

THE STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF ANDERSON
CITY OF PALESTINE

The Parks Advisory Board met in regular session on Tuesday, May 6, 2014 at 12:00pm in the City Hall conference Room, 504 North Queen Street, Palestine, TX.

The following members were present:

John Ballard McDonald	Diane Davis
Thelma Holland	Eric Musil

Others present:

Roy Crouch	Heather Hrebec
Rob Thames	Danielle Shultz
Parks Maintenance Staff as per Attached List	

A quorum of the Parks Advisory Board was present.

CALL TO ORDER

John Ballard McDonald called the meeting to order at 12.03 P.M.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by John, seconded by Eric, to approve the minutes of the April 1, 2014 meeting. Upon vote, motion passed unanimously.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

Discuss a Day in Parks and Introduce Our 2014 Parks Maintenance Staff:

Rob introduced the team leaders of the Parks maintenance staff. He explained that there are three teams, and they each have their own designated t-shirt color. Rob asked the teams leaders to introduce their crews. Josh Woods is over the Athletic Complex, Calhoun Field, Mitchell Campbell, and Steven Bennett fields. He introduced Azha Alfred and James Macintyre as two members of his team that wear black t-shirts. Michael Walsh oversees Reagan Park, Spring Street, Gateways, the Civic Center, Fire Station #4, and the Palestine Mall. He presented Jerod Bennett, Justin Conley, Tevin Watson, and Jose Sambrano as his team members that wear orange t-shirts. David Defore takes care of Steven Bennett, Greens Park, Calhoun, Willie Myers, Mitchell Campbell, and Larry Street Park. He announced Joel Deleon and Derard Kamalu as his team that wear green t-shirts. Melvin Butler takes care of City Hall, Carnegie, Farmers Market, Visitors Center, the Motorcycle Shop, Lorraine Circle, Tiffany, Phillips Park, Crestline, Fitzhugh, the Old Library, Mail and More, and the YMCA.

Rob explained that in addition to this Parks maintenance staff, there is an inmate squad that assists in the upkeep of the City of Palestine. All of these individuals have many responsibilities at the parks, cemeteries, lakes, and Athletic Complex besides turf. They are always involved in other projects such as rebuilding, repairs, and assisting City Hall with various tasks. Rob stated that he is very proud of what they are doing. John said, "What you are doing is really important. You don't get the recognition you think you should, but when you don't do something right, you hear about it. I appreciate what you are doing. I personally want to thank you for what you do." Roy responded, "Best attitude I have ever seen! This group is unbelievable!"

Discuss 2014 Steven Bennett Park Pool Summer Swim Schedule:

Roy announced that the new 2014 pool schedule has been adopted by City Council, and said that we will try to beef up our attendance at the pool this year. John made it known that the reduction in public swim time is upsetting to him. The pool schedule this year reduced its operational hours by 13.5 hours. The YMCA didn't reduce their time, but 13.5 hours came off of the public swim time. John intends to try to make some changes. He explained that their premises is flawed, and reducing hours because the hours are not utilized. He clarified that the pool has not been properly marketed for the public. He also stated that it would not be good PR if the public finds out that their swim time has been reduced. Even though City Council has approved the calendar, he assured the Board that it will be re-visited. John made a motion that this schedule be rejected, with Diane seconding the motion. All Parks Advisory Board members were in favor, and none opposed. John guaranteed that he would visit with City Council members before the next City Council meeting May 12, 2014.

Discuss 2014 Post Easter Egg Hunt Event:

Heather made it known that we did host our first Egg-Normous Easter Egg Hunt April 19th. She announced that 7,000 eggs were hidden on three baseball fields designated for three different age groups. Diane Davis volunteered to assist in the event. Heather said that there were lots of kids – more than expected. The event had a Rabbit Patch with chicks, ducks, bounce houses, music, face painting, and the Easter Bunny. She asked that each of us log onto Facebook, invite friends, and "like" the page. She said that it was a great event in all, with a few hic-ups. Next year, we plan to double the eggs and activities. It will be bigger and better. Diane suggested that we have water or soda to drink next year. Eric stated that he didn't know exactly when the hunt started. He suggested that we stagger times to start the hunt for families with kids in more than one age group, and so that the lines for the activities in the Rabbit Patch won't be so long immediately after the hunt. Roy stated that next year we plan on having the Easter Egg Hunt a full week earlier so that it won't interfere with any other hunts in town. Diane suggested that we have the event on Good Friday because all children are out of school that day. She also recommended that all kids be divided on opposite sides of the ball-fields and meet in the middle to find eggs. Eric said that it was a good event, and a good turn-out.

Discuss Reagan Park New Landscape Beautification Project:

Roy explained where this development will be in Reagan Park, and let it be known that Ann Slatery's mother, Elizabeth Hutchinson donated \$5,000 for this project. He explained that there are many different textures planned on being put into this improvement including park benches, boulders, mulch, river rock, and vegetation. He mentioned all the colors and variations planned to be dedicated to this enhancement of Reagan Park. John mentioned that it appears that a lot of shade will be created over the vegetation. Roy assured the Parks Advisory Board that the plants that will be inserted are shade tolerant, and everything should flow simply. The donation paid is just under half of what will be needed for this project. The City of Palestine's Legacy in the Park will pay for the remaining amount not paid by her contribution. Roy also pointed out that irrigation will also be needed. He said, "Nice things cost money. This will be a 'wow' factor for the park – it will be beautiful!" He also affirmed that Elizabeth Hutchinson will receive a small plaque placed on a boulder for her donation, and Legacy in the Park will receive a larger plaque because of the larger contribution for this development. Legacy in the Park's plaque will be great advertisement for more donations to Legacy for more improvements to the City of Palestine. Roy said that this will have great visual impact for the City. John thinks this will be awesome. Roy made a recommendation to support this project. John motioned to support the proposed plans, and Thelma seconded his motion.

