



ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

REVISED

Wednesday, April 11, 2012, 1:30 P.M.
8th Floor Conference Room
City Hall Building, 2 Civic Center Plaza

Members Present: 5

Joanne Burt, James H. Tolbert, Lois A. Balin, Richard L. Thomas, Charlie S. Wakeem, Chair

Members Absent: 4

Katrina Martich, Bill Addington, Andres Quintana, Kevin T. von Finger

Vacancies: 0

Planning and Economic Development Staff:

David Coronado, Lead Planner; Kimberly Forsyth, Lead Planner; Raul Garcia, Senior Planner; Kevin Smith, Planner; Justin Bass, Planner

Others Present:

Lupe Cuellar, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office; Pat Aduato, EPWU-PSB; Rudy Valdez, EPWU-PSB; Gonzalo Cedillos, EPWU-PSB; Marcia Tuck, Parks & Recreation, Open Space, Trails and Parks Coordinator; Jim ~~Correa~~ Carrillo, Half Associates, Inc

1. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Wakeem called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m.

2. Call to the Public (items not listed on the agenda)

None.

3. Discussion and Action

- a. Approval of Minutes: March 28, 2012

Chair Wakeem asked if Board Members had any additions, corrections and/or revisions for the March 28, 2012 meeting.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Ms. Burt and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MARCH 28, 2012.**

ABSTAIN: Richard L. Thomas

- b. Changes to the Agenda

No changes.

c. Review and comment on current subdivision applications, as indicated below:

- (1) **SUSU12-00016** Festiva Hills Addition Replat "A" – Being all of Lots 1, 3 and 4, Block 1, Festiva Hills Additions, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: East of Mesa Street and North of Festival Drive
Property Owner: Edwards Homes Inc. & Ronald and Sunshine Salas
Representative: CAD Consultant
District: 1
Type: Resubdivision Combination
Staff Contact: Justin Bass, (915) 541-4930, bassjd@elpasotexas.gov

Mr. Bass gave a PowerPoint presentation and noted Planning Staff recommends **APPROVAL**.

Chair Wakeem asked if anyone in the audience wished to speak in favor of or opposition to the request. There was no response from the audience.

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE.***

4. Discussion and Action: Parks and Recreation Master Plan update.

Contact: Marcia Tuck, (915) 541-4020, tuckmj@elpasotexas.gov

Ms. Tuck introduced Mr. Jim **Correa Carrillo**, Halff Associates, Inc.

Chair Wakeem welcomed Mr. **Correa Carrillo** and noted Mr. **Correa Carrillo** was not only the consultant for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan but also the consultant for the Open Space Master Plan and he did an excellent job.

Mr. Jim **Correa Carrillo**, Halff Associates, Inc. explained that this was not a presentation but more of a feedback session. He stated that the Parks Master Plan was six years old now and that this would be an interim update to find out what is working and what needs to be 'tweaked'. Mr. **Correa Carrillo** brought a Halff Associates, Inc. Sign-In sheet and requested those present to sign their names. He explained Halff Associates Inc. will treat this meeting as one of their own.

*Mr. **Correa Carrillo** asked Board Members to state what they feel are the three greatest open space needs that the OSAB is targeting; whether it be broad in nature, a category or a specific targeted piece of property, for El Paso right now:*

Ms. Balin:

- a. One of the most important problem areas is protecting as much of the mountain(s) abutting State Park lands as we possibly can; especially within undeveloped areas that belong to PSB both on the Northeast and West sides;
- b. It would be really nice to have water for the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park;
- c. The Keystone Heritage Park also needs to be in the limelight;

Ms. Burt thought one great need is to provide access to the public. To have areas where the public can walk and enjoy; senior citizens and mothers with young children and not just have all the open space on the periphery. The whole idea is to have things within walking the distance.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo clarified that could be more like hybrid-type open spaces; leaning toward more of passive side of recreation.

Mr. Tolbert would like to address some of the desert habitat and sand dunes in east El Paso and preserving some of that. For example, the Red Dunes and some other areas with some very important habitats and recreational opportunities as well.

Chair Wakeem stated, for him, it would be funding; whether for acquisition of open space, which is a high priority, or for improvements. For example, acquisition of trailheads and amenities for the trailheads such as parking, picnic tables, etc.

