

The Open Space and Trails Committee met on Thursday, July 6, 2017 at Seabrook City Hall, 1700 First Street, Seabrook, Texas to discuss and if appropriate, take action on the agenda items listed below.

THOSE PRESENT WERE:

Helen Burton	Chair
Sally Antrobus	Vice-Chair
John Coggeshall (absent)	Member
Monica Comeaux	Member
Debra Harper	Member
David Popken	Member
Thom Kolupski	Mayor
Robin Hicks	City Secretary

Chair Helen Burton called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1. PRESENTATIONS

1.1 Presentation on removal of invasive species at Seabrook Prairie. (George Kyame)

Mr. Kyame, who works closely with the Armand Bayou Nature Center, and who is a Master Naturalist, explained that he discovered the Seabrook Prairie and is interested in eradicating invasive species there and planting native prairie species. Mr. Kyame has already begun some of the eradication efforts and would be happy to work closely with the Open Space and Trails Committee on this project.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Joe, the Boy Scout who has been working with his fellow troop members to cut down variegated cane near the trails at the library, updated the Committee on the project's progress. 20 people worked on cutting and hauling during the last session, which took about 8 hours total. The next session of cutting and hauling is scheduled for July 23.

3. UPDATES

3.1 Update on the City Council meeting for discussion on the East West Trail Connection.

Committee member Coggeshall explained that the City Council discussed finishing the Pine Gully trail, constructing a sidewalk by Meyer at a cost of approximately \$3.9 million, and discussed connecting the trail system at El Mar. In addition, the Council seemed in favor of a project to expand the trail system from Hwy 146 to Old Seabrook, and they are looking at how to make that happen.

Mayor Kolupski said that there is already a box ditch at El Mar, so there is already a pathway; however, there are still property issues and the City will have to continue to work with TXDOT because of the 146 expansion project.

3.2 Update on recent and ongoing park activities and improvements.

Committee member Popken announced that the project to cut down the McCartney Rose near the trails at the library is still in the works, but because of the hot weather, the project is delayed until the volunteers can work in more favorable conditions.

3.3 Chair's Update on meeting with City Staff.

Chair Burton stated that she spoke with REI about their grant opportunities, and REI suggested that the City find a non-profit to partner with because REI gives grants to no-profit organizations. It has been suggested that the City work with Seabrook Rotary because REI has definitely expressed a like and interest in Seabrook and the Seabrook trails, so there may be some monies out there that would help with trails work.

Arthur Chairez, Director of Public Works, has retired after 42 years, and Kevin Padgett has been named the new Director of Public Works. Kevin will do a good job in his new position.

4. DISCUSSION ITEMS

4.1 Discussion on Highway 146 landscaping and the planting of trees in conjunction with the Expansion Project.

Mayor Kolupski explained that Highway 146 will eventually need to be landscaped, which will be a cost borne by the City. TXDOT is estimating a cost of approximately \$4million to use the standard TXDOT landscaping plan, which includes planting tree seedlings, which will take many years to grow. The Mayor has an idea for Seabrook to start a tree farm now, so that seedlings can be planted and will be bigger and fuller by the time the expansion project is ready for the landscaping portion.

Committee member Antrobus suggested that Harris County has done a great job with tree plantings around highways, like Beltway 8, so the County has the knowledge about cost, what kind of trees, and how many trees. Seabrook is in Harris County, so maybe the County can assist.

4.2 Discussion on condition of Parks related signs.

Chair Burton explained that the trail map signs have been ordered, but have not arrived yet. The bird signs cannot be constructed by the City because the City does not have the color required, and getting the color and making the signs would cost about \$2000 per sign; therefore, TXDOT will have to make the signs and it will take about one year for them to be completed. New signs will be placed first, then signs that need to be replaced will be constructed.

4.3 Discussion on a Great Texas Birding Classic Grant Application through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.

Chair Burton explained that the Committee has previously discussed the installation of bird rookery to assist with getting a grant through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. The suggested location is the new concrete outpouring toward Todville Road. At that location, people could see the birds from Pine Gully Park and from Todville Road. The particular spot is owned by the Port of Houston, and the City Manager has stated that the Port would give the City permission to construction a rookery there. More trees would have to be planted there, possibly cypress, which would also serve the second purpose of replanting what was lost after Hurricane Ike.

4.6 Discussion on a "Keep Texas Beautiful" Grant Application.

The Committee will continue to work on research to find out what Keep Texas Beautiful looks for in order to approve a grant application. The deadline date is not until next year and the application has not been published yet. The plan is to send the Public Works Administrative Assistant to the grant training offered by Keep Texas Beautiful, so that the Committee and the City will have first hand information from the organization on the process.

4.7 Discussion concerning the Woodlands Regeneration Project.

Chair Burton explained that the City's portion of this project will probably need to wait until the fall. The Committee members agreed.

4.8 Discussion on creation of a bee garden in Seabrook.

Committee member Antrobus stated that she heard a presentation by a Girl Scout who started a bee garden in Houston, and it was successful. Seabrook has not attempted a bee garden, and it would be a good Scout and Committee project. Such a project would expand the possibilities in Seabrook for engagement and public interest, as well as doing something to help keep bee populations going, since recent news indicates that bees may be in trouble and in danger of significant decline in numbers.

This topic will remain on future committee agendas for further discussion.

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4.9 Discussion on adding more palm trees on Main Street.

City staff is looking into the cost of treating the disease on the palms that are currently on Main Street; however, several have already died and are being removed. The arborist that assessed the situation stated that the disease will continue to contaminate even newly planted palms, so treatment will have to continue for the life of the trees. Replacing the palms is a huge cost as well. Staff is looking at maybe planting in every other space to cut down on both planting and treatment costs. The Mayor stated that right now the Council needs to decide what it wants to do and how much it wants to pay. Replacing the current type of palm costs about \$5000 per.

Part of the issue is that the look that the City wants requires palm trees, and Merlion has planned to put in palms to carry out the theme.

The Committee members suggested other tree types, which would still look nice and would provide more shade. Maybe Merlion could be approached with planting other tree types. 40 gallon trees, which will look large and full at the time of planting, cost about \$200 per tree.

5. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

5.1 Approve the minutes of the June 1, 2017 meeting. ATTACHMENT: June 1 minutes

Motion was made by Committee member Popken and seconded by Committee member Coggeshall to approve the June 1, 2017 meeting minutes.

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

5.2 Consider and take all appropriate action concerning the Action Items Checklist which is attached made a part of this agenda.

Chair Burton stated that the next quarterly report to Council will be in September.

5.3 Consider and take all appropriate action concerning the tasks for Parks staff.

No new tasks for Parks staff at this time.

5.4 Consider agenda items and upcoming meeting dates.

Next meeting will be August 3.

The following items should be on the next agenda:

- Bee garden

- Landscaping along Hwy 146
- Mr. Kayame's progress on the Seabrook Prairie
- Committee T-shirts
- Long range plans for Baybrook Park
- Update on recent and ongoing park activities and improvements
- Chair's Update on meeting with City Staff
- Great Texas Birding Classic Grant Application
- "Keep Texas Beautiful" Grant Application
- Woodlands Regeneration Project

The meeting was adjourned at 6:47 p.m.


Sally Antrobus, Vice-Chair


Robin Hicks, TRMC
City Secretary

