



Expanding Horizons

CITY OF CONVERSE
CITY ADMINISTRATION

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**Minutes
PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION
November 9, 2015
6:00 P.M.**

The Parks and Environmental Commission of the City of Converse Met for a Regular Meeting at the City Hall Conference Room, located at 405 S. Seguin Street to Discuss and Act on the Following Agenda Items:

1. Call To Order. (Vice-Chairman Perez)
Meeting called to order by Sam Perez at 6:02 p.m.

2. Opening Ceremonies. (Vice-Chairman Perez)
 - a. Invocation. Moment of silence.
 - b. Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Roll Call, Establishment of Quorum & Recognition of Visitors. (Chairman)
Members in attendance:

**Commissioner Sam Perez Jr. Vice-Chair
Commissioner Irvin Hollowell – Member
Commissioner Anthony Woods – Member
Commissioner Rick Smith – Member
Commissioner Rodger Dennes – Member
Commissioner Wenceslao Santiago - Member
Councilman Jeff Beehler – City Council Liaison
Manuel Longoria – Public Works Director
Vanessa Limones – Recording Secretary**

Absent:

Alovyia Freelon - Member

4. Citizens to be heard: This time is provided for Citizens to address the Parks and Recreation Commission on any issues and concerns under the commission's purview. No Parks and Recreation Commission Discussion or Action can be taken if an item is not on the Agenda. Please state your name and address for the record. Remarks should be limited to three minutes (3 min.).
5. Discussion and Appropriate Action to Approve Minutes of the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting conducted October 19, 2015. (Vice-Chairman Perez)
 - **Motion to approve by Rick Smith**

- **Seconded by Anthony Woods**
- **Rick Smith made an amendment to add member Santiago's name to the Oct. 19 minutes to reflect his attendance at the meeting**
- **Motion carried by majority vote. Vice-Chairman Perez noted one member against the motion.**

6. Discussion of parks master plan development process. (Mr. Bert Moyer, consultant; M. Longoria)

Manny Longoria introduced Bert Moyer. Moyer is creating a parks improvement vision plan. Moyer noted the contract ends December 2013, but is willing to potentially extend the contract pro-bono for one month to be able to present the final project to the commission.

The commission discussed the purpose of the plan and concluded that the main purpose is to use the plan to submit for grants and other sources of funding, and to also provide a vision for the future for citizens to potentially review and provide feedback in the future in the form of public hearings in 2016.

Mr. Moyer noted the city's current population (from 2010) and amount of park acreage is above average, but projecting future population growth, Moyer noted Converse could face a shortage of park land. He discussed the concept of connecting the city parks through a trail (including sidewalks for smaller trail loops in different parts of the city). There was discussion on what land is owned by the city and/or what land is potentially being acquired by the city in the future to grow park space and meet the need of future growth.

From the first draft presented by Mr. Moyer, some ideas included:

- Cleaning up the areas around the lakes at North Park and City Park
- Upgrade the area around the lake at City Park to allow for camping; add restroom facility
- Fix the baseball fields at North Park and City Park. Members of the commission asked for Moyer to provide an average number of ballfields needed to satisfy the population of Converse as to not have too little or too many ball fields.
- The commission discussed some ideas for the pool and whether to add more, renovate existing, or add other items (such as bleacher-seating) to attract swimming events. The commission asked Moyer to provide an assessment of how many pools are needed to serve the population of Converse.
- Moyer noted that adding a large parking lot to City Park, adding a 250-to-300 seat amphitheater (small venue), and improving and fixing the existing canyon-type area to be able to host concerts and other events that holds between 1,000-to-2,000 spectators (larger venue), similar to the former Verizon Amphitheatre in Selma, Texas (but not the same size), could present an opportunity for the city to host concerts and festivals.
- Moyer noted that because the parks are in / near a flood plain, everything build should be constructed to withstand a flood.

