutes for the January PRB meeting were approved unanimously.

~~IV.~~ **Friends Update: Sammi**

The Park Lovers Ball is this weekend at Hotel Zaza. Even if you're not there you can take part in the silent auction online, and you can purchase raffle tickets online as well. Also they need donations of cash or wine bottles for the wine pull.

V. **Council Update: John Montgomery**

The city named Katy Wilson as employee of the year. She is the community relations officer for WUPD.

In addition to the Edloe Street Pathway proposal, the city heard proposals on a contractor to do sidewalk and street repair and for ERP software to connect internal sources data for the city.

The council had a workshop on the long-term facilities plan, which addressed the future of the community center, library, police department, fire department, City Hall, and other facilities. The city departments needs more space and has received proposals from an architecture firm with minimal property acquisition. The city wants to hear input and proposals from the community. Nothing has been decided yet.

VI. **Parks & Recreation Update: Susan White**

Edloe Street Pathway: There were some takeaways from a city council meeting on the topic. There is interest in more shade, though power lines get in the way, and better green space with plantings that won't later interfere with sightlines. They are also looking at drought tolerant and native plants that attract pollinators. There are also questions about the best design for fencing and shade structures. Updated concepts are expected from the landscape architect in early February. The city also submitted for a Texas Parks and Wildlife trails grant that would provide an 80-20 cost sharing. The alternate B design – passive seating – is the plan going forward. There is also a proposed change to the pathway so that the section north of Sunset would look like a normal sidewalk.

We still haven't heard from Centerpoint about what it would take to move or bury the

powerlines.

The board asked about potential crosswalks, which will be addressed during an upcoming traffic study.

Judson Park: There will be a meeting on Feb. 14th, 6pm for a council workshop on the topic, and then present the funding approval to Friends. On the topic of the backboard, the user group recommended relocating it because the current location blocked the view from parents sitting in the children's play area who wanted to keep an eye on older kids on the tennis court. Also, balls kept ending up in the children's play area. Citizen input has raised the potential of an east-west backboard.

The board raised the question of whether there are clear backboards or quiet backboards.

The questions was also raised about limiting hours for backboard use due to sound complaints, or posting signage warning against loud noises during inappropriate hours. The question is whether this can actually be enforced. CM Montgomery recommended reviewing the current noise ordinance.

Pickleball: The board had recommended striping Weir and Judson for pickleball. We are moving forward with the striping. A low fence is being installed at Weir to separate the courts at an estimated cost of \$4,000. The goal is to get the restriping done by April 1.

VII. **Parks & Recreation Update: Will Bertron**

Community St. Vacant Lot: Chair Bertron met with new neighbors near the lot. He told them that there are no immediate plans to do anything with the lot. Nothing is being discussed or pursued at the moment. However, he wanted them to know that some proposal was possible in the future. The new homeowners noted that sometimes sports teams use the lot to meet and celebrate, and that the drainage is very poor. They also expressed concern that transients who take the rail might use any gate at the lot to access the neighborhood. Susan White noted that a pipeline easement interferes with any potential tennis court, though you could fit two pickleball courts.

VIII. **Park Ambassador Reports & Remarks**

- Colonial Park: Amar Patel (east) [not present]; Evan Mintz (west) noted that he rarely sees people use it and wanted to know if other members had a sense of when it was being used. Susan White offered to share upcoming reservation dates. Stephen Damiani (pool) it is still cold!
- Friends Park: Sami Morrison – WULL is starting up and so kids are starting to come through.
- Huffington Park: Brett Bingham – The park is great and widely used.
- Jennie Hughes Park: Laura Turley – Just wanted to note that people were using the space in fun ways.
- Judson Park: Richard Cunningham – The chair of the historic marker committee responded to a submission and asked for some edits. The process is underway to get a historic marker. We have a window between March-May to get state approval. The county needs to officially request the marker.
- Recreation Center: Manish Agrawal – No specific updates but the West University app is great and responsive for submitting concerns to the city.

- Whitt Johnson Park: Arlene Wells – The gaga balls are mysteriously walking away from the park. Also worth noting that if items are left at a park for several days then the parks staff take it to the Rec Center for Lost & Found
- Wier Park: Lulu Lopez – There is a concrete issue at the basketball court. Upcoming planning will look at the potential of building a deck to prevent root compaction around the big oak trees.

XI. Order of Business:

New business: Chair Bertron asked about picnic table policy, and how we respond to groups moving picnic tables. Susan White addressed the issue of balls going missing from the gaga ball dispenser. We'll continue to replace missing balls but may have to remove it and treat gaga as BYOB (bring your own ball) if the problem doesn't stop.

Old business: Susan White noted that the parks crew is monitoring the conditions of park gates and fences, and noted that people should use the West U app to report problems at parks.

The board discussed bringing in Prelude Music to Colonial Park. The organization puts on shows at Levy Park.

CM Montgomery wanted to reiterate the critical role that Friends plays in raising money for the parks, and wanted to thank Susan White for all of her incredible work.

XII. Adjournment:

Motion to Adjourn – 8:08 pm.