

**Minutes
Parks & Recreation Advisory Board
November 19, 2020**

On this 19th day of November, 2020, at 6:30 p.m., the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board convened in a Regular Meeting, and the same being opened to the public at their regular meeting place; thereof, at the Dr. George S. Woods Community Center, 202 E. Hondo Avenue, Devine, Texas. Notice of said Meeting having been prescribed in Chapter 551, Government Code, and Vernon's Texas Codes, Annotated, and the following members being present:

Mary Allison
Leslie Vail
Crystal Curiel

Thus, constituting a quorum.

Personnel present: Dora V. Rodriguez, Interim City Administrator/City Secretary; Tom Cate, City Attorney; Rob Flores, Superintendent of Public Works; and Celina Rodriguez, UB Clerk.

Others present: Mayor Cory Thompson, Alderwoman Kathy Lawler, Jim Lawler, Elsa Rodriguez, and Aurora Hernandez.

Board Member Mary Allison, presiding, called the meeting to order.

The first order of business was to welcome new board members.

The Board welcomed Crystal Curiel as the representative for District 4.

The second order of business was to discuss and consider approval of Minutes for Meeting on November 13, 2019.

The Board reviewed the minutes.

Motion by Board Member Vail, seconded by Board Member Allison to approve the minutes for the meeting on November 13, 2019.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The third order of business was Presentation/Training on the Open Meetings Law – Tom Cate, City Attorney.

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City Attorney Tom Cate addressed the Board and informed them that the first thing they needed to know is that according to the statutes, the Open Meetings Act does not apply to purely advisory bodies, and he explained that the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board is a purely advisory body.

City Attorney Tom Cate explained that Council is saying that it does apply to them but, as far as State Law goes, the penalties contained in state law would not apply to them. He advised the Board that if they are going to call each other up and talk about something that's going to be on the agenda, this would not be a criminal violation of the state law because the Board is purely an advisory committee. He told them that what Council did say is that it's going to apply to the Board as a framework; this will give them some structure in organizing their meetings. He explained that this means that the Board still needs to give 72 hours' notice of their meetings, just like the Council does, and the notices still need to be posted at City Hall and on the City website. He said Emergency meetings will require one hour notice before posting but, to his understanding, the Parks Board has never had an emergency meeting since it was created. He explained that if they want to discuss something, it would be best until after they've had a meeting. He also added that they do need to have a quorum of at least three people in order to conduct a meeting.

City Attorney Tom Cate advised that he wants the Board to be comfortable, and said this should be a very fun committee because what they are doing is bringing in new ideas or a continuation of older ideas to the Council for their approval.

The Board held discussion with City Attorney Tom Cate, and talked about doing a mail-out/survey for the Parks Board.

At this time, City Attorney Tom Cate administered the Oath of Office to Mary Allison to renew her term.

The fourth order of business was to discuss and consider appointing a Chairman.

Board Member Mary Allison said she would like to nominate Leslie Vail for Chairman, and Board Member Vail accepted the nomination.

Motion by Board Member Allison, seconded by Board Member Vail to appoint Leslie Vail as Chairman of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The fifth order of business was to discuss and consider appointing a Secretary.

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Board Member Allison called for nominations for Secretary. Discussion was held between Board Members Allison and Curiel on the Secretary position. Board Member Curiel said she would be glad for Board Member Allison to take the position.

Motion by Board Member Curiel, seconded by Chairman Vail for Mary Allison to be appointed as Secretary of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

At this time, newly appointed Chairman Leslie Vail presided over the meeting.

The sixth order of business was to discuss and consider request from Devine Little League.

- A. Lights
- B. Gates
- C. Replacement of broken equipment

Aurora Hernandez with the Devine Little League informed the Board that they've not had a chance to go out and check out the fields to see what needs to be done.

Board Member Allison reported that she and Alderman David Espinosa had gone out and checked out the Little League fields and dugouts. They saw some things that can be taken care of pretty easily, such as getting solar lights/motion lights for the dugouts; she said they were not very expensive, and this is something that can be recommended to Council. She spoke about their being a workable water fountain there, but commented on the restrooms being very filthy. She suggested, maybe after COVID is over, having a work day and getting together for some TLC, like painting.