- There was discussion on whether or not to include a dog park in North Park and/or City Par. It's the understanding of members of the commission that the animal shelter passed on this year's bond may also include a dog park.
- The commission discussed when and how to get feedback from the public. The idea moving forward is to have a vision of the future of the parks (what Mr. Moyer is currently doing), and then present the vision to the City of Converse citizens and general public in the form of public hearings. Receiving input about the vision, fine-tune the document moving forward to create a final master plan and begin implementation.
- Assessing potential of producing revenue through field rentals including adult leagues. Mr. Moyer said he would look into it.
- Potential of attracting youth leagues to the city parks for field rentals
- Mr. Moyer said the final report of the vision will include a list of resources for the city to apply/lobby for grants and funding
- Some discussion was had on improving the lakes, possibly adding piers, a dock, etc. to allow for conditions more conducive to fishing. The lake is currently used for fishing by citizens.
- Commission also acknowledged some work needs to be done on existing playgrounds
- Some commission suggestions to Mr. Moyer for the second draft include:
 - o Show data on quantity of baseball/softball fields, volleyball courts, soccer fields, football fields, volleyball courts, pools, pavilions, and other facilities per capita as an average
 - o Include soccer field(s), pool update/upgrade, potential of adult baseball and softball fields and youth baseball/softball fields in vision plan
 - o Neighborhood parks on existing city-owned land
 - o Possibility of dog park / area within existing park area
 - o Double basketball court at City Park to mirror what's at North Park.
 - o Potential piers, dock, etc. to the lake. Looking at other uses for the lake, such as swimming.
 - o Assess potential of separating fields into parks, for example, one park has baseball and softball, other park has football and soccer
 - o Revising the displayed size of East Park on the vision plan. It was noted at 10.5 acres and should be around 60 – 70 acres.
 - o Funding for parks and programming per capita from surrounding cities

7. Report from City Council Liaison (Councilman Beehler)

The councilman gave a report on the election results. He also updated the commission on the status of the nominated chairman of the commission, Mr. Smith: the city council must approve the commission's nomination and it's an agenda item at the next council meeting. There was some discussion on the resolution that was not approved at the last council meeting regarding a piece of property owned by the San Antonio River Authority that could serve as an entrance to East Park if it was owned by Converse. The commission discussed dog parks, the size of dog parks, types of dog parks, etc.

8. Public Works Director's Report (M. Longoria)

- a. Fitness equipment at North Park Walking Trail.

Mr. Longoria discussed the installment of fitness equipment at North Park primarily over by the lake. There will be pedestals installed to show proper usage of the equipment. Mr. Longoria also updated the commission on maintenance being done on the existing volleyball court at North Park. He mentioned that it's important to create a continuous maintenance calendar so-to-speak for fields/courts.

Mr. Longoria mentioned the intention of putting in a soccer field / soccer fields at North Park and asked for Commission member Hollowell's assistance. Hollowell mentioned that field sizes vary depending on the usage (adult vs. usage). Commission member Smith suggested not taking action on building/creating soccer fields until the vision plan is in a final draft stage. There was discussion on the revenue-producing ability of soccer fields for youth and adult leagues.

Mr. Hollowell also discussed that if the football field reservation process allows for a specific group to have priority, then it's not a first-come, first-serve facility. Councilman Beehler mentioned that each reservation has a contract. Mr. Smith mentioned that most facility rentals include some type of revenue (concessions, ticket sales, flat rate, etc.). Mr. Perez mentioned there is an obligation for groups renting the facility to provide volunteers to the city when needed.

Mr. Perez mentioned that the volleyball court at North Park may have glass. Mr. Longoria said he received no reports of glass on the court.

Mr. Hollowell broached the subject of the commission having a more involved role at the parks, including community service projects, such as pulling weeds, etc. In the past, the commission had painted the pool.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Longoria to provide a list of city-owned land that could potential be neighborhood parks.

9. Nomination of committee to sit on the Ordinance Committee (Perez)
Parks and Environmental Commission member Irwin Hollowell was selected to serve on the Ordinance Committee to represent this commission.

10. Discussion and Appropriate Action regarding changes to committee, per August 15, 2015 code, as approved by city council. Appendix A. (Chairman)

- a. Name of Committee
- b. Meeting Times
- c. Responsibilities
- d. Other Changes

Mr. Smith explained that some of the code that the commission operates under has been revised as of August 2015, including meeting days (moved from the second Monday of the month to the fourth Monday of the month), the name of the committee changed to Parks and Environmental Commission, and a revision of the responsibilities to reflect a change in the management/oversight of Night In Ole Converse; this commission is now in an advisory role and not the manager of the event.

