

## **PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING**

**July 19, 2022**

The Parks and Recreation Board held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, July 19, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. in Council Chambers at City Hall, 555 Walnut Street, Abilene, TX. Board members present were David Pittman, Jeff Goodin, Tanell Blackmon, Robyn Wertheim and Leigh Black. Parks & Recreation staff present were Lesli Andrews, Director, Chris Gibson, Assistant Director, Bobby Brown, Seniors/Aquatics Division Manager, Jesus Coronado, Parks Division Manager, Denae Duesler, Zoo Manager, Kelley Messer, Legal, Stanley Smith, Legal and Janina Aguero, Secretary.

David Pittman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Invocation:** Robyn Wertheim gave the invocation.

### **Public Comment:**

Bill Enriquez on behalf of Ovelia Campos, not just in Cesar Chavez Recreation Center, would like to propose to put portraits of those individuals who have been contributors to the neighborhood. Mr. Enriquez stated it is beneficial for children to see role models portraits and bios.

**Acceptance of Minutes from June 21, 2022:** Jeff Goodin moved the minutes to be approved. Robyn Wertheim seconded. With all in favor, the motion carried.

**Ovelia Campos Memorial Picture:** Lesli Andrews discussed receiving a request to hang up a picture in Cesar Chavez Recreation Center of Ovelia Campos. Lesli recapped the letter submitted stating Mrs. Campos was born and raised in Abilene, TX and worked for AISD for 48 years. Mrs. Campos was a founding member of the Hispanic Leadership Council and Sears Neighborhood Revitalization Committee. Lesli stated there is no current policy in place for placement of photos of members of the community in centers that are not named after them.

### **Public Comment:**

Samuel Garcia stated he is in support of putting the picture up of his dear friend, Ovelia Campos. Mr. Garcia asked the Board if they could keep the policy "broad." Mr. Garcia spoke about not having hispanic leaders in Abilene, but Mrs. Campos was one who he wanted the community to recognize.

Bill Enriquez said for the Sears Revitalization plan, Mrs. Campos was on the plan from 20 years ago. Mr. Enriquez stated that Mrs. Campos was the main organizer for the Thanksgiving dinner held at Cesar Chavez Recreation center and was an advocate for the underserved.

Robyn Wertheim moved to approve the display of Ovelia Campos' picture with a short bio. Jeff Goodin seconded the motion, with all in favor the motion passes.

Robyn Wertheim directed Parks and Recreation staff to develop a policy on the parameters involved with recognizing people in recreation facilities. Robyn made a comment that the Parks & Recreation staff include only local citizens for future policies on the subject.

**Approve application for America the Beautiful grant to assist with creation of grassland and wetland areas:** Denae Duesler, Development Manager for the Zoo, discussed the partnership with Parks & Recreation to submit a grant to improve access to the wetlands, which include the middle and north lake in Grover Nelson Park. With this grant, Denae showed visual slides of the shift further north to make the middle lake the same size as the north, refill with water, add fish and ducks, create docks for hiking and jogging paths connecting the trails further away from the road for a quieter environment. Denae presented visuals of the expansive grasslands to include roaming bison. Denae asked the board to approve submitting the application for the grant, which is 1.5 million dollars and is 100% given with no stipulation.

**Public Comment:** None

Jeff Goodin made a motion to approve submitting the application. Leigh Black seconded, with all in favor the motion carried.

**Approve including the proposed Grasslands and Wetlands areas in the zoo perimeter and including Festival Gardens in the Nelson Park Area:** Lesli Andrews reviewed the current agreement between the City of Abilene and the Abilene Zoological Society, that includes the Festival Gardens as part of the Zoo Master Plan footprint. Lesli discussed transitioning the Festival Gardens area to be included in the boundary of Grover Nelson Park while transitioning the North Lake to be included in the Zoo Master Plan for management by the Abilene Zoo. Lesli informed the board that if they do agree, the Festival Gardens will be the responsibility of the Parks & Recreation department and the Zoo will have responsibility over the North Lake. Lesli stated that the Zoological Society and Parks & Recreation Department are both in agreement with the transition. Leigh Black made a motion to approve. Robyn Wertheim seconded, with all in favor the motion carried.

**Aquatics Report:** Bobby Brown gave the update on aquatics. Bobby stated that the first Champions Day went so well, they had a second day on July 23. Bobby reviewed how well the staff did for the fourth of July weekend, making tie dye shirts and having fun with the kids. Bobby discussed the Walking with Seniors events that have been averaging 25 people and are bringing in members from the senior center and community.

**Seniors Report:** Bobby Brown gave the seniors report. Bobby discussed the talent show on Friday and having 25 acts already signed up. The seniors also have the Senior Trip to Fredericksburg coming up on Saturday, October 15th with 20 people

reserving spots so far. The seniors have a Woodstock Game Night on Thursday July 21 with costumes, food, music and prizes.

**Parks Report:** Jesus Coronado gave the parks report. Jesus reviewed the park's task of beautifying the landscape throughout the City, starting at Everman Park. The Parks crew installed mulch and stone edging to the flower beds. Jesus discussed the parks crew placement of over 100 T-Posts for banner barriers at Nelson Park for the 4th of July gathering. They also set up portable restrooms and maintained 18 trash barrels. Jesus spoke about the Skateboard Competition with the parks crew setting up bleachers, tents and completing graffiti clean up prior to the event start up.

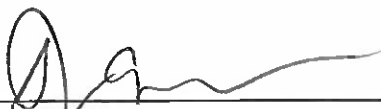
**Recreation Report:** Chris Gibson gave the recreation report. Chris reviewed the Skateboard Competition having a turnout of about 200 people and being successful with support from the community. Chris discussed the upcoming After School Program for ages 6-13 at the recreation centers. Chris informed the board about the scavenger hunt running throughout July with the Arrrghapalooza celebration at Adventure Cove for those who complete the hunt.

**Zoo:** Denae Duclier gave the report for the zoo. Denae talked about the naming of the baby anteaters Arnaud & Daphne, after a facebook poll from the public. Denae discussed the baby giraffe and baby Capybaras are out on display for viewing. Denae spoke about the upcoming PJ Masks Tour on July 23rd and that it would be free for Zoo Members. Denae informed the board about the upcoming Rock and Roar featuring Sister Hazel and Deep Blue Something. This event will be on August 13th and sales have already begun.

**Public Comment:** None

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 9:23am

  
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David Pittman, Parks Board Chairman

  
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Secretary