

TYPE OF MEETING	Monthly Meeting
CHAIR	Peter Billipp
SECRETARY	Mary McCulloch
ATTENDEES	Members Present: Peter Billipp, Will Bertron, Mary McCulloch, Mardi Turner, Maryann Grahamann, Lindsey Swiger, Laura Turley, Nina Pilson, Sami Morrison, Jeff Chen; Brett Bingham Staff: Susan White Council Liaison: Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Trautner
VISITORS	Courtney Bucy and Paul Manual

I. Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 6:34 pm by Peter Billipp.

II. Approval of September 16th Meeting Minutes: Nina Pilson made a motion to approve with Mardi Turner seconding the motion. The minutes were approved.

III. Citizen Comments:

Courtney Bucy: longtime resident, 14 years in West U with children at the elementary school. This is related to an element of the policy for field use at the rec center. The issue is that the fields are expensive property and we are not allowed to do pickup games, private lessons or personal training on the fields. Soccer players that are not part of Rise are the only ones getting kicked off. Tri-sports has other fields where this is not the case. Courtney was encouraged to put her comments on the agenda next time about one week prior to the meeting so the topic can be added to the agenda.

Paul Manuel: echoing Courtney’s comments. All of his kids have gone through Rec and Rise soccer programs. The fields should be accessible to residents. Other fields don’t have the same restrictions and it is overly burdensome. Paul canvased about twenty people in the past week and has yet to find one West U resident that was aware of the policy and has also not had any that say they support the policy.

IV. Friends Update: Sami Morrison

Had to unfortunately call off Fathers & Flashlights. There was not an easy way to figure out how to do it safely this year. Families are encouraged to camp at home on November 7th. The sponsor is Gibson Dunn. Providing signs for campers that donated in lieu of their registration. 40 to 50 donations so far, but hoping more residents will contribute. Park Lovers Ball is leaning towards a virtual gala. Donna is working extensively on this project. More details will come as we have more information. A production company would do prerecorded and live auction. Confident it will be successful. Kendra Scott jewelry has offered a special promo for Friends of West U with a 20% donation.

V. Council Update: Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Trautner

Tax rate established (dropped rate and effective tax rate) and residents should expect a small cut! Food waste diversion program for composting off site – workshop training was provided. Initial pilot program to determine interest level. Encouraged everyone to give it a try. Nina commented that she composts and does not think residents will want to go drop it off. Hope is that residents will show interest and then the city may be able to do something

more convenient and the pilot program will need to prove that there is enough interest.

Approved issuance of \$27 million in debt to combine with federal grants for Buffalo Speedway project. Includes an engineering study that will look at full city and would address additional flooding concerns. The city's debt is rolling off and even with this new issuance we are lower than prior years. Survey of drainage problems has been done and there would be a significant improvement from an infrastructure investment.