Ms. Hernandez explained that it is sad and since they didn't have a season last year, not much maintaining has been done by their board members and volunteers, so they kind of let it go. She asked Board Member Allison if she was suggesting to keep the gates and restrooms locked. Board Member Allison said, yes; she said that was something that Alderman David Espinosa had mentioned – that he wanted gates to keep people out (from vandalism). She told Ms. Hernandez that we'd have to take that up to Council to see what they want to do. Board Member Allison said she would like to make the recommendation to Council for little things just to get started.

City Attorney Tom Cate answered some questions for New Board Member Curiel in relation to the Devine Little League and the City of Devine.

According to Ms. Hernandez, they will be having a Devine Little League Meeting on Monday and they will be posting a Zoom link on the door of the Devine Little League.

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Board Member Allison suggested to table this item in order to give the Devine Little League time to meet and talk about it. Ms. Hernandez said she will bring these suggestions up to the Board, and she will try to contact Alderman David Espinosa.

Discussion was held on fundraisers.

Motion by Board Member Allison, seconded by Chairman Vail to table this item until we hear back from the Devine Little League.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The seventh order of business was to discuss and consider status on roped-off broken playground equipment.

Superintendent of Public Works Rob Flores addressed the Board. He explained that the broken piece of playground equipment that we are talking about is a giant Jax. It's been roped off since before COVID. He discussed in detail how it was basically vandalized and broken, and said it can't be fixed. He finally found a replacement Jax out of Park Place Recreational Designs in San Antonio. The cost for the Jax part and the hardware is \$940 just to replace that one piece. He said that the quote is valid for 30 days but was told that the price would not go up so it's fine. Superintendent of Public Works Rob Flores informed the Board that the Public Works guys can actually do the removal of the playground equipment.

Chairman Vail informed the Board of having the option of replacing that one piece of playground equipment at a cost of \$940, or actually removing it from the playground. She suggested to just remove that one piece of playground equipment.

The Board held discussion.

Motion by Board Member Allison, seconded by Chairman Vail to recommend to Council to remove the broken piece of playground equipment from the Briscoe Park.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The eighth order of business was to discuss and consider Lighting under Pavilion at Briscoe Park – the time change and getting dark at 5:00 p.m.

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Mayor Thompson addressed the Board. He said this was discussed last year, and he would like to put some sort of solar-based or LED-based lighting underneath the pavilion; something that would not require any wiring. He said the lights would be on a timer and not be on all night long. He talked about reaching out to Q-Technologies to install the lights; they have already installed some lights for the City. The Board reviewed some pictures as Mayor Thompson discussed prices according to the lumens. He told the Board that, in his opinion, we can probably get by with two of the 1000 lumens for \$575 each, at both ends of the pavilion. He felt that should be sufficient lighting to where it won't be dark underneath that cover.

Mayor Thompson informed the Board that the City put two street lights at the Briscoe Park and one at the John Curcio Park around two-three years ago. Discussion was held on possibly putting them on a timer in accordance with curfew hours. Mayor Thompson felt this is not so much a curfew problem, but rather a vandalism concern. According to Mayor Thompson, this may not be exactly what we need but said we could ask the Q-Technology representative for options.

Board Member Curiel inquired if we would know about how much of an area each light would cover; she said she wouldn't want any overkill on the lighting. Superintendent of Public Works Rob Flores held discussion on when we did the lighting at the Sewer Plant; he said it depended on the height.

Mayor Thompson asked Interim City Administrator/City Secretary Dora V. Rodriguez if there was any way we could meet with the representative before this gets taken before Council for a recommendation. She stated that he can actually meet with him one night. Mayor Thompson said he would do whatever, and added that the same situation would apply to John Curcio Park later when that park progresses.

Motion by Board Member Allison, seconded by Chairman Vail to recommend to Council for them to make a decision on the LED Lighting under the Pavilion at the Briscoe Park.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The ninth order of business was to discuss and consider Arbor Day tree planting locations requested by the Garden Club.

Elsa Rodriguez, President of the Garden Club, addressed the Board. She told the Board that the Garden Club has been around since 1947, and she briefly gave them a history of how the Garden Club took over the maintenance of the Four Corners in downtown Devine. They had to meet with TXDOT in order to do this because the four corners was state property. Their goal is to beautify Devine.

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Ms. Rodriguez talked to Council about their Arbor Day Project. She stated that they want to plant a tree at the Briscoe Park on Windy Knoll in honor of Arbor Day; they want to do this on February 25, 2021. She explained she went before Council and recommended planting a Desert Willow which is drought tolerant. She explained that they need someone to go with them a couple of days before they take the tree to show them so they can dig a hole for the tree. She stated she would like for the Mayor to be there. She said their meetings are at 3:00 p.m. but they will work with us, and they can do it at any time. The event will be published in the newspaper and the Garden Club would like to encourage everyone to “plant a tree” for Arbor Day.

