



Minutes
Special Meeting of the
Parks and Recreation Board
108 W. Broadway St., Prosper, Texas
Town of Prosper Municipal Chambers
Thursday, September 3, 2015, 6:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order / Roll Call.

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Barbara Cottone.

Roll call taken by Barbara Cottone. Board members present included: Barbara Cottone, Chair; Mandy Goddard, Vice-Chair; Jeffrey Hodges and Keith Yellin. Craig Andres and Drake Dunn were absent.

Jennifer Severance, Secretary, came in to the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Staff present included: Will Mitchell, Parks and Recreation Manager; Paul Naughton, Landscape Architect; Julie Shivers, Recreation Coordinator; Patty Kendzie, Senior Administrative Assistant, Parks and Recreation; Matt Furr, Parks Superintendent; and Leslie Scott, Prosper Community Library Director.

Dunaway Associates present: Phillip Neeley.

2. Consider and act upon approval of the minutes from the August 13, 2015, Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Motioned to approve by Goddard, seconded by Hodges. Approved 4-0.

3. Comments by the Public.

4. Presentation of "Book Trail," by Leslie Scott, Prosper Community Library Director.

Scott described the proposed pilot project, "Book Trail," which is designed to promote literacy, fitness and family engagement. The Book Trail would be the first of its kind in the state of Texas, a partnership between Texas A&M AgriLife Extension and the Prosper Community Library, Public Works and Parks and Recreation.

Scott said Eagles Landing Trail at Rucker Elementary is the intended site for the project. Approximately 20 posts will be installed to display book pages for children and caregivers to read while walking the trail. Scott said Hulon Webb suggested extending the concrete currently in place to accommodate the posts. Texas A&M AgriLife Extension has offered a \$500 grant to be used toward the Book Trail. Scott suggested those funds be used to cover the installation of the posts.

Scott said the Book Trail will combine the best of both worlds: reading and being outside. Library staff will select and change out titles. Titles will be changed every two weeks.

Hodges asked how the books will be kept dry. Mitchell said he discussed similar concerns, along with copyright issues and maintenance questions, and Scott has researched to ensure no copyright issues. Furr responded that the additional maintenance required would be a minimum of an extra 45 minutes of weed eating and that the Parks budget can absorb that, as of now. Scott explained the plexiglass structure would keep the books dry, there were no copyright issues, and that vandalism is a chance taken with any project.

In response to a question by Hodges about long-term liability, Scott and Mitchell said to remember the Book Trail will be approached as a pilot project. Any long-term commitments will be addressed in detail at a later date. Cottone asked about the posts: why is wood suggested rather than metal? Mitchell said cost is a factor, yet if the Book Trail becomes popular, those details can be revisited.

Scott said she would love to undertake the project and A&M would love to partner with Prosper. Cottone said that since Prosper will be known “worldwide” for its trail system, this project is a great fit! Goddard said that, from an educator’s view, the Book Trail looks like an awesome opportunity. Changing out the books every two weeks makes it even better. Scott added that ideas for the future include bringing in authors; there is an author who lives in Prosper. Hodges suggested residents could be asked to sponsor the posts. Scott related that she and Hulon Webb had discussed sponsorships, yet with the A&M grant, the financing will mostly be covered, except for maintenance. She said plans are to ask Barnes & Noble to donate books.

5. Discuss and act on revised program refund policies.

Shivers presented a revised, more in-depth analysis of refund policies that included statistics from neighboring cities noting their transfer fees, refunds, cancellations and withdrawal policies. The new proposal suggests a 10% Administrative Fee be assessed against all refunds to cover the costs of credit card and software fees. Shivers presented a breakdown of costs for each class, at both 10% and 20%.

Mitchell said the most important thing is to make sure customers are happy. Customer service will always be the focus and philosophy. The refund fee chart was created to have a policy to publish. If amendments are needed as the program grows, the topic will be revisited.

Motioned to approve by Hodges, seconded by Severance. Approved 5-0.

6. Final review of the Parks Master Plan.

Naughton said the Parks Master Plan is in the “home stretch.” He thanked Cottone and Parks Master Plan Advisory Board members for their service over the last two years, stating the Master Plan will provide a good guideline and increased opportunity to obtain grants.

Neeley thanked the staff, Shivers, Mitchell and Naughton, for their help in supplying information for the Plan. He especially thanked Naughton, who has been there, “running alongside the car,” through the entire process. He said the Master Plan should always be in motion. It has energy, movement and good balance. The good news and the bad news is that Prosper is a growth community. The balance contained within the Plan will allow Prosper to be strategic in partnerships and grants. Inventory will be a never ending detail, which can be made available to the public through the website (as a link). It’s important to keep the Plan up to date.