VI. Parks & Rec Update: Susan White

- 1) COVID-19 Update – resuming contracted programming the week of October 12, starting with indoor & outdoor adult classes and outdoor children's programs. Tennis has received a lot of requests, along with adult classes like Jazzercise. For most classes, with the distancing restrictions, the 75% occupancy allowed would not be reached. Lastly, the indoor children's classes will be looked into resuming when HISD in person classes resume on October 19. Also looking into replacing the basketball goals the same week as there is a lot of interest in that. There are no state or county orders prohibiting us from doing so. Laura asked about cleaning policies for indoors and Susan assured the board that the disinfecting process at the indoor facilities is great and has received positive feedback. Nina asked about water fountains and Susan said that will be last.
- 2) Colonial Park East – The sailboat and playhouse were installed to maximize use from the natural shade canopy. There is a nice about of shade depending on the time of the day, and the updates are coming along nicely. Sand area with wood play structures are installed. Some of the wrong color panels were installed but the contractor is replacing them.
- 3) Survey Update – Calls with TX A&M to get the survey going again. They have consulted with experts in the field. The survey will be online in the same format as the last highly successful one done in 2015. Targeting seniors that are not yet in the age bracket even to plan for longer term. Targeting end of October for sending the survey out to residents. Language suggested by A&M is to use "2019" instead of "pre-covid" for specific questions about activities that have been suspended. Should take approximately 10-13 minutes to complete. There are spaces to write comments and the survey offers a follow up Zoom meeting available if requested. Postcard reminders can be sent out to any low response groups/areas. Thank you to Mardi for her help with the grammar and formatting!
- 4) Misc. – The Houston (in-person) marathon has been officially cancelled this year, so there will not be a Mayor's Breakfast. Requests have come in to open the rec center earlier. Approximately 60% of residents that would like to open at 5am instead of 6am are coming from the seniors that have complimentary or reduced memberships so a cost analysis is being conducted. Tennis feedback is that instructors are monopolizing the courts. We will need to look at both the field and tennis policies. Jeff plays tennis and would love to be on the subcommittee for this. Jeff works out at the rec center and has positive comments about the cardio and weight area. He suggests rotating the machines being used, which are currently blocked with signs for distance spacing. Susan says this is possible and is also considering moving some machines out onto the big balcony area. Flooring expense and electrical needs are being evaluated for a permanent use of the space.
- 5) Events – The new Halloween event this year due to Covid will be a drive by event on October 23rd. This will replace Full Moon Fest for this year. Vendors and staff will be dressed up in costume and be giving out candy and activity books. The tree lighting

ceremony event may be a laser light show at the rec center by reservation. 60 cars in the parking lot with 4 time slots. It will also be on facebook live or similar. Mardi loves the light show idea.

VII. Huffington Park Update Planning Discussion (2021):

Mardi – leading this update. Will thinks there are a lot of common thoughts. It's a great space but is underutilized. As a small kid park, what would we even do larger greenspace at Huffington park if they were to purchase the lot next door? Granite and concrete does not mix well and it is a slippery for little kids. Paving would be better and Susan thinks it would be okayed by the forester on the West side of the playground. Crepe Myrtles would be removed and that will help sustain the other trees. Some of the trees can definitely be raised from underneath by removing limbs, but we have to be respectful of the neighbors' privacy that backs up to the park. The west side fence is in good condition. The south side fence may be from 1996 as it is original. Adding a fence against a fence is not a feasible solution but the residents may push back on replacing the existing one due to losing the greenery. Mardi suggested looking at the shared fence agreement.

No theme at this point, but feedback is consistent that this should remain a small kid park. Sami suggested a transportation theme. Mardi brought up bouncy flooring – poured in place rubber. Mary talked about seeing the hills being used for running toddlers. She also said that concrete sidewalks are not as great for little kids as a solid, smooth surface like the material on a basketball court. Maryann thinks equipment is in good shape, just need to be cleaned. Her young children love this park. Sami asked about pooling water and/or bugs being an issue by the hills. Susan said the turf is old and all the ground area has potential for consideration and drainage improvements. The rubber flooring is very expensive. Artificial turf is an option to look into. Kevin Boyle (previous board chair) brought up a graffiti/chalk wall for Colonial Park and Susan is wondering if we can incorporate that at Huffington on the south fence. A Huffington Park Task Force will be formed to work on this redevelopment.

Will clarified that Mary was talking about less concrete joints for the path surface. He suggested the wall decorating could be tied into a fundraiser and would need to avoid any business or political views.

Congratulations to Lindsey on the birth of her new son and Brett on his new son and daughter (twins)!

VIII. Park Ambassador Assignments:

- Colonial Park East (Will)
- Colonial Park West (Nina)
- Colonial Park Pool (Mary)
- Friends Pocket Park (Sami) - Sami said that friends park looks good.
- Huffington Park (Maryann)
- JEH Park (Laura) - this park is in use consistently and nice!
- Judson Park (Jeff) - Jeff has been to Judson and said it's in good shape.
- Recreation Center Playground (Mardi)
- Whitt Johnson (Brett)
- Wier Park (Lindsey)

IX. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for November 4, 2020.

