



City of Brenham Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

A special meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was held on Wednesday, January 15, 2020, beginning at 11:30 a.m. at Hohlt Park, All Sports Building, 137 Lounge Road Brenham, Texas.

Members present:

Paula Buls
Luis Mendoza
Jim Baker
Lee Chalmers
Bill Betts
Ginger Bosse
Matthew Wehring

Members absent:

Delbert Boeker
Andrea Fischer

Others present:

City Manager James Fisher, Assistant City Manager of Public Services and Utilities Donald Reese, Public Works Director Dane Rau, Casey Redman, Tammy Jaster, and Crystal Locke

Citizens present:

Perry Thomas, Mildred Nobbman, Linda Thomas, and Cayte Neil

Media Present:

Alyssa Faykus, Brenham Banner Press; and Josh Blaschke, KWHI

1. Call Meeting to Order

2. Citizens/Visitor Comments

City Manager James Fisher introduced Assistant City Manager of Public Services and Utilities Donald Reese.

There were no citizen comments.

WORK SESSION

3. Presentation and Discussion Related to the Future Brenham Family Park Design and Construction

City Manager James Fisher opened the discussion with a general layout of the park and properties adjacent to the park. Fisher reminded the Board that the Corps of Engineers denied an on-channel lake structure and noted the pond could not be built the way it was originally designed. Fisher added that the Corps of Engineers views at any creek that empties into a river that empties into the Gulf as navigable waters.

Fisher explained that Jones|Carter presented a new preliminary detention pond rendering that included six ponds ranging from .5-7 acres each. Fisher stated that staff was not happy with the number of ponds and advised the Board that Jones|Carter returned with a second preliminary pond rendering that included four ponds. Fisher noted that the ponds throughout the park required a vast amount of space.

Fisher added that the Kruse family owned the property to the west of the parkland, and it would likely be developed into residential development which would impact the park. Fisher noted the proposed non-residential development to the east of the park. Another challenge, Fisher explained, is the proposed Blue Bell Road and Chappell Hill Street extensions. Fisher expressed concern about the Chappell Hill Street extension, which would dissect the park and pose added challenges. Fisher said that moving forward staff is looking for guidance from the Board regarding the layout of the detention ponds, potential road extension that would dissect the park, and park amenities.

Board Member Jim Baker asked about the specific water amenities that would be offered to park users such as a dock for fishing and a kayak launch. Baker noted that seven acres might not be big enough and mentioned combining the three ponds located in the north section of the park to one large pond.

Fisher added that staff and the Kruse family had discussed moving the pond to the west (Pond B) further to the west to share the boundary line with the future residential development. Fisher also noted the electrical line that runs through the west side of the park and potentially working with Bluebonnet Electric and/or the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) to establish a walking trail underneath the line.

Board Member Lee Chalmers asked about the current waterways on the property. Rau used the park maps to show that there is an existing creek that begins at Home Depot and runs through the property. Chalmers also asked if there are any ponds that already existed on the park property. Rau responded that there are no ponds on the property. Rau added that the ponds would need to be constructed. Rau also noted that there can be a mutual pond that serves as a detention pond and a lake structure. Board Member Lee Chalmers asked if the Corps of Engineers was requesting a certain number of acres per pond. Rau said no and explained that (we) cannot impound water on the creek channel.

Board Member Lee Chalmers added that he would like to see one large pond instead of several smaller ponds. Fisher noted the added selling point of the pond sharing the boundary line and the benefit of connecting to the park and having direct access.

Rau explained that the Kruse family envisioned athletic fields on the parkland. Chairperson Bill Betts added that Ed Kruse wanted multi-purpose athletic fields and referenced the three fields that were included in the rendering from William Krueger. Board Member Ginger Bosse asked about the details to the agreement for the donation of the land. Rau noted the monetary amounts pertaining to the roadway and the dam structure. Fisher added that to his knowledge there was not an agreement specific to park amenities but noted the park renderings that existed and the multi-purpose fields that are included.