Discuss and Review the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan:

Nine items are listed in order of priority. 1) One full time Parks employee, and three additional seasonal employee positions. 2) Requested the purchase of a tractor with a front end loader. 3) Replacement of five HVAC split system units at Carnegie Library. 4) Requested to purchase one ½ ton Ford F-150 extended cab pickup truck for the Parks Supervisor. 5) Requested the purchase of three new playground units at Larry Street Park, Calhoun Park, and Greens Park. 6) Requested the purchase to complete a new design / build landscape beautification project located at the Wall of Honor site on Spring Street. 7) Requested the purchase and installation of new field lighting at the Palestine Athletic Complex. Fields #7 and #5 are expected to start the replacement project. 8) Requested the purchase of new floatable fishing dock for Wolf Creek Lake. 9) Requested the purchase to replace the Palestine Mall signage. Roy stated that for all of these projects to be completed, it would cost \$622,800. Roy stated that he is trying to get the lakes restocked with Carp, and is speaking with Texas Parks & Wildlife. Rob mentioned that he is working with a state biologist, and is looking at a restocking program. John stated that if we get it stocked, there will be a lot more usage in our lakes. Roy wanted the Parks Advisory Board to know what our upcoming projects are. 1) We have already completed our first plan - to open new "Block A" section in the City Cemetery, and begin selling advertisement for those new spaces. 2) Plan to open 2nd new "Block C" section in the City Cemetery, and begin selling advertisement for those new spaces. 3) Plan to create / develop and install a new landscape beautification project for Reagan Park that involves funding from a private donation from Legacy in the Park program. 4) Plan to coordinate with the Public Works Department to complete Phase I of the new Willie Myers parking lot project. 5) Plan to coordinate with the Anderson County Master Gardeners for renovating the interior planters at the Palestine Mall. 6) Plan to coordinate with Anderson County Historical Commission in designing, creating, and installing a front entrance signage project for Palestine City Cemetery. Roy recently heard, however, that the Anderson

County Historical Commission has decided not to complete this project. 7) Plan to rehab and renovate Upper Lake East Park area with four newly rehab park shelters, new picnic tables, new trash receptacles, new BBQ grills, newly created interpretive areas, and new signage. 8) Hot Pepper Festival preparation. 9) PYAA State baseball tournament preparation. 10) Plan for a newly created information desk area at the Public Library. 11) Completed – Easter Egg Hunt event preparation and planning. 12) Plan to implement Summer Reading program at Palestine Public Library. 13) Plan to create new policies and procedure for newly developed meeting space at Palestine Public Library. 14) Plan to complete the Capital Improvement Project at the Palestine Athletic Complex.

Discuss Steven Bennett Park Signage:

John announced that he thinks Concept C from Design Center Signs looks good. Eric agreed. Roy stated that it looks clear and gets right to the facts. John motioned to accept Concept C, and Eric seconded the motion.

Discuss and Make Recommendation to Move Future Monthly Park Board Meetings to the Palestine Parks & Recreation Main Offices / Conference Room Effective June 3, 2014

John agreed that moving the Park Advisory Board meetings to the Parks and Recreation main office in the Palestine Mall would be more convenient for several people involved in the meetings. John motioned to accept this change, and Diane seconded. All board members were in favor. Starting June 3, 2014, the Parks Advisory Board meetings will be held at the Palestine Mall in the Parks and Recreation Department's conference room.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*Roy passed out budgets to his department heads, and they are working on them. They need to be turned in to the City Manager in 2-3 weeks. He pointed out that there are a lot of things that have to be considered to operate for a full year.

*Roy clarified that the department is in the process of updating the planters in the Mall. At this point, the planters have been repainted, and the new potting soil and mulch will be added to them soon.

*A Mall Walking Program is in the process of being created.

*A large gator has been spotted at Upper Lake. Rob contacted a licensed gator hunter in Rusk to take care of this problem. Rob stated that last Friday he and the gator hunter got a hook and shot into the gator, but then the fight was on, and the gator got off the hook. Upper Lake has been closed until the gator is caught. Rob mentioned that he has located the hole that the gator hangs out, and will try again next weekend. He added that the hunter did estimate that the gator is between 8-10 feet long.

*A Veteran's Mall Walking Program is scheduled for May 21, 2014.

*Movies in the Park has been rescheduled for this Saturday, May 10th.

*The Splash Park will open with a "Splash Bash" May 24th at 11:00 to give the City of Palestine plenty of time to get up and ready for the party. A DJ, concessions, door prizes, and many other fun things are planned for this event. After May 24th, the Splash Park will be open 10:00am – 8:00pm every day. Starting September 6th, it will only be open weekends from 12:00pm – 5:00pm, with September 28th being the last day for the Splash Park in 2014.

*Adrian Peterson Day is scheduled for Saturday, June 21st in Reagan Park.

ADJOURN

Motion Made by John and seconded by Diane to adjourn at 1:24 P.M.

Danielle Shultz