

## PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING

March 14, 2006

The Parks and Recreation Board held its monthly meeting on Tuesday March 14, 2006, at 8:30 a.m. in Abilene Zoological Discovery Center. Board members present were Amber Cree, Gail Russey, Mike Schweikhard, Susan Arrington, Toney Gutierrez, and Moses Hall. Absent Board Member was John Goode. Community Services staff present were Mike Hall, Director; Tony Neitzler, Assistant Director; Susan Gerred, Recreation Supervisor; Bob Cheatham, Parks Superintendent; Jeff Bullock, Zoo Superintendent; and Linda Hansen, Executive Secretary.

Chair, Amber Cree called the meeting to order.

Mrs. Cree introduced the new Executive Secretary Linda Hansen and Board Member Moses Hall. Mr. Hall is a principal at Reagan Elementary and attended ACU.

Invocation was given by Toney Gutierrez.

Gail Russey motioned that the minutes of the January 10, 2006, meeting be approved. Susan Arrington seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried.

**Presentation of Spring Leisure Guide:** Susan Gerred reviewed the Spring 2006 Leisure Guide. Several pictures were included in this guide for different events. The division will continue to highlight special events with pictures in future guides. New classes were introduced: How to play the Piano in five easy lessons, Mother/Daughter dance aerobics, and dance aerobics. G.V. Daniels will host the Spring Shoot Out and the Jitterbug classes were reinstated. K-9 classes continue to be popular. Senior Citizens continue the popular dance classes. The Senior Jamboree will be May 16. Adaptive Recreation had pictures of the King/Queen Valentine Dance. The Summer Playground Program kicks off this quarter. The track club will be starting in June.

**Capital Improvement Program:** Mike Hall reviewed the CIP 5 Year Program. This is an annual program that gives each department the opportunity to plan capital improvement projects for the next 5 years. Funding for the projects comes from several sources like Certificates of Obligations, Bonds elections, community development block grants, general fund, and possibly funded by private sector. Mr. Hall reviewed projects that have been funded: Lake Kirby park Development, Phase 3, Nelson Park Tree Planting, Rose Park Trail, repave, Master Plan Phase 3A, Pedestrian Walks Repairs and Replace, Bridge Club Parking, Johnson Park Fishing Pier, Rose Park Road Paving, Park Trail paving. Most projects have been funded through certificates of obligations. The Wonders of Life exploration complex was funded by private sector. Projects that are proposed for funding include: South Abilene Park Development, Nelson Park Trail lighting, South Abilene Park Acquisition, Sports Lighting Upgrade, Irrigation System replacement, Festival Gardens Development, Vaughn-Camp Park Wetlands, Playground Modernization, N. 10<sup>th</sup> & Wall St. park development, Carver Park Picnic Shelter, Ball

Field Concession Building, Building Roof Repair, Lake Kirby Park, Baseball Complex, Sears Park Development, Zoo Enhancement package, and African Plains Exhibit.

A priority list was submitted to City Council for possible funding through the Certificates of Obligation Program. These include: Nelson Park Trail Lighting - was resubmitted as funding was redirected due to the cost of repaving projects came in higher than expected; Lee Park Playground – replace playground it is over 20 years old; Ball Field Concession Replacement – replacing Sears Little League facilities, current building is over 40 years old, this will be an ongoing project to update all Ball Field buildings to bring them up to date and ADA compliance; Request from Citizens to construct Picnic Shelter in Carver Park - a petition with over 200 signatures was submitted by the neighborhood; Rose Park Shop Phase II - continue to replace remainder of facilities; and Vaughn-Camp Park Wetlands - providing fishing area for citizens. Toney Gutierrez moved that the CIP list be approved. Mike Schweikhard seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried.

**Request to charge admission:** Bob Cheatham introduced two annual requests to charge admission from the Abilene Slow-pitch Softball Association: March 17 – March 19 tournament benefiting Betterment of Softball in Abilene and September 1 – September 3 benefiting Betterment of Softball for LULAC. Monies that come in are used to improve park. Gail Russey recommends approval to charge for the other tournaments. Toney Gutierrez seconded the motion. With all in favor, the motion carried.

**Operation Report:** (Recreation) Susan Gerred reported that the Daddy/Daughter was successful and continues to grow each year, 380 attended. Over 100 attended the Valentine Bingo at Recreation Centers. Staff attended the Texas Recreation and Parks Society conferences last week. The Division received a grant for \$5000 to be used for scholarships for low-income to attend the Summer Playground Program. The Mother/Son Date Night is scheduled for Thursday, March 23, 2006. The annual Steam ‘N Wheels Bike Race will be held on Saturday, March 18.

**Operation Report:** (Parks) Bob Cheatham reported that several paving projects are under way with JH Strain receiving the bid. Bids will be taken for the paving of the Bridge Club parking lot. The construction of the playground at Lake Kirby is going well with 90% completed with final site work still needed. Funding will be need for the grass. Problems with steel have caused some delay in the renovation of the concession building at Will Hair Park. Staff will begin spring planting soon.

**Operation Report:** (Zoo) Jeff Bullock welcomed the Board to the Zoo for this month’s Board Meeting. The Zoo will be having its 40 Fun Years celebration, with special events geared to the 40-year anniversary celebration. Year to date attendance as of February was 29,805 - up 7000 from last year. Entry complex and Learning Center bid opening was March 2, 2006, with Jeff Luther Construction receiving the bid. Construction will begin March 20, 2006, with completion date noted for March 21, 2007. Asphalt work is in progress with delays due to spring break attendance. The Zoo is beginning a partnership with Master Gardeners to work with them on current and future gardens.

Will Burch, Education Coordinator informed the Board of the Spring Break Camps. Applications are being accepted for the Zoo Teen Program. Summer camps continue to grow. April 29 the Zoo will host a Family Day as an enrichment day that will be free for the citizens. May 6, 2006, will be Salute to Dyess Air Force Base with meals and entertainment being provided.

Following the meeting the Board toured the projects that will be on the Bond Election.

Meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.