

**Council Minutes May 11, 2016**

**STATE OF TEXAS §**

**COUNTY OF TARRANT §**

**CITY OF BEDFORD §**

**The City Council of the City of Bedford, Texas, met in Work Session at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2000 Forest Ridge Drive, on the 11th day of May, 2016 with the following members present:**

Jim Griffin	Mayor
Ray Champney	Council Members
Steve Farco	
Roger Fisher	
Rusty Sartor	
Roy W. Turner	

constituting a quorum.

Councilmember Gebhart was absent from the meeting.

Staff present included:

Roger Gibson	City Manager
Kelli Agan	Assistant City Manager
Michael Wells	City Secretary
Don Henderson	Parks Superintendent
Amanda Jacobs	Assistant City Secretary
Meg Jakubik	Strategic Services Manager
Eric Valdez	Community Services Manager

**WORK SESSION**

The Work Session began at 5:01 p.m.

**CALL TO ORDER/GENERAL COMMENTS**

Mayor Griffin called the meeting to order.

**WORK SESSION**

- **Discussion regarding the Boys Ranch Park**

Mayor Griffin gave a brief history on the Boys Ranch Park Phase I renovations and stated that 62% of voters approved the project.

- **Feeding of Wildlife at the Park**

There was discussion regarding feeding wildlife at the lake; that staff has researched the topic; that overcrowding, competition for food and less nutritious food increases the susceptibility of life threatening diseases; that the US Fish and Wildlife Services stresses not to feed wildlife in public places; that Texas Parks and Wildlife, the New York Department of Environmental Conservation

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and PETA all agree on the same concept to stop feeding the wildlife.

Mayor Griffin introduced Sam Kieschnick, Biologist with the Texas Parks and Wildlife. Mr. Kieschnick stated that when changes are made to the food chain (food web) there are affects, that actions have consequences; that when supplemental nutrients are added to an environment, the rest of the environment reacts to that. Mr. Kieschnick stated that he finds coyotes to be magnificent organisms; that when he sees one he tries to scare it away because he does not want the coyote to get used to him and for it to stay wild; that he wants to reinforce the fear that it should have; that the supplemental feeding of the waterfowl, turtles and frogs results in overpopulation; that Texas Parks and Wildlife strongly discourages supplemental feeding on the private and public level; that the vegetation will take time to come available again; that through disturbances, the environment reacts, populations go up, populations go down, and it is all part of the natural cycle.

There was discussion regarding supplemental feeding through a feeding kiosk and rationing the food in the kiosks. Mr. Kieschnick stated that all biologists would recommend that no supplemental feeding occurs; that organisms may move off to look for nutrients, which is the way nature works. It was stated that Mr. Kieschnick has a Master's Degree in Genetics and is an Urban Wildlife Biologist, dealing with how organisms work within the urban environment.

In response to questions from Council, Mr. Kieschnick stated that turtles are opportunistic generalists, meaning that they eat whatever is available including meat, vegetation, fungi or slime mold; that he strongly advises against feeding machines; that currently, sufficient sources are not available for all the populations of waterfowl at the lake; that when nutrients are not available, organisms that can move will move; that turtles, ducks and kids were using the ramps; that regarding the placement of the ramps, nature will find a way out; that rats and mice may eat corn and dog food left on the ground; that it will take time for the habitat to become re-established; that at this point, all staff can do is observe; that the impact of the ramps on the wildlife is positive; that where you have water there is a bio-diversity, which takes time too; that creating a no-mow area may help to speed growth along; that in an urban environment, organisms have three choices: move, adapt or die, which are all natural choices and beyond human control; that the death of wildlife is a part of the natural eco-system; that Texas Parks and Wildlife offers interpretive programs at State Parks and Nature Centers; that Mr. Kieschnick is able to help educate the public and the Council; and that Blue Gill Sun Fish will be added to the lake in the coming weeks.

Mayor Griffin outlined the topics of discussion and stated that staff wants to install "information stations" with pictures and information about the wildlife, a statement about not feeding the wildlife and why, and discussion on a "no feeding" ordinance.

There was discussion regarding information stations and that the signage needed to be "zoo quality" to meet the aesthetics of the lake; the point of the signs being to educate visitors to the park and to inform them of "no feeding" regulations; staff researching other cities' "no feeding" ordinances and how they are enforced; education being critical; the Library having programs to educate the community; and the possibility of offering Texas Parks and Wildlife classes.

Council was is in favor of installing zoo quality signage to get the message out about the type of wildlife in the park, to not feed said wildlife, and to include the general rules of the park; and of directing staff to research a "no feeding" ordinance.

- **INGRESS/EGRESS TO THE LAKE**

There was discussion on the three ramps currently in place and that they are adequate for the turtles and water fowl; that the ramps need to be safe for people, animals, and aesthetically

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pleasing; that the current ramps do not meet the aesthetic quality wanted in the park and throughout the City; if the ramps will remain stable as the lake settles; to consider asking Kimley-Horn to redo the ramp that they designed and installed; and possibly tying the ramps into the next phase of the project.

Mayor Griffin summarized the discussion stating that the Council agrees that three ramps are adequate and that more aesthetically pleasing ramps should be created, with the possibility of utilizing the weir location.

There was discussion on adding basking stones around the concrete over-spill; the over-spill being the deepest part of the lake and may be problematic; each basking stone requiring a base, which may affect the flow of water; that turtles utilize the current basking stone, which sits just below the water's surface; the project will need to be contracted out and not performed by staff; the basking stones being an eye-sore when the water levels go down; devising floating basking stones that can be raised and lowered depending on the lake level to eliminate the accumulation of feces and other organisms; and directing staff to meet with Kimley-Horn regarding ramps at the waterfall area and floating basking stones.

- **ASTHETICS**

There was discussion regarding standardizing the trash receptacles, adding more benches, adding sod around the lake to help address erosion; staff should poll the visitors of the park regarding the placement of the benches; the importance of irrigating the sod; the existing park features needing to be addressed; fencing around the ball fields; striping the parking lot; painting; removing the excess signage; the Parks and Recreation Board adding additional grills; maintaining the grass area along Harwood Road near the Clubhouse for Special Needs; and having a clean-up day prior to 4thFest.

- **SIGNAGE/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

There was discussion regarding the Council being of the consensus to avoid sign pollution; making the instructional signs multi-purpose; adding surveillance cameras; that Parks staff is assigned parks to patrol; installing monument signs at the entrance of each park; getting a quote on outsourcing all mowing; having a college intern serve as caretaker who that lives on-site in a 12x8 tiny-house to look after the park 24-7 and to educate the public on the wildlife; installing surveillance cameras and the infrastructure to do so already being in place; that the system can record and can be monitored by the V.I.P.S. program or the dispatch center; cameras being initially installed on the north and south ends of the park and near the playground area; that a drone has been purchased to video and promote City events; and that cameras will be on existing poles or on the buildings.

- **FUTURE PHASES OF BOYS RANCH PARK IMPROVEMENTS**

There was discussion regarding combining the remaining phases of the improvement project; Council's desire to tour area facilities; that the new phases should consider the changing demographics of the City; including a banquet space and a true workout facility with showers; volleyball; improvements to the Post Office channel; improvements to the area at the corner of Harwood Road and Forest Ridge Drive; and there being a solid plan looking at the big picture, including the Cultural District.

Mayor Griffin stated that the discussion was very important; that experts from Texas Parks and Wildlife and other agencies across the country have given the same message that supplemental

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feeding of the wildlife needs to stop; and that staff has been given the tools to make that happen.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Griffin adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

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Jim Griffin, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Michael Wells, City Secretary