

Appendix A – Meeting Minutes

Edinburg Parks and Recreation Master Plan

CITIZENS' CONGRESS (December 09, 2004)

Lane Kendig, inc., (LKI) in association with TIP Strategies, Inc. and Melden & Hunt, Inc., conducted a series of focus group meetings at a Citizens' Congress meeting that was held by the City of Edinburg on December 09, 2004.

The meeting was an opportunity to explain the purpose of a comprehensive plan, and more specifically, what this meant for the City of Edinburg. However, the primary objective was to identify citizen perceptions of issues and problems in the community related to parks and livability, economic development, infrastructure, and land use. A further objective was to identify options to address these issues and problems, and finally, identify which of these options were community priorities.

The aforementioned information was solicited with a view to identifying the goals and objectives for the Edinburg Comprehensive Plan and the Park Master Plan. The goals and objectives reflect the community's priorities for ongoing development and growth management in the City.

The Citizens' Congress was a critical milestone in the plan development process since it generated the information required to develop the goals and objectives that provide direction for policy development and decision-making. Ultimately, these goals and objectives serve as benchmarks for implementation and evaluation of the Plans – critical steps in the plan development process.

To ensure broad representation of the public's interests, LKI worked with the City in advance of the meeting to encourage strong public participation in the Citizens' Congress. Methods for promoting the meeting included media clips in the local paper, broadcasts on the local television channel, and information on the City's website.

The following reflects the information that came forward to benefit the development of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.



Parks and Livability Focus Group Meetings

Karen A. Gregory, Facilitator
Lane Kendig, inc.



Existing parks are faced with maintenance (e.g. watering) problems.

What are the issues and problems facing the parks and recreation system and the livability of the City?

- ◆ Land shortage in key areas
- ◆ Ebony Golf Course lease is coming up - opportunity for the City to acquire 160 acres of land
- ◆ Park dedication requirement is needed
- ◆ Well connected bike lanes are required – related to the issue of safety
- ◆ Size of parks must be balanced
- ◆ North of Monte Cristo there are no parks or paths – issue of accessibility
- ◆ Existing parks are not maintained (e.g. watering)
- ◆ Partnerships are not happening, i.e. money/contracts between the City and schools
- ◆ Accessibility parks within walking distance
- ◆ Lack of trails
- ◆ Trail surfaces (e.g. hard surfaces are difficult to run on)
- ◆ Attractiveness
- ◆ Need more park facilities
- ◆ Need more programming for parks (e.g. adult supervised programs, safety)
- ◆ Native landscaping and water features are required
- ◆ Town needs a centre, not a parking lot
- ◆ Partnership between the County and precinct is missing - lacking multi-use facilities where joint use can be had
- ◆ Need a walking trail near the centre of town
- ◆ Reservoir at Sugar and Chapin is underused – opportunity for frisbee golf, mountain biking, etc.
- ◆ Downtown square historically surrounded by parks - the City/County doesn't own the downtown square land
- ◆ Why not build high rise parking structure to change use of downtown square?
- ◆ Parking problems
- ◆ Affordability issues – e.g. land acquisition for parks, downtown revitalization, etc.
- ◆ City partnership with State and UT-Pan American – could fix the area around the rail track
- ◆ Ebony Golf Course has a historical building that should be preserved – other examples of historic buildings in the city that also should be preserved

- ◆ Shade and sidewalks are lacking
- ◆ Need to fully develop land and fully realize the potential of property
- ◆ Street and park lighting are required (not light pollution, must be environmentally responsible)
- ◆ AEP owns all of the street lighting
- ◆ Need to invest in mature trees for plantings - will gain shade benefits
- ◆ Code enforcement (e.g. abandoned cars, garbage) – related to issues of aesthetics and health
- ◆ Need additional transportation system (youth have difficulty getting around)
- ◆ Habitat for birds, butterflies, etc. is needed in parks – spin-off is that it would attract tourism
- ◆ As development occurs trees are being destroyed

What are the issues and problems facing the parks and recreation system and the livability of the City?

- ◆ Community parks have bad lighting, no activities (e.g. recreation facilities, poorly maintained)
- ◆ Municipal Park is too far from downtown
- ◆ Policy enforcement is not happening in parks
- ◆ Large parks are not always being used well (e.g. Fountain Park)
- ◆ Need park on south-west side of the city – no parks are there and yet it is a growth area
- ◆ Parks are focused on younger kids but they should also address young adults
- ◆ Lighting is an issue (e.g. for basketball courts)
- ◆ South of Freddy Gonzalez (main canal area) could be developed
- ◆ Need more green areas, e.g. urban forest
- ◆ Water reservoir could be developed (i.e. north-west holding pond)
- ◆ Not a lot of activities in parks
- ◆ No one knows what frisbee golf is – good to have activities in parks but people have to understand how to participate
- ◆ Regulation enforcement – especially abandoned vehicles on lots
- ◆ Not enough parks - Municipal Park is a good beginning
- ◆ Diversity in housing, thinking, openness to different cultures, etc. is required to achieved livability
- ◆ Outdoor activities are required
- ◆ No special sites/facilities for big events exist - Municipal is not adequate. Could be an opportunity for economic input (question raised whether the need is there)
- ◆ Affordability – i.e. price of land acquisition



Parks lack shaded areas to protect from sun and heat.