The commission suggested that the meetings be kept on the second Monday of the month and appropriate action to codify this change in the city code will move forward, if necessary.

Motion to approve: Member Anthony Woods

Second: Irwin Hollowell

Motion passed.

Councilman Beehler said he would take this item to the City Council. Mr. Longoria also said he would update the agenda for the next City Council agenda.

At the next meeting, a discussion will take place on adding a community service component to members of the commission to assist in cleaning up the parks, painting areas in the park, etc.

11. Discussion regarding 2015-2016 F.Y. Parks and Recreation Commission Budget. (Public Works Director)

Mr. Longoria presented the Parks and Recreation department budget for FY 15-16. The total budget is \$399,129, with a majority of that for staffing. Some highlighted items include:

- \$50,000 for fence replacements. Ball field fences, surrounding fences, etc. Staff is doing an assessment now of fences.
- \$20,000 for facility improvements. City staff will use this money to update restrooms to comply with ADA.
- \$20,000 for new maintenance truck.
- \$3,500 of a contractual obligation for Night in Ole Converse with the Lions Club.
 - o The commission inquired what this money is spent on. Mr. Longoria said he would check into it.
- Within that budget, the Parks and Environmental Commission has a budget line of \$7,500 for "events and other" items.
 - o Member Hollowell inquired as to what "other" is defined as.
 - o Councilman Beehler said the committee can spend that money as they wish.
 - o Member Smith asked for an updated monthly budget report of the commission's budget line at each future meeting. Mr. Longoria agreed to provide this.
- There is also a \$250 budget line for apparel.

12. Discussion on any new updates or details for potential future events. (Chairman)

a. 25 Mile Bike Ride benefiting Veterans

Member Roger Dennes talked with people in the cycling community and that a 40-mile or 62-mile bike ride route may be needed instead of a 25-mile bike ride to attract members of the cycling community. It would be important to use the country roads. Member Dennes said he needs to have approval from City Council and has not approached the council yet because he needs to do talk with the police and other important groups to put on the event. The event would be suitable around Night in Ole Converse, but the event may be more successful around Veteran's Day, such as the

weekend before or after Veteran's Day. Having multiple distances along the same route would be good for varying levels in the cycling community, such as a 14-miler, 25-miler, and 40-miler.

Mr. Longoria mentioned that the branches of military have cycling teams/groups and that could be a logical place for the group to start.

b. Movies in The Park

Mr. Smith, Mr. Longoria, and Mr. Perez explained to the group the difference in obtaining licensing permission to show a video (and the expense) and the expense of renting or purchasing audio/visual hardware to show the video. The licensing varies on the expected crowd size, type of movie, and how new/old the movie is. If a Disney movie is shown, the company puts restrictions on when you can show a Disney movie depending on when they are releasing similar movies in theatres. There is the potential to partner with a company for sponsorship and/or ask food trucks to sell / provide food at the event and the commission can receive revenue from sales or a flat fee from those companies. A decision was made for Mr. Smith to gather research and finalize a proposal for two movies in spring/early summer 2016 (including marketing expenses), not to exceed \$3,000 in expenses. This item will be considered at the next meeting in a formal appropriate action agenda item.

c. Fitness in The Park

The idea is to have local fitness clubs sponsor and host fitness days in the park to explain use of the new equipment, as well as other activities. The item has been tabled until next meeting.

13. Discussion of Agenda Items for next meeting.

Potential agenda items for next meeting include:

- Commission budget update (monthly)
- Presentation from Mr. Moyer, vision plan
- Community service component for commission responsibilities
 - o Update on events, including bike ride, movies in the park, and fitness in the park

14. Set date and time for next meeting

Monday, December 14, 6 p.m.

15. Adjournment.

Adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

Passed and approved by the Parks and Environmental Commission this 14 day of December 2015.

Attest:


Rick Smith