



City of Farmers Branch Joint City Council & Parks and Recreation Board Meeting

4 p.m. Special Called Meeting

Thursday, March 22, 2018

Recreation Center
14050 Hesrtside Place
Farmers Branch, TX 75234

Oak Meeting Room

Council Members Present: - Mayor Robert C. Dye; Mayor Pro Tem John Norwood; Council Member Ana Reyes; Council Member Terry Lynne; Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Mike Bomgardner

Absent: - Council Member Bronson Blackson

Park Board Members Present: - Board Chair Jan Wooldridge, Sarah Langhorst, Marc Traynor, Adriane Young, Connie Hardy, Christine Dimon, Robert Stewart, Pat Thompson, Stephan Root, Barbara Leedy, David Merritt, Margaret Young (emeritus)

Staff: - Charles Cox, City Manager; Jeff Harting, Director of Parks and Recreation; Wimberly Phillips, Recreation Superintendent; Maria Minter, Recreation Center Manager; Rachael Arroyo, Aquatics Manager; Linda Gaucin, Administrative Assistant III; Sara Egan, Assistant to City Secretary

A. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Dye called the special called meeting to order at 4:07pm. He asked everyone on the table to introduce themselves as well as those in the audience.

A.1 TMP-2630 Discuss City Council expectations for Parks and Recreation Board.

Mayor Dye opened the floor for discussion regarding City council expectations.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood summarized the series of discussions Council is regarding the budget and cost effectiveness. He stated Council relies on the board's recommendation of potential projects due to its significance or prioritization to align with the theme City in a Park.

Council Member Lynne stated Council is fiscally responsible of expenditures. To be good stewards, input from staff and residents is important to determine the investment amounts for services and amenities offered by the City. He encouraged the board to think

about how the city should be doing things differently or increasing the utilization of assets. For example, an idea of providing a body mass scale may be of great value not just at the Recreation Center, but also at the senior center.

Council Member Reyes thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She emphasized how critical the board's feedback is to Council. Tracking the progress of prioritized ideas turned into projects is evidence of meaningful change to Farmers Branch.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner stated oversight and general direction is the Council's responsibility. His first approach on things are with a financial perspective. Council depends on the board to determine the right areas of investment. The budget shows well managed growth and it is clear the Aquatic Center is a challenge. Council would love to hear ideas to enhance revenue, quality of life, and the reoccurring costs. What will it take to make Farmers Branch great in 2021 as Council works to formulate the following fiscal budget.

A.2 TMP-2632 Discuss and review Parks and Recreation Revenue expectations.

Board Member Root suggested Council not view each division of Parks and Recreation as a separate entity, but as a whole.

Board Chair Wooldridge stated in the past it was strongly believed an aquatic center was a needed amenity. She stated the board's conversations have included increasing admission fees. She asked Council if the goal is to make it 100% sustainable.

Board Member Dimon commented the City of Garland faced similar challenges with an aquatic facility and their approach was to partner with charity groups and other organizations to invite additional people at a tier pricing admission to recuperate costs.

Board Member Root inquired about the Tour of Lights.

Mayor Dye explained there is a significant amount of traffic driving through Farmers Branch without an indication they stay and invest back to the City while the City invests ¼ of a million. This event is an opportunity for potential change that will benefit the City.

Board Member Root stated community groups rely on the Tour of Lights donations, and cancelling this event would be limiting.

Board Member Thompson added without a defined target it is difficult to make assessments. For example, a dog park has been identified as a highly desired based on the Resident Survey. However, it is a high maintenance cost unlikely to produce revenue. Staff is very creative with a lot of ideas, but the board needs more specific guidance.

Council Member Lynne suggested the dog park could be located near the Animal Adoption Center, Police Department, and Brookhaven College. He suggested the board seek sponsorship for the dog park as an alternative funding method.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner added that the financial rapid growth is related to long term solutions for the creeks, development on the east side, and residence in the flood plains. Recommendations for the dog park or any other recommendation should include the degree of prioritization, the period of completion, and its projected impact.

Council Member Reyes agreed with Ms. Thompson regarding the difficulty of not having a specific goal; noting, staff is available to assist the board with recommendations. She also acknowledge Mr. Root's concern of the charities benefiting from the Tour of Lights.

Board Member Root added the charities are grateful and have expressed a willingness to work with the City.

Board Member Traynor commented the City could operate smarter and achieve the desired outcome.

Board Member Hardy stated the ice rink proposal included revenue that could be earned by nonprofit groups.

Director of Parks and Recreation, Jeff Harting stated the initial proposal of the ice rink has been reformulated to accommodate changes and may no longer provide revenue for nonprofits.

Board Member Dimon agreed on the idea of seeking sponsorship and prioritizing potential locations for a dog park.

Mayor Dye added Purina provides grants and the City may apply as an alternative funding method as well as seek federal funding opportunities. He also mentioned this is above and beyond services. Prioritizing these potential projects is where the Council will collectively move the City forward.

Board Member Dimon encouraged Council to visit neighboring city dog parks to gain the experience and research their financing approach.

A.3 TMP-2633 Discuss and review Park Amenities versus Park Services.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood stated some things are deemed free. The City is not in the business of amusement and entertainment; however, Council can not allow cost to rise indefinitely. Through an exercise Council determined that overall Parks and Recreation is an amenity. With the expected increase in population over the next five years, he asked how can Farmers Branch attract resident. He suggested by repurposing parks and by offering amenities people will move to live in Farmers Branch.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner inquired about the pricing for the use of fields by select soccer clubs.

Mr. Harting stated that select soccer clubs pay \$7,000 per year for practice space at Farmers Branch Park. That fee covers maintenance cost for the time used by the clubs.

Board Member Leedy mentioned there are intangible values to consider and suggested capping costs at a fixed rate or per capita.

Board Member Merritt stated Mr. Harting does a great job of presenting monthly and annual reports. He asked Council to define what is important regarding cost recovery and specify a target to move forward.

Mayor Dye explained services are needed aspects of the City to operate. Amenities are above and beyond factor that make Farmers Branch a City in a Park.

Director of Finance, Sherrelle Evans-Jones explained staff is expected to present to Council in May. The presentation will consider perspectives of services versus amenities with details of facts regarding costs, revenue, and cost recovery based on the Council's direction for a percentage of cost recovery.

City Manager, Charles Cox added once the optimal potential for cost recovery is determined in May, staff will work with the board to reasonably adjust expenditures.

Mayor Pro Tem Norwood explained some services must be provided for a certain quality of life. Services are necessary to operate as a city. Amenities are a luxury and maintain some attraction to keep residents here. Fiscal demands require Council to look at the budget more closely.

Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner asked the board to consider if they could start all over again would 27 parks still exist or would it have changed.

Council Member Reyes summarized the conversation began with concerns about the budget overage. Its the cause of identifying services and amenities, but the City's identity is a City in a Park and should not steer away from it. Funds should be set aside to maintain that identity.

No additional comments were made. Mayor Dye thanked everyone for attending.

B. ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Wooldridge made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Board Member Traynor. Motion prevailed by a unanimous vote.

Mayor Dye made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Bomgardner. Motion prevailed by a unanimous vote.

The meeting adjourned at 5:41 p.m.

SIGNED: _____
Mayor

SIGNED: _____
Chair

ATTEST: _____
Assistant to City Secretary