Mr. Thomas commented on accessibility to trailheads and referred to the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy in Phoenix, Arizona. At the Conservancy, there are more than 12 access points with parking lots, restrooms and water facilities for hikers.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo wondered if there was a hierarchy issue regarding neighborhood based trails/trailheads and access to other State Park trailheads, levels of trailhead physicality, etc. He commented on the issue of promoting the City to both the locals and visitors.

Chair Wakeem noted UTEP is redesigning the campus, where the extension of Arroyo Park goes through the campus, to create a walking trail.

- As a long term goal, Chair Wakeem wondered why it would not be possible to have connectivity all the way from Palisades through Arroyo Park through UTEP and on to the river. It is doable, it is all one trail. Additionally, Mr. Cedillos pointed out an ideal location for parking at the base of Arroyo Park.
- Another long term goal is the River Trail, which is in the Open Space Master Plan and is also a big part of the new Comprehensive Plan.

Mr. Thomas noted the Parks & Recreation Master Plan mentions the River Trail but does not go into great detail.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo surmised that trails are an issue, both existing and any additional opportunities.

Chair Wakeem reiterated the Red Sands would be one to add to the Open Space Master Plan **but it is outside of the City limits and probably outside of the zoning change.**

Ms. Burt thought that small areas, within the City limits that are not developable or have not been developed, provide an opportunity for acquisition and then possibly create passive parks out of those areas. For example, the arroyo located right below Wildwood Court.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo asked what the process is to identify areas mentioned by Ms. Burt. Chair Wakeem responded the OSAB Stormwater Priority List.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo noted the other issue is funding and to acquire these areas you need funding.

Mr. Thomas asked Ms. Tuck when the Final Draft of the Revised Parks & Recreation Master Plan will be complete.

Ms. Tuck explained that the Parks & Recreation Department is hoping to present that to City Council in the summer.

Mr. Tolbert commented on North Reserve Park, located in the Mountain Park area, which is on the Parks & Recreation inventory list. He stated North Reserve Park was given to the City by the Government with the condition that the park is left in its natural state. North Reserve Park goes up the arroyo, up the ridge and right into the State Park. It would be nice if the Parks & Recreation Department provided a small parking area and cleaned up the area a little.

Ms. Balin noted that, per the Open Space Master Plan, there is an option to preserve agricultural land as open space. She felt it important to get this going on the eastside and in the Mission Valley area. Ms. Balin suggested leasing part of the property for trails.

Chair Wakeem disagreed and noted most of the agricultural land is outside the city limits.

Ms. Balin mentioned Texas A&M Extension Center and Blackie ~~Cheser~~ Chesher Park.

Due to lack of a quorum, Chair Wakeem requested a short recess. Meeting resumed approximately five minutes later.

Ms. Balin thought the Texas A&M Extension Center and Blackie ~~Cheser~~ Chesher Park may have natural habitat surrounding parks; these are areas that may have potential.

Mr. Valdez added there are a number of very wide El Paso Electric Company easements on the eastside.

Ms. Tuck responded Parks & Recreation Department has submitted a grant application to do something about that. She would keep the Board posted on the status of the project.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo commented on existing and future drainage ditches/channels. He asked if manufacturing these channels to contain this open space asset as more than just a trail, possibly include revegetation, reforestation, would this be something to consider.

Ms. Burt noted channels are owned by the EPWU-PSB.

Chair Wakeem thought that might be something to look into. Additionally, the EPWU-PSB Fred Hervey Plant is a very, ~~very~~ important wildlife habitat. Chair Wakeem felt this was also something to look into. Chair Wakeem noted existing eastside properties include the Feather Lakes and the Rio Bosque.

Mr. Valdez explained access to the Feather Lakes is allowed; however, there is no permanent physical access.

Ms. Balin added there is a trail around the Feather Lakes.

Ms. Burt referred to the Keystone Master Plan and noted there is a provision to connect the Wakeem Teschner Arroyo with Keystone by a trail. She wondered how that would be accomplished.

Ms. Tuck responded the Bond election; however, in terms of connectivity, this is the great discussion.

Chair Wakeem suggested Ms. Tuck look into that.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo remembered a discussion yesterday regarding a Nature Center at the Keystone Heritage Park.

Chair Wakeem commented on the City of Albuquerque Parks & Recreation Department, Open Space Division. Chair Wakeem stated it would be nice to have an Open Space Facility at the Keystone Heritage Park.

Ms. Tuck noted the Rio Bosque does have a sort of Educational Center, not quite as involved as the Keystone Heritage Park suggested facility.

Chair Wakeem wondered why both the Keystone Heritage Park and Rio Bosque Park could not have an educational facility.