Chairperson Bill Betts asked if staff had made any effort to contact the Corps of Engineers (Corps). Fisher explained the lengthy process in working with the Corps of Engineers and noted that in his experience the Corps does not like to be challenged once a decision has been made. Fisher added that staff would be willing to readdress the decision with the Corps but noted that it could take 6-18 months to get a response from them. Fisher explained that staff felt moving forward with the project would be best and to find another solution based on the Corps decision. Chairperson Betts mentioned the electric transmission line being a factor in the future development of the park.

Board Member Paula Buls asked staff about the original trail design that looped around the pond and how the trail might be affected if the pond is moved further west and shared with the neighboring future residential development. Chairperson Bill Betts responded that the City could negotiate with the neighboring developer to include a trail. Board Member Matthew Wehring added that if the pond is able to be relocated onto the residential property, the bigger the pond could be, decrease the number of ponds, and potentially lessen the maintenance for the City.

Board Member Ginger Bosse expressed concerns about potential flooding and noted the high waters in the ditch near Wal-Mart when it rains now, and development has not even started. Bosse added that a big pond may be beneficial to help prevent flooding in other areas.

Board Member Lee Chalmers asked about the property's flood plain. Rau responded that the property is in the 100-year flood plain and noted that many of the parks are in flood plains.

Rau continued and discussed the future needs of the community pertaining to sport fields. Rau noted the ponds and trails in the rendering and asked the Board for additional input on future park amenities. Board Member Matthew Wehring stated the best way to begin movement on the property is to offer passive type recreation including wildflower areas, trails, and natural elements. Wehring added to include a designated area for future multi-purpose fields. Rau explained the planned trail system which would include a mixture of cement and natural trails for walking and biking.

Citizen Linda Thomas commented, with respect to athletics, that her concern is that this project does not turn into another athletic complex. Thomas added that staff and the Board should look at future community needs that focus on family-oriented play including cricket and pickleball.

Citizen Mildred Nobbman asked staff if there would be playgrounds and swing sets at the new park. Rau referenced the rendering of the park and noted that areas have been identified for playscapes. Nobbman recommended curb cuts to allow for easy wheelchair access, as well as tee ball fields.

Citizen Perry Thomas asked if there had been a study on the impact park construction would have on the wildlife in the area. Thomas added that adjacent property owners have wildlife tax exemptions and noted the bald eagles sighted near the proposed parkland. Thomas stated that he had contacted the local Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) biologist and TPWD staff had not been consulted about the park. Thomas added that he is in favor of preserving the wildlife.

Chairperson Bill Betts mentioned that if the multipurpose fields were built in later phases, parking would need to be addressed. Betts asked staff for an estimated number of acres for parking on the south side of the park. Rau referenced the park rendering and explained the proposed road leading into the park from Highway 36 that would create a U-shaped road with additional parking.

Chairperson Bill Betts asked about the timeline for the residential development to the west of the park and the potential for the pond to share the boundary line. Fisher stated that when staff last spoke to the developer the concept of a shared boundary line was an option. Chairperson Bill Betts recapped that solving the location of the pond would allow staff the ability to move forward with a concrete Phase I(a) plan. Fisher echoed Betts and summarized comments from the Board to minimize the number of ponds on the park property and work with the developer to the west of the property to share the pond as far west as allowed.

Board Member Paula Buls mentioned that when the Board originally met about the new parkland, themes were discussed and asked if that was something being considered. Locke reminded the Board that during the planning phase for the Brenham Family Park Master Plan the Joint Committee discussed park themes and the consensus was Brenham History.

Board Member Matthew Wehring asked when staff would be notified about the status of the grant application submitted for Brenham Family Park. Locke noted the grant notification period was mid-May.

Board Member Ginger Bosse commented about the aesthetics of the pond. Bosse stated she would like to see a mixture of developed and natural elements.

