

## Senior Advisory Board Minutes

August 8, 2007

9:30 a.m.

Rose Park Center Activity Center

The meeting of the Senior Citizens Advisory Board was held at Rose Park Senior Activity Center, located at 2625 South 7<sup>th</sup>. Those in attendance were: Harriot Connor, Leroy King, Paul Rehm, Hazel Forkerway, Linda Rutledge Smith, Emory Walton and Eddie Hodges. Staff members present were Tony Neitzler, Carl Scott and Julie Sartor.

Board Members not in attendance: John Goode and Cynthia Cooke

Minutes of the previous meeting held on July 18, 2007 were reviewed. A motion was made by Linda Rutledge Smith a second by Hazel Forkerway to approve minutes with the correction made that Harriet Connor was in attendance. The motion carried.

Special guests in attendance from Half Associates, Inc. are Jim Carrillo, Brill Bickner, and Kimberly Annis.

Introduction about The Park Master Plan: The Master Plan has not been updated in over a decade and in the past Senior Citizens had not been included. This year the City has hired Half Associates to work on the Parks Master Plan, which includes Senior Citizens.

This was a special called meeting to update the Senior Advisory Board on the progress of The Parks Master Plan and will only be a summary of what was discussed through a series of questions and answers between the board and the consultants.

Mr. Carrillo said that The Parks Master Plan is a working road map, like a jig-saw puzzle, putting the pieces together with things always changing. Mr. Bickner added this is the time that you can dream a little.

Question was asked about things that our board liked and there were various answers from the board members including that they are all proud of the facilities that we have in place, no matter the size of the facilities and they all have good programs and are good for their communities.

Hazel Forkerway talked about G. V. Daniels facility, which is a smaller facility and they have formed a committee looking into ways to bring more people into the facility and more events. Carl Scott talked about the re-organization of the G. V. Daniels and Cobb Senior Centers and how they have the Coordinators for Recreation and Senior Citizens are handling both programs. That it will take some time for all of this to work, but they are working closely with these programs to make sure that everything will transition smoothly.

Mr. Carrillo asked about transportation and what were the limitations on transportation. Carl Scott gave details on our transportations system, but you have to reside within the city limits to be picked up. Transportation for trips and special events from the individual centers are scheduled for after 2:00 p.m. or on Saturdays.

Linda Rutledge-Smith commented that she had visited S. Park a few years ago at Thanksgiving and was small and is this normal. Carl said that S. Park is a small center that only averages about fifteen participants.

The discussion then turned to programming and facilities. Mr. Bickner said that the trend is to have more facilities like Rose with more activities and programming, smaller centers can't offer as different things. At some point would it be time to consolidate smaller centers to be able to offer more. Mr. Bickner said an example would be to build an aquatics facility. You would have to look at the demographics and see if this would be something you support.

Emory Walton and Paul Rehm who both attend and volunteer at Rose Park indicated that everyone that visits Rose Park is impressed with the facility and what it has to offer. Mr. Bickner wanted to know if we have any special events such as an open-house. Mr. Scott indicated that we had not had any open house. Hazel said that they are planning one for G. V. Daniels.

Ms. Smith since you said we should dream, what about a large aqua-sized facility? Doctors encourage this type of therapy. Mr. Scott mentioned that it is good therapy, but would seniors be comfortable getting in a swimsuit? Paul suggested we test this next summer using the city pools. Carl said we would be evaluating our aquatics program and it might be possible to have a senior program 11:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon. The question was asked if any of the hospitals have pools for therapy. Leroy King said that Hendricks charges \$35 monthly and will evaluate you.

Getting back to the subject of combined larger facilities, Mr. Scott asked Ms. Forkerway for her input since she attends one of the smaller facilities. Carl said that he has heard people like the smaller centers and would not come to a larger site. Hazel said this is correct that the participants at Daniels like the smaller community center. Tony Neitzler said while management may look at consolidations they would not do it at the expense of losing participants. Ms. Smith wanted to know about possible surveys. Mr. Bickner said that phone surveys were being done.

Mr. Carrillo said another trend is to have recreation and seniors in the same buildings which we are already doing. The national trend is a large center which has gyms, aquatic facilities and more mixing of two. Comment was made by Mr. Hodges even if you had this getting participation would be the main hurdle.

Mr. Bickner said Abilene is becoming a good destination for retirement so facilities do play into this. The question is have you tapped into the population? You say that the Rose Park facilities as an average daily attendance of 400, where is everybody else? How do you attract the ones that do not come. Many cities have retirement clubs and groups and retirement facilities that people live there and participate in their activities. Need to bridge the gap between the boomers and the older generations.

Ms. Smith said that Abilene has several facilities that cater to retirement living that residents participate in their own activities. Mr. King said that many people will come to the center especially at special times such as Thanksgiving, so they know it is here they just don't have the need or desire to come daily and there is nothing you can do to change that.

Mr. Scott indicated with the Meals-on-Wheels program that serves over 900 people which cuts down on people coming to the center for the nutrition need.

Mr. Bickner wanted to switch gears and would like to know what about Parks in Abilene.

There were several suggestions from board members from walking paths, tennis, volleyball, fishing, boating, and even maybe even some senior softball teams. Mr. Hodges wanted to know who runs the softball fields. Mr. Scott explained that these are run and teams are organized through the Softball Association.

Mr. Scott informed the board that the exercise room is ready for use with the new equipment in place.

The meeting was adjourned.