

Parks and Trails Master Plan Committee Minutes March 1, 2022

STATE OF TEXAS §

COUNTY OF TARRANT §

CITY OF BEDFORD §

The Parks and Trails Master Plan Committee met at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 2000 Forest Ridge Drive, on the 1st day of March 2022 with the following members present:

Cindy Almendarez
Ruth Culver
Rob Gagliardi
Donna Hanson
Glenn Mizell
Sarah Weaver

Councilmembers
Parks and Recreation Board
Beautification Commission
Resident At-Large

constituting a quorum.

Staff present included:

Jimmy Stathatos
Michael Wells
Don Henderson

City Manager
City Secretary
Parks Superintendent

Also in attendance:

Amy Sabol

Mayor Pro Tem

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Public comments were made during the New Business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion on Parks and Trails Master Plan.

City Manager Jimmy Stathatos stated the Committee can help set the stage for what the City Council would see in terms of a proposed Parks and Trails Master Plan. Public input would be gathered as the process moves forward and he envisioned at least three or four meetings. He explained the City is legally required to have a master plan, which needs to have been updated within the prior five years to be eligible for a state grant the City wants to apply for in the fall. He discussed the possibility of activating some of the City's trails in terms of art, little workout facilities, and connectivity. He further discussed active versus more passive parks.

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Councilmember Ruth Culver stated she was honored to have the position on the Committee but will be going off the Council in April and will not run for a second term. She asked that Mayor Pro Tem Amy Sabol take her place on the Committee.

Dennis Sims, with Dunkin Sims Stoffels, the consultant on the project, stated the company is landscape architects and park planners with 40-years' experience in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and only does park planning for municipalities. He stated the project is to update the City's 2016 Park Master Plan. He explained a master plan is a document that governmental entities can use to plan their park system in a systematic and logical way so that citizens are being served and that there is a good expenditure of public dollars. He discussed the reasoning for such plans having to be submitted to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department. He stated even though plans are good for ten years, they should be updated every five years to be eligible to apply for state grants as that they may be out-of-date.

Mr. Sims stated the City should determine what the citizens want and one method to do so is the public hearing process, which is one of the purposes of the Committee. One of the updates to the Master Plan is to redo an inventory of the parks to see what has been built or taken out in the last five years. The whole park system would be examined, including the location of each park and how it is being serviced currently compared to 2016. Mr. Sims stated they will not be doing a completely new park master plan but an update to that so the state can accept it; however, every ten years, the City needs to do an entirely new master plan. He further stated that the state wants a new priority list, which Council must adopt by resolution. Further, the City's demographics will need to be updated, most likely based on the 2020 census. There was discussion on Generations Park and the amount of grants available for indoor and outdoor facilities.

Mr. Sims stated the process would probably take two to three months depending on how the public meetings go. There was discussion on the Committee reviewing the update and making recommendations to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Council.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Sims stated matches for the state grants can come from multiple ways, including cash, labor, and/or land value. There was discussion on the timing for updating the Parks Master Plan, including requirements by the Texas Department of Parks and Wildlife and eligibility for grants, and the process by which the 2016 Master Plan was developed. Mr. Sims stated surveys would not be sent out for this update, as they are more for new park plans, but there would be the required public input. Mr. Stathatos stated the City would look at opportunities to engage the public through social media. He further stated the City is looking at an outdoor grant funded through sales tax on sporting goods, and that Council would have to decide on the actual project to be funded through the grant.

Bruce Emery, a resident of Bedford, asked for guidance on what things in the Plan are allowed to be changed, including what could be removed. He stated some of the parks have changed considerably in five years, which would need to be included as to the intent for those parks, and some neighborhoods have changed. Mr. Sims stated that would be part of the public input process.

Mr. Sims stated the process would need to be completed by the middle of July to submit the Master Plan in time to apply for the grant. There was discussion on the public input process and on pocket or neighborhood parks, including the costs to maintain them and utilizing property in the flood plain. Mr. Sims advised that neighborhood parks be a minimum of five acres so amenities can be added to make them viable.

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There was further discussion on the Hurst-Eules-Bedford Independent School District selling or donating property at Meadow Park to be used as part of the matching grant; the process for disposing of park land; the City Council selecting the chairperson of the Committee; providing the Committee members a copy of the current Parks Master Plan; inventorying the current amenities in the City's parks; the possibility of tennis courts, including locating them at a park other than Generations Park and the necessary topography to construct them; making the public input process less formal and similar to a previous public input meetings for Generations Park, including using hand-held microphones as opposed to residents having to speak at a podium; the necessity of holding the meetings in the Council Chambers in order to record them; having part of the public input process focus solely on Generations Park; and the trails along Cheek Sparger Road, including their status as park land, ensuring they are included in the Master Plan, and the recent Tarrant County election approving funding for trail and drainage improvements.

2. ADJOURNMENT

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

Rob Gagliardi, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Michael Wells, City Secretary