Next, he described additions to the latest version of the Master Plan. First, land acquisition. Prosper is ahead of the curve in this area. Over the next 5-10 years, the biggest challenge will be acreage for community park use, for the Town of Prosper and also for PISD. Second, a Facility Standards category was added to show the number of fields and the need for playgrounds. He reiterated that Prosper could be known for having one of the finest trail facilities in the DFW area. To date, Prosper has 15-16 miles of trails and Windsong will add another 40. Lastly, Neeley said an Action Plan was added to outline priorities and timeframes, which will give staff the strategy for Capital Improvement Projects, partnerships and grants.

Goddard said, "This is exciting!" Mitchell added that although the process was a long one, a new Master Plan was needed immediately to replace one that was out of date, adding that Neeley was great to work with. Cottone said working on the Master Plan has been eye opening for everyone. Questions from the Advisory Committee, the Council, and residents sometimes tend to get stuck in the details, yet we all need to view the Master Plan as a guide. She added that Neeley is a "bundle of knowledge" and such a pleasure to work with.

Neeley concluded that parks should be a part of the Prosper brand and hopefully, next Tuesday night, the Council will adopt the Master Plan.

7. Informational items.

Mitchell presented a slide showing a median that had been newly rocked. He expressed appreciation for the phenomenal job done by Furr's staff, especially given all the issues they have faced. Pumps have gone down and they've had to work on many unexpected special projects. He said Parks and Rec staff is the best he's ever had the opportunity to work with.

Regarding the pond at Frontier, Furr said the original development was, in his opinion, a disaster. The contractor installed things that shouldn't have been there. The well went down resulting in a large expense. The lake is losing 300 gallons a minute. The pump's down; the well's down. Then there's the drought and the grass is not looking good. That's why rock was chosen for Prosper Trail, because it's easy to maintain, looks good and takes no water. This year's been tough on the budget. All sports now happen at the same time (football, soccer, baseball) and lacrosse has been added and the number of participants keeps going up.

Cottone asked Furr about the Pecan Grove pond. He responded that beavers are damaging the fountains. They've chewed wires and shorted out the pump, but now a new contractor is in place. Cottone said Parks Operations is doing a great job and asked how many worked with Furr. He responded 11 guys and 3 contractors.

Mitchell said a letter was received from Atmos. Work has started on the pipeline (north/south line). Furr said he's learned that Frontier Park is the most difficult of all Atmos projects. The main problem is all the pumps. The gas line also poses major maintenance problems and there is no potable water.

Shivers showed the five entries for the Wild in Prosper Photo Contest. All photos received will be posted on the website. She also described the Community Picnic on September 12 and Christmas Festival planning. Cottone asked if volunteers were needed at the picnic and Shivers responded that staffing is under control. She invited the Park Board members to come out and enjoy the day.

Naughton spoke about the Parks Master Plan and Frontier Park North. Dunaway is currently refining the layout so it will be ready when it's time for construction drawings. The new field will be artificial turf. Shivers is working on field utilization, which will be an ongoing process with the sports organizations. Naughton is working on a Texas Parks and Wildlife grant for Frontier Park North. Hodges asked if all fields are turf. Naughton responded yes. Also, there is no infield clay and all fields are lit and long enough to be flexible for most sports. This is key, given Prosper's growth.

8. Possibly direct Town Staff to schedule topic(s) for discussion at a future meeting.

Hodges asked about marathons. Mitchell said marathons are big productions. Companies come in to run them and a large volunteer base is typically used. Hodges asked if bike races were along the same lines. Mitchell answered yes. The streets would need to be closed for both marathons and bike races. Cottone said with any type large event, closing roads, police and security are major issues. Shivers said Windsong is conducting a 5k and she redirects resident inquiries to them. Hodges asked if it would be possible to use the trail system for a race or a run. Cottone said she wasn't aware of any suburban cities that conduct marathons and that a company specializing in runs most likely would need to be hired. Runs these days are computerized, even to the point of chips in running shoes. Shivers reminded the group that the Mayors Challenge was a successful endeavor that encouraged residents to log walking miles and that the initiative will be repeated.

Cottone thanked Drake and Andres for their service, as their terms on the Park & Recreation Board are up. Goddard and Cottone's terms will also expire in September; both have reapplied. New appointments have not yet been announced.

9. Adjourn.

Motioned by Yellin, seconded by Hodges to adjourn. Approved 5-0. Meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.


