

CITY OF ROCKPORT

MINUTES

PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD

REGULAR MEETING

6:00 p.m., Monday, May 23, 2016

Bay Education Center

121 Seabreeze Drive, Rockport, Texas

On the 23rd day of May, 2016, the City of Rockport Parks & Leisure Services Advisory Board met at 6:00 p.m. at the Bay Education Center, 121 Seabreeze Drive, Rockport, Texas, and notice of meeting, specifying time, place, date and subject, was posted in accordance with the Texas Government Code, § 551.041.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ty Brisgill
Cassandra Perkins
Leo Villa
Kate Catlow
Debra Corpora

OTHERS PRESENT:

J. D. Villa, City Council Liaison
Tom Staley, Director of Parks & Leisure Services
Richard Martinez
Owen Fitzsimmons
Claudia Dorn
John Huckabee
Betsy Armstrong
Stan Armstrong

1. Call meeting to order.

The meeting of the City of Rockport Parks & Leisure Services Advisory Board was brought to order by the Chair, Ty Brisgill, at 6:00 p.m., on May 23, 2016, who noted the presence of a quorum of members.

2. Citizens to be heard.

At this time, comments will be taken from the audience on any subject matter that is not on the agenda. In accordance with the Open Meetings Act, the Board may not discuss or take action on any item that has not been posted on the agenda.

There were no citizens to be heard.

3. Deliberate and act to approve March 28, 2016, regular meeting minutes.

Board Member Villa motioned to approve the March 28, 2016, regular meeting minutes as written. Board Member Perkins seconded the motion. Motion unanimously approved.

4. Deliberate on April 26, 2016, City Council joint workshop meeting with the Parks Advisory Board.

Board members reviewed and discussed the April 26, 2016, City Council Joint Workshop Meeting Minutes. All agreed that the dialogue with the Mayor and Council Members was beneficial, and that the board should spend the time necessary with a slow, steady approach toward development of a plan to present to the Council on the future purpose of the park property at 1501 Broadway. A most important part of this process is to invite guests with knowledge, expertise and experience in a variety of topics appropriate to this property, including any and all citizens wishing to add their personal comments.

5. Deliberate progress of Spencer Park upgrade with Aransas Leadership Class XX.

Tom Staley informed Board Members that the Leadership Class is working on the basketball court at Spencer Park. There are new rims and painted backboards, and the lines on the court surface will be painted soon. He said there will be some remaining funds and the class will be discussing several ways to use them.

6. Deliberate on developing conceptual plan for the new city park at 1501 Broadway.

Board members again confirmed their intention to take the time needed to get this assignment right the first time. Board Member Catlow asked that her handout on the subject of “rewilding” be added as an agenda item at the June board meeting. A board member suggested that photographer Sally Mitchell be invited to the June board meeting, and Claudia Dorn also, to provide an update on the rookery.

7. Deliberate on presentation by Coastal Bend Bay and Estuaries Foundation Coastal Bird Program concerning management and protection of nesting water birds in an urban park.

Owen Fitzsimmons, Conservation Biologist and Coastal Bird Specialist with the Coastal Bend Bay and Estuaries Program, briefed board members on the federal and state requirements in enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. He said that protecting birds from human disturbance during the nesting period (February-August) is the main focus of enforcement officials. He said human disturbance during this period can place the colonies at risk, and that the birds nesting at this city-owned park are protected species. The desired distance between the nesting site and human contact is 100 meters, but the distance is really dependent on when disturbance of the birds is noticed. Board member Corpora commented that “We’re on a slippery slope with determining disturbance.” A question was asked about the impact of allowing food on the property, since food would attract gulls to the rookery. Mr. Fitzsimmons said that the gulls can put at risk the success of the nesting. The gulls can chase the adult birds

from the nests and leave the chicks exposed and vulnerable. A board member asked about the black skimmer colony on Rockport Beach that has close contact with humans during their nesting period. Mr. Fitzsimmons said the issues of Rockport Beach are annual problems, with a history of trying to encourage the birds to change their nesting site or closing areas of the park for the nesting birds. Board Member Catlow added that a “re-wilding” approach practiced in Vancouver, British Columbia, looks at the big picture of preservation in their community planning. Mr. Fitzsimmons said that an education component would fit well on this property, and the use of web-cams would show the birds’ activities during the nesting season. He said that he can show the board how this is used at other locations in educating the public as part of ecotourism.

8. Deliberate on report from Ms. Claudia Dorn concerning the state of the shore bird rookery at 1501 Broadway.

Claudia Dorn, a wildlife biologist and member of the Aransas Bird & Nature Club and the Texas Colonial Water Bird Society, spoke to the board about the rookery at the new park site. She has been counting the birds during the nesting season at this location since 2008. She said currently there are 93 pairs of great egrets, 62 pairs of great blue herons, and 34 pairs of night black herons. On occasion, roseate spoonbills arrive later in the year. She added that a member of U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service conducts an annual bird count on the property by June. In response to a board member’s question, Ms. Dorn said the hours when the birds are most subject to disturbance is between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Visitor Stan Armstrong commented that picnicking should not be permitted on the property, since that activity would attract birds and trash. Board members thanked Ms. Dorn for coming and invited her to return often to provide an update on the rookery.

9. Deliberate on “Wings Rescue Center” request to conduct operations from one of the three cottages in the new park at 1501 Broadway.

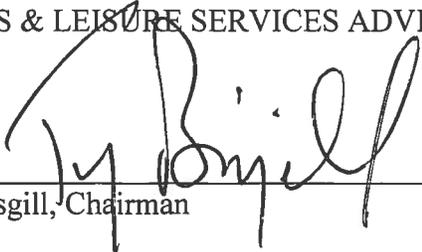
Tom Staley said that he received a call from Kay Adams with the Wings Rescue Center, indicating they have a building and no longer are in need of assistance from the city.

10. Deliberate on possible agenda items for the June 27, 2016, meeting.

Board members agreed to ask Sally Mitchell and Claudia Dorn to the next meeting. Board member Catlow also wants to discuss the re-wilding initiative in Vancouver, B.C.

11. Upon motion duly made and seconded, the regular meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

PARKS & LEISURE SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD



Ty Briggill, Chairman

Parks and Leisure Services

Meeting Attendance Chart

Name of Board Meeting: PARKS ADVISORY

Date: MAY 123 2016

Members

Visitors Attending this date:

- 1) Kate Carlson
- 2) Debra Corpora
- 3) Cassandra M. Pentecost
- 4) Leo Pilla
- 5) By Bill
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____