



City of Belton – Parks Board Meeting Minutes

Harris Community Center, Smith Room
401 N. Alexander Street
Belton, TX
Monday, May 2nd, 2016 – 5:30 p.m.

The City of Belton Parks Board held a meeting on Monday, April 4th, 2016, in the Smith Room at the Harris Community Center. Attending the meeting were Parks Board members Daniel Bucher, Diane Ring, T.R. McLaughlin, and Chair, Josh Pearson. City Staff in attendance included Director of Parks and Recreation, Matt Bates, Parks Superintendent, James Grant, Library Director, Kim Kroll, Public Information Officer, Paul Romer, and Assistant City Manager, Gene Ellis.

1. **Call to Order.**

Vice Chair Daniel Bucher called the meeting to order at 5:37pm

2. **Public Comments**

Ms. Virginia Ortega signed up for public comments to speak about her and her families desire to see a Dog Park built in Belton. Ms. Ortega explained to the board how her son had tragically passed away just over a year ago, and the family was looking to do something in Belton in his memory. Ms. Ortega told the board that she reached out to Director of Parks and Recreation, Matt Bates, about the idea a year ago, which was just about the same time that the Parks Strategic Master Plan Update started. Mr. Bates told the board that with the survey results ranking a Dog Park as a higher priority, staff could now begin the initial planning steps with Ms. Ortega such as identifying potential locations, and basic concept designs of the park.

3. **Consider the minutes from the April 4th, 2016, Parks Board Meeting.**

Mr. McLaughlin made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, Ms. Ring seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously, 3-0.

4. **Discuss the priorities that have emerged from the 2016 Combined Belton Parks and Recreation and Comprehensive Plan Survey.**

Brent Luck, Luck Design Team, explained to the board how priorities were established during the survey process and how going forward the priorities would be presented at the Public Meeting #2. Mr. Luck first began by explaining to the board that priorities #2- Indoor Rec Center, #10- Indoor Swimming Pool, and # 15- Senior Center would be removed from the list and placed in a separate "Indoor Facility List". This is due to the items being high dollar amounts to construct and could potentially hurt grant opportunities in the future. Mr. Luck then went on to ask whether any of the board were surprised by the ranking of any particular amenities. Mr. Bucher stated he was surprised that soccer fields were ranked at #9 given the current size of the youth soccer association. Mr. Bates notified the board and Mr. Luck that the results that were currently being reviewed did not include the final numbers as the survey was granted an extension. Mr. Bates mentioned that in the final few days of the survey, the soccer association made a push with its parents and coaches to fill out the survey. Mr. Bates asked that though the results may not differ too much, that the most recent results were shown at the Public Meeting #2. Mr. Luck explained to the board that when a City with Belton's population begins to surpass 20,000 people, the need for an indoor rec center becomes more apparent and residents tend to voice their desire for one. Mr. Luck went on to explain that there are several options available to a City including a YMCA who would come in and run a city built facility with no cost of operation to the City. Mr. Luck explained that there are several pros and cons to having a YMCA in a community like Belton, and should the City and board wish to pursue this as an option, then a feasibility study by the YMCA maybe the route to go. Mr. Bates told the board that staff and council has made it a goal for FY 2016 in the strategic plan to investigate a possible City Recreation Center. Mr. Luck brought up that a Dog Park has emerged as a high ranking priority and what thoughts the board had about that. Ms. Ring spoke that for a

while now a Dog park has been something folks in the community have wanted, and selecting a location so that it could be accessible all residents in Belton has been challenging. Mr. Luck mentioned that fencing an irrigation alone can be quite expensive and that the City should keep this in mind as the parks plan update proceeds. Mr. Luck brought up practice fields as an item that was routinely mentioned in the comments section of the survey whether the board had any comments or thoughts about the need. Mr. Bucher mentioned that by increasing open space (#9 on priority list) it would in turn address the #7- Practice athletic fields priority. Mr. Luck discussed another recurring comment that appeared in the comments section which was parking, specifically Heritage and Chisholm Trail Parks. Mr. Bates told the board that these items are currently being looked into by staff, and proposals for solutions would be shared in the near future. Mr. Luck discussed with board the requests for lights at the soccer fields. Mr. Bates shared with the board that as it currently stands, soccer plays its games on Saturday mornings and early afternoon, and no practices are allowed at the fields during the week. The board agreed that lighting heritage park soccer fields is not a high priority given the way it is currently made up. Other items also discussed a need for an amphitheater, and shading on playground structures.

Mr. Luck updated the board on the next steps of the plan which includes finalizing the priorities after the 2nd Public Meeting, along with defining Belton's needs assessment and how the identified needs and priorities will be achieved through funding mechanisms etc.

5. Board and/or Staff comments.

None.

6. Adjourn.

Chair Pearson adjourned the meeting at 7:12 p.m.