

The Open Space and Trails Committee met in teleconference session on Thursday, February 4, 2021 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 – Ex. Absence | Member                                    |
| Debra Harper                 | Member                                    |
| David Popken                 | Member                                    |
| Heather Cable - Ex. Absence  | Member                                    |
| Sean Landis                  | Deputy City Manager                       |
| Kevin Padgett                | Public Works Director                     |
| Brian Craig                  | City Engineer/Asst. Public Works Director |
| Stephanie Guerrero           | Executive Administrative Assistant        |
| Natalie Stephens             | Public Works Administrative Specialist    |

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

**1. PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Laurian Tollett, 601 Bradley Street, stated she was in opposition of Ordinance 2021-14, “Feeding Wildlife.” Ms. Tollett understands the issues being addressed is related to feral pigs in area. The proposed ordinance will not solve that issue. Feeding promotes wildlife awareness and being able to observe wildlife tends to have people support wildlife conservation. If a concern is water quality, look at Galveston Bay Foundation report where humans and industry are the cause of pollution. We support local business by purchasing seeds. The larger correlation is due to de-forestation. We are losing so much of the natural habitat. When Seabrook builds, the animals find other locations. Wildlife does not lose their natural foraging skills when part of their diet is provided by humans. In a perfect world there would be a habitat for food, but as the city grows, there is less for wildlife to call home. There must be a way to develop while providing allowance for wildlife to thrive along with us. If habitat is being destroyed, then animals have to find food, which means crossing roads.

Kathy Morgan, 3410 Todville Road, stated she was in opposition of Ordinance 2021-14. “Feeding Wildlife.” Ms. Morgan moved to Seabrook over 25 years ago and in the beginning we had constant stream of deer, rabbits, squirrels, birds, and now city wants to prohibit us from feeding these beautiful creatures. City says that feeding deer will increase likelihood of collision between deer and cars; however our observation is that the deer population has been

weening substantially in recent years. When deer cross the road, most people slow down or stop just to admire these majestic creatures. There is no issue if you go the speed limit. If it is on private property, the City show not care what is done. Ms. Morgan would like to see all the reports of findings as mentioned in the Ordinance such as the findings to the contributing to increase in bacteria in Galveston Bay. It is our understanding that farmlands contribute to most of the bacterial pollution due to runoff from chemicals used on farmlands. Who will enforce this ordinance? The police and code enforcement officers? We do not have enough employed to do the job they are being asked to do now. Writing an ordinance for the people who have deer loving plants in their landscaping does not seem fair minded.

## **2. COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **2.1 Presentation of the Chair's quarterly report to Council. (Committee)**

Chair Burton went over the presentation, in Attachment A, she will make to Council at the February 16, 2021 Regular City Council meeting.

### **2.2 Discussion on parking at parks. (Committee)**

City Staff is currently researching options for an additional parking lot.

### **2.3 Discussion on grants. (Committee)**

Public Works Director, Kevin Padgett, mentioned City Staff is reviewing a grant application that is for expanding the trails in Seabrook.

### **2.4 Discussion on Keep Texas Beautiful. (Committee)**

A grant submission is approaching. Vice Chair Antrobus is currently working on the application. Public Works Director, Kevin Padgett, stated that this is the final year of ineligibility since winning the monetary award a few years back.

### **2.5 Discussion on Trash Bash. (Committee)**

Trash Bash will be Thursday, March 25, 2021 – Saturday, March 27, 2021. This event will be virtual. Volunteers will be able to upload their cleanups digitally to have their reports counted.

### **2.6 Discussion on Ordinance 2021-14, "Feeding Wildlife." (City Staff)**

This item came about after various complaints were received from residents of feeding the wildlife in which Staff got direction from City Council to address this item and draft an

ordinance. The ordinance has been reviewed and tabled at the February 2, 2021 Regular City Council meeting to be modified, reviewed and brought back to Council at a later date.

