

**Minutes**  
**PARKS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION**  
**February 8, 2016**  
**6:30 P.M.**

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

1. Call To Order. (Chairman)  
**Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.**
2. Opening Ceremonies. (Chairman)
  - a. Moment of silence.
  - b. Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Roll Call, Establishment of Quorum & Recognition of Visitors. (Chairman)  
**Quorum established.**

**Members Present:**

Rick Smith, Chairman  
Sam Perez, Jr., Vice-Chairman  
Irvin Hollowell, Member  
Wenceslao Santiago, Member  
Nancy Droneburg, City Council Liaison  
Manny Longoria, Public Works Director  
Vanessa Limones, Public Works Administrative Assistant  
Elizabeth Brown, Grants Administrator

**Members Absent, unexcused:**

Rodger Dennes, Member

**Members Absent, excused:**

Anthony Woods

**Members Resigned:**

Alovyia Freelon (effective January 25, 2016)

Smith: Mr. Dennes' absences are unexcused for the past two meetings and this meeting if he does not show up. It's his last meeting according to his term limit. He has not returned a call or emails. Is there a motion to unexcused the absences? *There was no motion.*

We currently have two member openings and two alternate member openings. Applications for the board is online, and the marquee and water bill are advertising the opening.

Santiago: Can members of the board be present at a meeting via proxy?

Longoria: Certain boards are prohibited from attending by proxy. But I'm not clear about an advisory group, which is what this group is considered.

4. Citizens to be heard: This time is provided for Citizens to address the Parks and Environmental Commission on any issues and concerns under the commission's purview. No Parks and Environmental 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.).

**No citizens spoke.**

5. Discussion and Appropriate Action of Consent Agenda. (Chairman)
  - a. January 11, 2016 minutes

Santiago offered two amendments to the January 11, 2016 minutes to clarify the exact language he used. The chairman agreed to update the minutes to reflect the exact language.

- Page 3, change content "to call animal shelters" to "call veterinarians around the city" and add "low cost" in front of "vaccinations" and add "a major donor."
- Page 9, item C, typo: change "move" to "more"

Smith: The minutes are not meant to be verbatim, and I have no problem updating the minutes, but these minutes are supposed to be more in-depth than summary minutes, but not verbatim.

**Motion to approve the minutes with amendments by Perez. Second Santiago. Motion passes.**

6. Report from the Public Works Director (M. Longoria)
  - a. Calendar of upcoming rentals (six-month view)
  - b. Financial Report
  - c. Updates on grants

Longoria provided the commission members with a calendar of rentals for the upcoming months.

Longoria: There was a BBQ cook-off over the past weekend. St. Monica's School (in blue on calendar) will not be needing a reservation they had previously had. The CYO will still have their reservation and the Judson Youth Sports Foundation will still have their reservation. Financial report is presented and expenditures reflect Movie in the Park Event.

Brown: The Texas Wildlife Grant was submitted. It's a competitive grant. There's another grant available for playground bills. They require 200 – 250 volunteers and the playground will almost be fully-funded. The big Texas Wildlife grants are upcoming. We should identify what the goals and priorities are to go after.

Smith: can you identify some places for the playground and we could address those locations next meeting?

Santiago: I've done two of these playground builds before and it takes a lot of coordination. A project manager may be needed to coordinate everything.

Smith: Manny, can you update everyone on the status of providing food and beverage at some meetings for commission members?

Longoria: The city manager told me the practice is not to provide food for commission meetings. It's not a budgeted item. That's not to say that the group couldn't ask for funds budgeted next cycle.

Droneburg: My thought on what city council would say is no. I don't think you should spend budget money on the food, even if it's small.

Smith: How does the group want to proceed? The item was tabled until members bring ideas.

Santiago: I propose we think about it as a budget item for next fiscal year.

7. Report from City Council Liaison (Councilwoman N. Droneburg)

The council discussed getting more police, passed the parks vision plan, discussed "Jake Brakes" and rezoned two parcels or land.

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

- a. 25 Mile Bike Ride benefiting Veterans (R. Dennes)
- b. Movies in the Park (R. Smith)
  - i. Advertising
  - ii. Other updates

Smith: I would like to make a motion to indefinitely table the bike ride event since no progress has been made. Hearing no objection, I will remove this from the agenda moving forward.