Board Member Luis Mendoza asked about park safety. Rau mentioned adding an automatic gate at the park entrance that would close and lock after hours to eliminate vehicle access. Rau added that lighting is very expensive and was included in the grant application to be added along the trail. Mendoza added that the location of the park is concerning with the proximity to the highway. Fisher stated that a gate may not be the answer and added that gates usually keep public safety out when they are needed. Fisher stated that staff would look at ways to monitor the park and echoed Mendoza's comment about the proximity to the highway and retail development.

Citizen Perry Thomas questioned where the water would be captured from the pond as the main creek flow is below that. Fisher explained that the pond would be designed to have a natural slow release back into the creeks. Fisher stated the Corps of Engineers biggest concern is that the creek flow is not negatively affected.

Rau asked the Board for comments about the proposed Chappell Hill Street extension originally planned to route through the park. The consensus of the Board was to not extend the road through the park.

Citizen Cayte Neil commented about the usage on the north piece of the park, referred to as Phase I(a). Neil noted the importance of nature on the physical and mental growth of kids and providing spaces for children and families to experience climbing trees, running in open fields, and looking for bird nests.

REGULAR SESSION

4. Parks and Recreation Staff Updates

Splash Pad for Henderson Park

Director of Public Works Dane Rau presented an update on the splash pad project at Henderson Park. Rau stated that the splash pad project is being presented at the January 16 Council meeting to discuss and approve a purchase order with Vortex Aquatic Structures. Rau noted the purchase order is for approximately \$250,000 and reminded the Board that the Brenham Community Development Corporation (BCDC) allocated \$300,000 for the build out of the splash pad. Rau added that the remaining funding would be used for additional site amenities such as sidewalks. Once the purchase order is issued, Rau noted, the estimated project completion is May.

Board Member Matthew Wehring asked about shade for the project. Rau noted that there are nice pecan trees near the project site for natural shade. Rau added that staff has contracted with a local engineer to plan for a future pad site with shade cover. Rau advised the Board that the splash pad would be compliant with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations.

Citizen Cayte Neil asked about restrooms. Rau explained that there are not restrooms at the project site and noted that Henderson Park has three restrooms located in the park. Rau added that staff is looking at possibly adding restrooms in the future.

Rau reminded the Board that the City had applied for additional funding for the splash pad project through the H-E-B Community Investment Program in the amount of \$200,000 and are waiting to be notified of the application status.

Participation in the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Recreational Trails Grant Program for Improvements to the Nature Trail at Hohlt Park

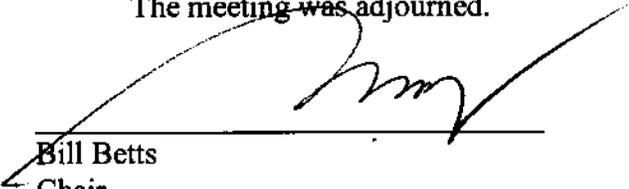
Community Services Specialist Crystal Locke presented this item. Locke informed the Board of the Recreational Trails Grant Program through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

(TPWD) for additional funding for improvements to the nature trail at Hohlt Park. Locke explained that the nature trail was located on the southside of Hohlt Park. Locke stated that staff had worked with a landscape architect who put together a preliminary layout, referred to as the "Cross Over into Nature" trail. Locke added that the trail is approximately 0.60 mile and improvements would include several environments to explore, such as a wetland area and pollinator gardens and would also include educational signage. Locke stated that this project is approximately \$85,000 and the grant program provides up to an 80 percent reimbursement with a 20 percent match. Locke added that this item would be presented at the January 16 Council meeting for approval to submit a grant application.

Rau added that the nature trail was funded by BCDC and \$40,000 was allocated to the project. Board Member Paula Buls asked about the timeline. Locke responded that the grant application is due February 1, 2020 and staff should be notified in April.

5. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.



Bill Betts
Chair

ATTEST:



Crystal Locke
Staff Liaison