

The Open Space and Trails Committee met on Thursday, November 1, 2018 at Seabrook City Hall, 1700 1st 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	Member
Monica Comeaux	Member
Debra Harper	Member
David Popken	Member
Heather Cable	Member
Sean Landis	Deputy City Manager
Kevin Padgett	Director of Public Works
Stephanie Martinez	Executive Administrative Assistant

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

1. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Director of Public Works, Kevin Padgett stated that the road closure on Meyer was due to the waterline project.

2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS

2.1 Update on recent and ongoing park activities and improvements.

- The Parks Department has been doing a great job keeping up with the parks with all of the recent rainfall. The cane berm in Meador Park has been cut.
- Some parks are in need of doggie bags.

2.2 City Staff update.

Director of Public Works, Kevin Padgett, mentioned that any wash-outs on the Meador Park and Hester Park trails will be taken care of within the next two weeks.

2.3 Discussion and approval of the Action Items Checklist.

City Secretary, Robin Hicks, said that uniformity among all boards and committees is the goal. The agenda format has changed to create more transparency and to be in line with how the Texas Attorney General is reviewing and addressing violations of the Open Meetings Act, even though no violation has been made by this Committee. The action items checklist provides a full range of actions a committee can take, and the minutes of each meeting will reflect the detail of discussion on each item on the checklist. The meeting location change from the small downstairs conference

room to the City Council Chamber is to provide a larger area for the public to attend Committee meetings.

Member Coggeshall asked why are they are still a committee when they do not have a budget or authority.

Deputy City Manager, Sean Landis, stated that staff has come up with some options from researching other cities' beautification programs who do not function under Robert's Rules of Order. Those committees are more relaxed. Agendas do not have to be posted and committee members could meet at a park together and work on a project without violating the Open Meetings Act. The committee would still report to Council, and staff can come up with by-laws to require a core group of members as the decision makers for the committee, but this flexibility will allow more attraction for individuals who want to be a part of this group. Staff does not have a preference on what the committee would like to do but it would probably be better for the functionality and flexibility of the committee if they do not function under the Open Meetings Act. This is one of the hardest working commissions the City has with all the volunteer hours and projects accomplished, which require consistent physical work. There is a short-coming with how the committee functions at the moment because if four or more members get together at a park to work on a project a quorum occurs and causes problems.

Member Antrobus stated that recently it was indicated that the City Manager asked the Committee to start meeting in the Council Chamber instead of the downstairs conference room to be more civilized officials; however, now that the meetings are in the Council Chambers, the conversation seems to have reversed itself. No one has been informed that there was any kind of problem. The committee has been abundantly grateful with the tremendous way staff has been willing to work with the members. Staff knocks themselves out at every turn to help the committee with projects. It is a bit mysterious to find that there is something awkward going on.

Mr. Landis stated that it is just the formality of the Open Meetings Act that the committee currently has to follow that might be an issue. All the boards and commissions meet in the Council Chambers and post agendas. This group functions a lot differently because no other board or commission meets in the parks and gets their hands dirty.

Member Antrobus reminded everyone that a while back the City had an events committee who did not like having to follow the Open Meetings Act so the committee was reinvented as a task force, and after one year of being an independent from the Open Meetings Act, it disappeared. So if the decision to move out from the requirements of the Open Meetings Act is made, there are some risks associated.

Mr. Landis stated that if the committee decides to no longer follow the Open Meetings Act, there will still be guidance from staff and Council. There is no one in the City that wishes to see the Open Space and Trails Committee go away. The City truly benefits from the work the committee members do.

By Committee consensus, staff will provide a report at the next Open Space and Trails meeting of their findings regarding whether the Open Space and Trails Committee can choose to move out from under the requirements of the Open Meetings Act.

- Birding Event: The next birding seminar will be November 29, 2018 and the next birding count will be December 1, 2018. Something to consider is making the upcoming events less formal. Starting using the language “birding event” instead of “birding seminar.” The less formal language tends to attract more people. Generic signs will be created to use for future birding events. Two things hinder the attendance levels: there are no birds present at the seminar and hosting the birding event at the Public Works facility. Hosting the event at Carothers seemed to be a hit the first time around because people saw birds at a nice facility.
- Erosion at Pine Gully: The area is still too wet from the recent rainfall to begin the erosion control plan. Supplies will be ordered soon.
- Fall Sweep: The event will take place November 3, 2018 from 10am – 12pm. Keep Texas Beautiful will provide all the materials. The area of interest will be NASA to SH146 and Pine Gully Park. The Rotary Club is bringing about 30 volunteers for the event.
- Grants: Member Coggeshall has started working on a new grant that will help connect the trails to SH146. The Main Street palm trees were partially funded by a grant from Keep Texas Beautiful.
- Mile Marker Trail Maps: There have been several requests for mile marker trail maps. Member Coggeshall presented 3 different trail map examples to the committee. By Committee consensus the version of the trail map that Member Coggeshall created is the easier one to read and understand.
- Osprey Perch: The ground was finally dry enough to install the osprey perch. The Parks Department impressed everyone with installing the perch in about an hour. The Audubon Society is helping compose language for a sign that explains the purpose of the perch. With this project complete, the Port is on board with another potential project of a chimney swift.
- Pollinator Pathway: No updated information at the time. Item will be postponed until February 2019.
- Report to Council: The next report will be in January 2019.
- Seabrook Prairie: No updated information at the time.
- Seed Library and Community Garden: Member Cable is collecting seeds.
- Trail Lighting: The solar lights will provide a path guidance around the trail. Staff has received some pricing but there is no timeline yet for the project.
- Trash Cans, Recycling, etc.: The Boy Scout is still in the process of painting the recycle bins. These bins will be placed by the trash cans.
- Tree Planting: Trees of Houston will be providing the trees to the City. Professionals from the Trees of Houston will be the ones planting the trees this year. The City was contacted by another group that has a budget and wants to plant trees for the City. This group asked for recommendations as to where they should plant trees. The Committee will review the parks and see where trees should be plants.
- Volunteers: The Committee gave their volunteer hours to Chair Burton during the meeting to keep records current. A volunteer project needed is a canopy built over the signs in the parks that provides protection from the sun and trees. Member Popken will put together a sketch of what the canopy should look like.

- Woodlands Regeneration: Member Popken asked for assistance from Parks Staff to help remove the cane berm.
- Tennis Court Restoration: Surface leveling is the current phase of the restoration project. Once the rain stops, this project should not take much more longer.

2.4 Consider and take all appropriate action concerning recommendations to the Public Works Director on Parks related projects.

- Sidewalk Extension at Park Dr.: This project is ongoing
- Trail Extension at Pine Gully & Baybrook: These projects are ongoing and should be completed by the end of the year.
- Irrigation System at Pine Gully: This project is ongoing.

2.5 Approve the minutes of the October 4, 2018 Open Space and Trails Committee meeting.

Member Harper stated that line 219 should read "Member Harper stated that there is a way of enlarging the spacing 3 or 4 feet so that parking can be butt to butt."

Motion was made by Member Antrobus and seconded by Member Popken

To approve the minutes of the October 4, 2018 meeting minutes with noted corrections

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT

2.6 Establish future meeting dates and agenda item.

By Committee consensus:

- Remove Osprey Perch – Completed
- Remove Pollinator Pathway – Activate February 2019
- Remove Report to Council – Next Quarterly Report January 2019
- Add Irrigation System at Pine Gully & Baybrook

Upon motion duly made, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18pm


Stephanie Martinez,
Executive Administrative Assistant


Helen Burton,
Chair