Smith: Update on the movie in the parks event:

- I created a conceptual flyer
- The newspaper advertising is complete
- Facebook, social media, etc. will be used through city assets

Santiago: I heard that it's work to get a response from the population of Converse. We should develop a plan to communicate our events to schools and churches.

Smith: two other items we discussed last meeting we should discuss again.

- Back to school event: if we want to do that again in August, we should start the planning on it again.

Limones: it was very successful last year. A lot of people came and we gave out about 200 backpacks.

Hollowell: We should look at better control for giving out the backpacks. We needed to spend the budget money, so we maximized the pizza and gave out the backpacks (about \$15 backpacks). Other than that, we need to improve the speaker system, but everything else went as plan. And we still have 250 drawstring bags from Academy as a donation.

Limones: It was a clear backpack with school supplies included.

Smith: If we were to explore this for next meeting and consider budget money for this event again, can we consider it next meeting?

Hollowell: I would recommend doing this event as an annual event, as well as having another event for an end-of-school party using the pool. The movie in the park event could be in conjunction with the end-of-school party or it could be two separate events.

Smith: The other event we discussed last meeting was a holiday lights judging event.

Droneburg: This was done about six or seven years ago. The Parks commission picked a night, chose a night, and gave out first, second, and third place prizes for residents and businesses. I'm not sure why it went away, and there is no money spent other than signs to go in the yards. There is no theme to it. I have had a lot of people ask me why we can't bring it back. I think it's something that we should go back to. Contestants would stop in at City Hall and fill out an entry form with details about their lights.

Perez: We used to use our December meeting to do the judging. A bus was rented and we went around and judged lights. We gave out gift cards as a prize.

Smith: Is this something the commission wants to do? I'll put together an outline for next meeting. There is a Christmas Tree lighting event that we can partner with.

Santiago: I would like to take the lead on the community garden idea presented last meeting.

Longoria: The idea [of a community garden] is conceptual right now.

Santiago: I don't want to rush through it, but I want to do it.

Smith: Take the lead on it and meet with the library to start the discussions, and when we have more information, we can take it from there.

9. Park and Environmental Commission membership - update. (Chairman).

*Update provided in item 3.*

10. Update on Parks Master Plan and Next Steps. (Chairman and M. Longoria)

Smith: The next step is to have a strategic planning session to help with implementation. We should each invite citizens and other people to be part of the strategic planning group.

Longoria: Having a facilitator could be good to help us lead the discussion. I have a contact I can reach out to. He would charge us probably \$1,000 or less, but there is a lot of prep work and a final report to be done, and he would do that.

Hollowell: The city already had an idea for what the bond was for, but it hasn't come back to the committee. Do we know what the council wants? The money was allocated but we don't know what exactly it was for.

Smith: It wasn't earmarked for anything specific other than park improvements.

Droneburg: Yes, it was for improvements in the park. They want this commission to prioritize what we want and then present it to council.

Smith: Manny, can the facilitator get some background information, or I will, from the City Council members on their ideas for park improvements?

11. Discussion of Agenda Items for next meeting.

- Same standing items
- Community garden update
- Backpack / beginning of school event update
- Holiday lights event update
- Consultant / master plan update
- End of school event

Santiago: We should have a plan on how to spend the remaining money.

Smith: I will create a spreadsheet of financial projection/forecast about what we have upcoming, together with our financial update provided, that we can help forecast our expenses.

Hollowell: We were told we couldn't spend the money we had left over on improvements to the pool, such as pool coverings, tables, etc.

Longoria: Those expenses won't be denied again.

Santiago: A citizen asked me: "When was the last time the pond was stocked? Or the grass was cut?" I felt like I was denied the information I needed to give

Hollowell: The information is on the website.

Santiago: I want more information. I am accustomed to seeing a report. When was the grass mowed? What maintenance items are routine? How many times have you done it? There is where I felt the commission can help you with what you need.

Longoria: I will work on a report for that and come back next month.

Limonas: We are on the list to have our lake stocked.

12. Set date and time for next meeting. **Monday, March 14, 6 p.m.**

13. Adjournment.

**Motion to adjourn by Santiago, seconded by Perez. Adjourned at 7:50 p.m.**

**CERTIFICATION**

Passed and approved by the Parks and Environmental Commission this 14 day of March, 2016.

Attest:

  
Rick Smith, Chairman