

MINUTES

JUNE 1, 2022

6:30PM

IN PERSON, REC CENTER

TYPE OF MEETING	Parks and Recreation Board Monthly Meeting
CHAIR	Will Bertron
SECRETARY	Evan Mintz
ATTENDEES	Members Present: Will Bertron, Sami Morrison, Richard Cunningham, Amar Patel, Evan Mintz, Stephen Damiani, Lulu Lopez, Laura Turley, Arlene Wells, Stephen Damiani Staff: Susan White Council Liaison: Mayor Sample
VISITORS	Additional Attendees: Juliana Brown

I. **Call to Order:** Will Bertron called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. **Citizen Comments:**

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

IV. **Friends update: Sami Morrison, Friends Board Chair**

June 10th is highlighted as the first party on the patio of the series at Colonial Park – the Friends board and Parks board are being recognized. The events are sponsored by Mary Francis.

V. **Council Update: Susan Sample, Mayor**

The city manager has been out of town for one month and just got back. We cut the ribbon on the virtual gate.

VI. **Parks and Recreation Update: Susan White, Parks and Recreation Director**

Misc updates: Edloe Pathway -- Trees near Tinys would be impacted by plans for a wall. The city's structural engineer is looking at potential alternatives – modern metal fencing – to separate the pathway from the parking lot.

We did not get AARP funding, we're still waiting to hear about the Texas Parks and Wildlife grant.

We have received pricing from Centerpoint to relocate power poles and a guywire. The only electrical box that will be moved is a standup box partway along the path that – we believe – controls the lighting for the footbridges.

The proposal for the Poor Farm historic marker has been submitted to the county and accepted. We're waiting for state approval

Judson Park: Play structures will be repainted. We're waiting for new lighting, which has been delayed due to supply chain issues. One of the contractors for the artificial turf has backed out due to lack of workers – this is the first time in memory something like that has ever happened.

The Colonial Park ice cream social – members only – is June 3.

Fee Schedule Update – We're taking a proposal for increasing fees to City Council. This is part of the annual budget process. The proposal was discussed at the May meeting. A question was raised about pegging cost to income, especially for senior citizens who receive discounts. The city does allow for a no-questions-asked waiver for seniors who can't pay the fee. There was an effort to create a criteria-based waiver a few years ago. It became very controversial. Apparently, an urban lore exists that the bond election to fund the facility was tied to promises that seniors would be fee. We don't have any specific documentation on this. It was also pointed out that we still charge infants who might not even get in the pool. A point was made that we're making ~7% increase in revenue, which is basically keeping up with inflation. The goal was to help recoup the cost of giving pay raises to staffers.

85% of revenue comes from classes and programs – the vast majority of funds.

Rec Center Operational Hours – Staff is looking at a recommendation but we'll need to collect more info. We have found that the people who arrive at 5am also come at 530am when the facility opens at 530am. They prefer 5am, but it is difficult to bring in staffers for a 5am opening in contrast to a 530am opening.

Cardio and Weight Room Survey – Seeing about creating more room in the cardio weight room by expanding into the stretch room. We'll be doing a survey of rec center members to get feedback. A question was asked as to whether we can include questions about hours. The survey has already been developed, however, and there's likely going to be a difference between the hours people say they want and the hours they actually use.

VII. **Programming Committee Update: Manish Agrawal, Stephen Damiani, Lulu Lopez, Arlene Wells, and Candyce Beneke (Senior Services Board)**

Program fees - Changes to nonresident fees for classes were discussed. Other facilities, such as the JCC and YMCA, have a fee for nonmembers to take part in classes in addition to the nonresident fee. A question was raised as to the purpose of nonresident fees, and also the issue of fees for one-time lessons adding up in contrast to a one-time fee for a longer term class.

There is priority registration for residents and currently enrolled nonresidents. There is discussion about eliminating priority registration.

The rec center strives for 85% cost recovery, meaning West U residents subsidize 15% through tax dollars. An idea was raised about charging nonresidents 15% extra, which would basically equalize use.

It is worth noting that the aquatic classes raise significant amounts of money and we don't want to push away nonresidents. Only the swimming and tennis classes are regularly full.

There was worry that a one-time big jump in fees would scare away people, and that a decline in memberships during COVID would mean that people are shopping around and now would not be the time to raise prices and scare away potential class members.

For-profit instructors – The Sugarland model went over well and the city attorney expanded to cover other commercial activities. Concerns were raised about whether the legislation would interfere with ice cream trucks and lemonade stands. Concerns were assured that enforcement discretion would be used wisely, and that ice cream trucks operated on city streets and not in parks.

The idea was raised of adding new swim lanes at Colonial.

Adult Swim Time and Area at Colonial Park Pool – There are concerns about creating specific zones, mediating when kids cross over inappropriately. It was raised that the Rec Center pool essentially functions as the adult pool. Concerns were also raised about distracting lifeguards from their safety charge.

Richard made a motion that the board wanted to reject the idea of adult swim at Colonial. It was seconded. This passed unanimously.

VIII. **Wier Park: Will Bertron**

The goal is to provide a list to give to Susan and the staff and understand the cost and scope of work, whether a third party hire is necessary.

Questions were raised about the safety of having a proposed deck next to the basketball court.

Support was reiterated for reorienting the basketball court and eliminating the handicapped spaces to expand the park space. The issue of adding deck space was discussed, specifically in areas that would cover exposed roots near trees, which have limited use.

Susan is going to put together a user group for the park.

IX. **Park Ambassador Reports & Remarks**

- Colonial Park: Amar Patel (east) the latch is broken at the entrance to the playground area across from the pavilion; Evan Mintz (west) They closed the gates in prep for pool season. Would this part of the park be good for a potential dog park? No, it wouldn't; Stephen Damiani (pool) The pool is incredible! It is open! West U is in action! Also, James is amazing and works well with everyone.
- Friends Park: Sami Morrison – The tree looks healthy. The park is great. Baseball stuff.
- Huffington Park: Brett Bingham – He is on vacation but said everything is peachy at Huffington

- Jennie Hughes Park: Laura Turley – No updates, but a Girl Scout is working on creating interpretive signage for the landscaping. There are concerns about the water feature working.
- Judson Park: Richard Cunningham – Nothing new. Work is progressing.
- Recreation Center: Manish Agrawal – The park gets a lot of use, especially in the past few weeks. Likely because of swim team events.
- Whitt Johnson Park: Arlene Wells – Nothing to report. Some ant beds were noticed, but issues with reporting on the app.
- Wier Park: Lulu Lopez – Saw a kid eating it on the granite and it was not good.

XI. Order of Business

XII. Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn – 8:50 pm.