The Committee made the following Comments:

- Why was this item brought up to Council? There has been multiple complaints about various wildlife feeding all throughout the city from feeding ducks, the feral cats, etc.
- The City should give an educational class on feeding wildlife. We are becoming overrun by wild animals.
- Once you start feeding the wild animals, they become very habit oriented.
- How will the City enforce not feeding the wildlife? The police department has bigger fish to fry. This seems like government overreach.
- There is no state wide regulation against feeding, although state parks do prohibit feeding.
- The buildouts and stripping of the land eliminate food for the animals.
- The City is having double vision because at the same time of wanting to ban feeding the wildlife, we want to have a pollinator pathway, gardens, and migrant birds. The City needs to use caution with the ordinance.
- A blanket prohibition is impossible to enforce and does cause offense among people who think they should be able to do what they please on private property.
- Seabrook brags about its trails and natural areas then goes to war with the wildlife does not sit well with its residents.
- It was unnerving to residents to find this item on the Council agenda when there has been no real public conversation about feeding wildlife.
- Council should try to stage a public conversation of some kind, such as an informal poll released to residents on social media or an informal meeting with City Staff. This would allow people to weigh in if they care about this topic. This would give City Staff an insight as to what the demand is from residents.
- It's discouraging to see the wildlife eat the plants and trees that were planted.

*Motion was made by Vice Chair Antrobus and seconded by Member Popken*

*That the Open Space and Trails Committee recommends to City Council that some mechanism be found to gather more public input before taking action on this item*

*MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT*

106 **2.7 Update on the Story Walk Signage. (City Staff)**

107 This story walk program was proposed by the Harris County library at Meador Park by  
108 Milagros. A Memorandum of Understanding was reviewed and accepted by City Council to  
109 allow for the story walk signage, and to move forward with the recommended changes, as far  
110 as where the signs would be located, and the number of signs. Milagro's has communicated  
111 that they have taken the MOU to the Library Board for consideration. Eighteen signs should  
112 be going up at the park. Signs are to go in sequence, where children would walk from sign to  
113 sign and read as they go and create a story by the time they get to the end of it. Those signs  
114 would be interchangeable throughout the year.

115 **2.8 Update on volunteer hours. (Committee)**

116 Committee members will submit their monthly volunteer hours to Chair Burton for record  
117 keeping.

118 **2.9 City Staff update. (City Staff)**

119 Public Works Director, Kevin Padgett, announced that due to recent staff position changes  
120 the Public Works Administrative Specialist, Natalie Stephens, will be the new liaison for the  
121 Committee.

122 **2.10 Approve the minutes of the December 3, 2020 Open Space and Trails Committee**  
123 **meeting. (Guerrero)**

124 *Motion made by Vice Chair Antrobus and seconded by Member Popken*

125 *To approve the minutes of the December 3, 2020 Open Space and Trails Committee meeting*

126 *MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT*

127 **2.11 Approve the minutes of the January 7, 2021 Open Space and Trails Committee**  
128 **meeting. (Guerrero)**

129 *Motion made by Vice Chair Antrobus and seconded by Member Popken*

130 *To approve the minutes of the January 7, 2021 Open Space and Trails Committee meeting*

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132 *MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT*

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136 **2.12 Establish future meeting dates and agenda items. (Committee)**

137 The next meeting will be held on March 4, 2021.

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139 Upon motion duly made, the meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.

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*Stephanie Guerrero*

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Stephanie Guerrero,  
HR Specialist

*Helen Burton*

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Helen Burton,  
Chair

## ATTACHMENT A



- 10<sup>th</sup> year of Tree Planting Awesomeness!





# Awesome Tree Planting Volunteers

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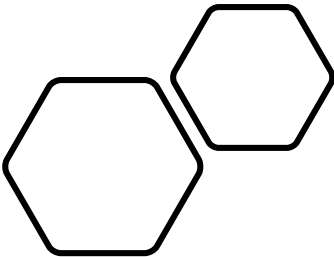
Tree staging  
so people  
know where  
to plant trees



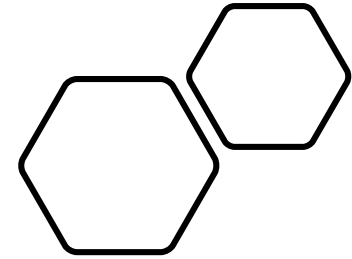




Awesome tree  
planters!









Seabrook leaf initiative –  
citizens drop off bags of leaves  
and the city uses them for  
mulch in the parks – over 600  
bags collected!





- Tire pulled from along the trail in December





Edible forest planting  
done on city property by  
Rotarian's, sponsored by  
Evelyn Meador Library



Close up of the  
flowers in the  
prairie



- December 2020 Seabrook starts Christmas tree recycling. Trees dropped off were turned into mulch
- December waterway conservation efforts – remove fishing nets and tires from Todville bridge
- Starting on 2020 Governor's Community Achievement Award – due March 4
- December volunteer hours – 98
- Year to date volunteer hours 1151.5