City Attorney Tom Cate advised that this still needs to go before Council for approval with the recommendation of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, so it will have to be taken back to Council again.

Mayor Thompson told the Board that they just need to identify a location at the park that will not interfere with their long-term goals for the park. He added that he had committed at the last council meeting to matching by having a tree at the John Curcio Park also, which he will be personally donating. He told the Board that he would like for them to look at both parks. He suggested that the Board get a map of the playgrounds so they can identify what areas are available to put these trees in the future.

Motion by Chairman Vail, seconded by Board Member Allison to recommend to Council to approve moving forward with the planting of the tree at Briscoe Park.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The tenth order of business was to discuss and consider adding a basketball court at Briscoe Park at the west side area to provide activity for teenagers in our community.

Chairman Vail talked to the Board about implementing this because she feels that we don't have anything to offer the teenagers, other than the sand volleyball which was just installed last year. Board Member Allison was against this because it's been discussed with the Board before and she said we just didn't have the money, and it causes altercations. However, she commented that the John Curcio Park could use a basketball court. She would like to put this on a wish list and go for a splash pad instead. Chairman Vail said she would still like for this to be considered. Board Member Curiel suggested this could be an item to put on the mail-out/survey that they talked about.

Motion by Chairman Vail, seconded by Board Member Curiel to table the basketball court at the Briscoe Park.

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Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The eleventh order of business was to discuss and consider Mayor's presentation on acquiring property next to Curcio Park to expand Curcio Park.

Mayor Thompson addressed the Board. He talked to the Board about the Council looking at acquiring one of the properties on Hester Avenue next to Curcio Park in order to expand the park. The property is currently owned by the Negro Baptist Church. He is wanting recommendations from the Board on how to use that property once we acquire it. Mayor Thompson suggested putting a plaque as a memorial in honor of the people who went to the church/school during segregation.

Mayor Thompson also talked about the City trying to expand a business loop onto the highway and the possibility of building apartments which would be very close to the park. Our TIRZ Consultant, Mr. Lance Elliott is working on this, and has already been in touch with a developer. He told the Board that we're talking about four to five years down the road. He told the Board that as they look into the future, Council would need recommendations on what they want done.

The Board briefly talked about hiking & biking trails. Mayor Thompson suggested for the Board to think about the population growth and on what we can do short-term and long-term as well, and then get back to Council. He told the Board that they weren't given much of a budget since the Board hasn't met since last year, but as they come up with ideas, we would need to amend the budget.

The Board held discussion.

Motion by Board Member Allison, seconded by Board Member Curiel to table this item and bring it back for further discussion.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The twelfth order of business was to discuss and consider Mayor's presentation on the Green Belt.

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Mayor Thompson told the Board that one of the major complaints he gets is that Devine does not have sidewalks. He said sidewalks are expensive; even bigger and more developed cities do not have sidewalks. He presented his thoughts on creating a Green Belt that extends from the Golf Course area all the way down to Burnt Boot Creek. He said it can be all the way from Malone (by the Golf Course) all the way down to Zig Zag (by Burnt Boot Creek). It can be a six-foot-wide belt of concrete from one end to the other, and it would tie in to the Briscoe Park at Windy Knoll, and also tie in to the football field, and it would tie in to another park that was previously talked about for District 3. Some of the land is owned by the City; some is owned by the School and some is owned by Mr. Dorfmeister, across from Briscoe Park.

No action was taken.

The thirteenth order of business was to discuss and consider setting a date and time for meetings.

Chairman Vail commented that she would prefer to have a set date and time to meet each month. The Board held discussion and decided to meet on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center.

Motion by Board Member Allison, seconded by Board Member Curiel to meet the second Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Community Center.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

The fourteenth order of business was Informational Items.

The following was discussed:

- Mayor Thompson announced that Alderman Vega is still looking for someone to fill the seat for a Parks representative for District 1, and we may be looking for someone in District 2. Discussion was held.
- Alderwoman Kathy Lawler introduced herself as the new council person for District 4.

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There being no further business to come before the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, motion made by Board Member Allison, seconded by Board Member Vail to adjourn the meeting.

Ayes	--	Three (With 1 Vacancy in District 1 And District 2)
Nays	--	None

Motion carried.

Chairman

Secretary