Ms. Burt clarified it is a small Visitor's Center really.

Ms. Tuck would provide copies of the Keystone Heritage Park Master Plan and the Rio Bosque Master Plan to Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo.

Follow up questions per Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo:

1. *Aside from the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, as an Open Space Advisory Board, do you have any other goals you would like to accomplish.*

Chair Wakeem thought the Open Space Master Plan laid things out pretty well. It identifies the ecologically sensitive areas and arroyos; anything that has to do with Stormwater to include wetlands and bosques.

Mr. Valdez explained that, with the recent adoption of the Comprehensive Plan, a suggestion was made to prepare an Arroyo Plan.

Chair Wakeem provided background information regarding the OSAB trying to implement recommendations of the *Open Space Master Plan* and the obstacles encountered.

Ms. Cuellar and Chair Wakeem discussed annexations, parkland dedications, lack of funding, developers and transfer of development rights, OSAB adopting smart provisions and what the OSAB can do to accomplish the goals within the *Open Space Master Plan*.

2. *Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo would like to hear the OSAB's thoughts regarding active vs. passive park space.*

Chair Wakeem commented on park ponds and dividing of the 10% OSAB park pond monies.

Mr. Tolbert stated he would like to see more measures for water conservation, passive rainwater harvesting throughout the parks system.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo commented on the use of artificial turf and redesigning the City's park ponds to be assets instead of eye sores.

Mr. Valdez commented on providing incentives for developers to develop park ponds and other amenities.

Ms. Cuellar noted the City Plan Commission has asked the City Engineer to explain the Design Construction Manual slope requirements. The CPC is stating slope requirements for El Paso are not the same as other cities.

Chair Wakeem responded the OSAB changed the 2007 Subdivision Code slope requirements from a 6 to 1 slope to a 3 to 1 slope, small area/steeper slope.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo, Ms. Cuellar and Chair Wakeem discussed developers and incentives for park ponds.

Ms. Balin referred to the very large stormwater retention areas and wondered why those retention areas couldn't be opened to allow the public to walk their dogs.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo noted other cities are recognizing they have an asset and need to put it to use.

3. Regarding parks in general, Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo asked the OSAB what their thoughts are regarding the current park system, what works and what does not; what steps need to be added, improved on, etc.

Ms. Balin noted the Tucson Parks system has places for dogs to run, arroyos with paths that go for miles and a constructed wetland for birds. She would like to have those kinds of features here.

Ms. Burt remembered parks, when she was growing up, were predominantly passive with flowers and public art and that the sports fields weren't considered parks. Ms. Burt would like Parks to separate the sports field from the park; for example, recreation fields then parks. Ms. Burt complimented the Parks Department noting the trees, grass and the maintenance of the medians has improved 100% over the last three years.

Chair Wakeem stated that over the last five years the City parks have greatly improved.

Mr. Tolbert would like to see more community gardens. Additionally, he thought it would be great if the Parks & Recreation Department would allow volunteers for things like trail building, connectivity, native tree planting.

Ms. Tuck commented on the city's parking lot construction requirements.

Mr. Thomas thought that there was a City Department that coordinates volunteers.

Ms. Tuck responded, as a defined volunteer mechanism, the Parks & Recreation Department has "Park Partners". Ms. Tuck elaborated on the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation Grant recently awarded to the Parks & Recreation Department. She explained that half of the monies are to include nutrition curriculum into existing after school programs and summer camps and day cares; the other half of the grant monies is to build a pilot project community garden within an existing City park.

Mr. ~~Correa~~ Carrillo invited the OSAB to the public meetings.

5. **Discussion and Action:** Items for Future Agendas.

1. Chair Wakeem requested:
 - a. Keystone Heritage Park
 - b. Northeast Master Plan
 - c. ASARCO Update (tentative)
 - d. Trailheads – Report on timeline
 - e. 2012 Open Space Advisory Board Meeting Schedule (new)
2. Mr. Thomas requested:
 - a. Meeting with Mr. Dallo regarding Silver Springs access
3. Mr. Tolbert requested:
 - a. Stormwater Funding Quarterly Report - PSB
4. Mr. Coronado:
 - a. Plats and Land Study Quarterly Report - Planning

STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Coronado explained rewrite of the OSAB ordinance will be adopted next Tuesday. The NOS Overlay will be presented to the City Council at the May 1st, City Council meeting.

6. **Adjournment**

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN.***