



**OPEN SPACE ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES**

Wednesday, February 12, 2020, 3:00 P.M.  
City 1 Building (City Hall), 300 N Campbell  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, City Council Chambers

**Members Present: 5**

*Chairman Don Baumgardt, Vice-Chairwoman Dr. Rebecca Escamilla, Alyssa Benavides Cervantes (late arrival), Yvonne Cacho, and Patricia White*

**Members Absent: 0**

**Vacancy: 4**

*Districts, 1, 6, and 8 and Mayor*

**Planning & Inspections Department – Planning:**

*Karina Brasgalla, Senior Planner; Nelson Ortiz, Lead Planner; Harrison Plourde, Lead Planner*

**Other City Staff Present/Other Presenters:**

*Roberta Brito, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office; Jorge Castillo, Open Space, Trails & Parks Coordinator, Parks & Recreation*

**Members of the public: 2**

*Marilyn Guida, Bob Geyer*

**Establish a Quorum**

*A quorum of the Open Space Advisory Board was present.*

**Meeting Called to Order**

*Chairman Baumgardt called the meeting to order.*

**Time Limits for Information Presentations:**

*There is a 15 minute time limit for presentations, with additional time granted at the discretion of the presiding officer. This limitation is applicable only to the presentation itself and does not include discussion and action elements of an item.*

**Call to the Public (items not listed on the Agenda):**

*Members of the public will be allowed 3 minutes to present, with additional time granted at the discretion of the presiding officer.*

There was no one signed up to speak.

## REGULAR AGENDA

**1. Discussion and Action:** Changes to the Agenda

There were no changes to the agenda.

**2. Discussion and Action:** Approval of the Minutes for January 15, 2020.

Chairman Baumgardt asked Board Members if they had any additions, corrections and/or revisions to the minutes.

**MOTION:**

*Motion made by Ms. White, seconded by Ms. Cacho AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES AS SUBMITTED.*

**NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE:** Ms. Benavides

**3. Information and Discussion:** Quarterly report of pending Board motions.

**Contact:** Karina Brasgalla, [brasgallakx@elpasotexas.gov](mailto:brasgallakx@elpasotexas.gov)

Karina Brasgalla gave the quarterly report of pending Board Motions.

**4. Information and Discussion:** A review of open space recreation and preservation opportunities in El Paso that are not adjacent to the Franklin Mountains.

**Contact:** Jorge Castillo, [castillojx1@elpasotexas.gov](mailto:castillojx1@elpasotexas.gov)

Chairman Baumgardt stated he requested Staff place agenda items 4. and 5. on the agenda. There are opportunities throughout the city that the Parks & Recreation Department knows of that are not adjacent to the Franklin Mountains that Board Members should be made aware of.

Jorge Castillo gave a presentation regarding ongoing and planned projects in the Parks & Recreation Department and responded to comments and questions from the Board and members of the public.

**MOTION:**

*Motion made by Ms. White, seconded by Ms. Cacho AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO WAIVE THE RULES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT.*

**NOT PRESENT FOR THE VOTE:** Ms. Benavides

The following members of the public commented:

1. Marilyn Guida
2. Bob Geyer

**5. Information and Discussion:** Initial discussion regarding creation of an Open Space Management Plan for land purchased with Quality of Life Bond funds.

**Contact:** Jorge Castillo, [castillojx1@elpasotexas.gov](mailto:castillojx1@elpasotexas.gov)

Chairman Baumgardt explained there are more pieces of open space in the city that will remain open spaces, it is important that the city looks at how that land is managed and not possibly neglected, which is what we do now. At some point in the future, Chairman Baumgardt requested having a discussion regarding land controlled by the PSB. Today's presentation will discuss the lands that the city purchased with Quality of Life Bond funds, what the status of the land is, and what can be done to ensure the land is properly managed and maintained.

Prior to the presentation, Mr. Castillo clarified not so much land purchased with Quality of Life Bond funds but the land where the Parks & Recreation Department does have either natural spaces or land having been designated open space from a Parks perspective. Mr. Castillo gave the presentation and responded to comments and questions from Board Members and members of the public.

Mr. Castillo recommended, sometime in the future, updating the Open Space Master Plan to include management of those lands, internally and externally. For example who takes care of the land, who takes care of the maintenance and who cares for those particular properties. He commented on partnerships with land projects and city departments, for example, the Keystone Heritage Park and the Parks & Recreation Department, the Rio Bosque and UTEP, UTEP is the main steward of the Rio Bosque, and the Playa Drain and El Paso Water. El Paso Water owns the Playa Drain and provides the maintenance. Mr. Castillo noted that a couple 100 trees are proposed to be planted around the Playa Drain, he estimated 80% of those trees would likely survive. In the future, Mr. Castillo proposed discussing the Knapp Land, Castner Range and Lost Dog.

Mr. Castillo discussed who the owners of the open space are such as the City of El Paso, El Paso Water, the Irrigation District, and the International Boundary and Water Commission. He commented on the City of Albuquerque Open Space Division and noted this division oversees 30,000 acres with a staff of 40+.

Ms. Benavides thanked Mr. Castillo for his interesting presentation. Regarding illegal dumping, she noted in the 80's and 90's there was an effort made to educate the public. With the Frontera Land Alliance she has seen signs alerting the public regarding mattress pickups. Ms. Benavides noted the Frontera Land Alliance would be having an event this Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup>, to include a tour along Bosque.

Regarding illegal dumping, Mr. Castillo recommended inviting the Environmental Services Department to give a presentation to the OSAB. He commented on conservation partner, Frontera Land Alliance and volunteer groups for park clean up events such as Arroyo Park and Borderland Mountain Bike Association. Neighborhood Associations and interested park users have volunteered to conduct Arroyo Park and Palisades area clean ups. He would provide contact information for the Paso del Norte Trail Initiative.

Chairman Baumgardt suggested using “*Friends of*” groups and Neighborhood Associations that could coordinate clean up dates with the city. He asked what the process would be to start to create a new Open Space Master Plan.

Mr. Castillo commented on using an outline from the City of Albuquerque Open Space Plan as a starting point for a guide for management of open space, with resources and with limited resources. He commented on radio and television broadcasts to promote open spaces and wild open spaces in New Mexico.

Ms. Benavides commented on a marked difference between resources in New Mexico and El Paso with regard to educational resources for open spaces.

Ms. Bragalla explained the original Open Space Master Plan was done in 2007. To create a new Master Plan, Board Members would have to make a recommendation to City Council to direct staff to take action.

Ms. White suggested maybe not creating a new Plan but rather updating the existing Plan. She stated that as the city buys more open space it may be beneficial to create an Open Space Department like the City of Albuquerque.

Mr. Castillo suggested it may be efficient to provide funding options for volunteers and volunteer groups.

Ms. Benavides suggested creating volunteer or designated open space location clean up groups, for example, the River Trail Open Space Association.

Ms. Bragalla explained Neighborhood Associations can be recognized by the city and are entitled to certain information, notices and programs; however, with regard to creating recognized Neighborhood Association those must be tied to specific geographic information and resident information. There are civic associations not tied to specific locations but shared interests.

The following members of the public commented:

1. Marilyn Guida
2. Bob Geyer

## CLOSED SESSION

### FOR THE RECORD

*The Open Space Advisory Board of the City of El Paso may retire into CLOSED SESSION pursuant to Section 3.5A of the El Paso City Charter and the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, Subchapter D, to discuss any of the items on this agenda, consistent with the terms of the Open Meetings Act. The Open Space Advisory Board will return to open session to take any final action.*

SECTION 551.071   CONSULTATION WITH ATTORNEY  
SECTION 551.072   DELIBERATION REGARDING REAL PROPERTY  
SECTION 551.073   DELIBERATION REGARDING PROSPECTIVE GIFTS  
SECTION 551.074   PERSONNEL MATTERS  
SECTION 551.076   DELIBERATION REGARDING SECURITY DEVICES  
SECTION 551.087   DELIBERATION REGARDING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEGOTIATIONS

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## **6. Adjournment**

### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Ms. Benavides seconded by Dr. Escamilla AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN.*