Policy enforcement in parks is an issue that needs to be addressed.

- ◆ Need facilities or small parks in large new developments – holding developer responsible for park development is required (not just the responsibility of the city to provide park space)
- ◆ More shade required
- ◆ Benches with botanical areas is required (e.g. to address older population)



What are the options to address the issues and problems identified regarding parks and livability?

- ◆ Ordinance for trees and a dedicated budget (e.g. Tree City USA, Brownsville example)
- ◆ Transplanting trees from developed areas to parks (i.e. with use of tree spade)
- ◆ Plant rescues
- ◆ Community service hours to undertake home renovations (exterior), etc. Service clubs could donate paint, etc.
- ◆ Hold a “City Pride” weekend
- ◆ Develop a Master Plan for hike/bike trails (long-range focus)
- ◆ Create a City nursery - seed source is available at the Birding Centre (use volunteers)
- ◆ Don’t forget young people – e.g. extend skate park, involve youth in meetings for the Plan
- ◆ Create indoor facilities and provide transportation to facilities for seniors
- ◆ Develop a centre at the park for education programs (e.g. nutrition, applied learning opportunities)
- ◆ Use state inmates (12 000 locally) for free labor
- ◆ Create multi-use parks for all users (e.g. ages, abilities), especially large parks. If large parks addressed all user needs, they could become “family parks”
- ◆ Distribute a parks survey through schools to tap into youth
- ◆ Target older neighborhoods/parks for seniors who have driving limitations - create a programmed facility
- ◆ Develop a coordinated effort (City, County, School Board) to address land use. The coordination could take the form of a board (created by ordinance) that would review plats, hold regular meetings, etc.
- ◆ Coordinate with recreation associations and schools to better use facilities
- ◆ Coordinate among County, City and School Board to ease development process for developers
- ◆ Establish a funding program with a long-range focus
- ◆ Engage in youth outreach to find out what youth want – especially ones who are not using parks



What are the options to address the issues and problems identified regarding parks and livability?

- ◆ More police officers for enforcement of by-laws
- ◆ Roaming enforcement (e.g. break city into areas, enforce one area each month to address issues)
- ◆ Grant writing to obtain funding
- ◆ Create a beautification committee with ability to fine, address lot clean up, etc.
- ◆ Get neighbors/community involved
- ◆ Create a Plant a Tree program
- ◆ City could partner with private sector (e.g. to put paddle boats in parks, etc.)
- ◆ Partner with UT-Pan American
- ◆ Hold a cultural festival (e.g. to demonstrate diversity in food)

Which of these options are priorities?

- ◆ Partnerships – for multi-use facilities and outdoor parks, to leverage dollars
- ◆ New park development and hike/bike trails
- ◆ Park maintenance and better use of existing parks
- ◆ Ebony Golf Course – address lease issue
- ◆ Establish a beautification board
- ◆ Engage in land acquisition for a greenbelt, bike trails
- ◆ Intensify use of existing parks
- ◆ Park development – developers must leave green space (should be enforced through regulation)

**EDINBURG PARKS & RECREATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER
315 EAST PALM DRIVE
JANAUARY 19, 2005
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Peter De La Garza, Chairman
Mr. Nick Cantu, Board Member
Mr. Roy Garza, Board Member
Mr. Arnulfo Martinez, Board Member
Mr. Mike Rios, Board Member
Mr. Fred Guerra Jr., Board Member
Mr. Robert Garcia, Board Member
Mr. Gilbert Enriquez, Board Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Gilbert Guerra, Board Member

STAFF:

Mr. Frank X. Garza, Community Service Director
Mr. Luis A. Rodriguez, Parks and Recreation Director
Mrs. Angela Avitia, Senior Secretary I

GUESTS:

Mr. Juan Lopez, Planning & Zoning
Director
Karen A. Gregory, Senior
Planner, Lane Kendig, inc. (LKI)
Bret C. Keast, Vice President, LKI

ITEM I CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peter De La Garza at 6:15 p.m.

- A. Roll Call: Angela Avitia conducted roll call.

ITEM II APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF DECEMBER 8, 2004.

Motion to approve minutes for the meeting of December 8, 2004, was made by Arnulfo Martinez and seconded by Mike Rios. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM III MONTHLY AND SPECIAL PROGRAM/PROJECT REPORTS FOR THE MONTH OF DECEMBER 2004.

- A. Community Recreation Center Report: Mr. Rodriguez gave the board the number of participants for each of the Department's winter leagues. Registration for the upcoming Youth Basketball was held from November 1st to December 11, 2004.
- B. Recreation Report: Mr. Rodriguez reported the numbers for the membership enrollment for children and adults. The Fall recreation programs ended its second session on December 18, 2004. The Goju-Ryu Karate Team competed in Weslaco on December 3rd were several of Master Martin Martinez's students placed in their respected divisions.

- C. Aquatics Report: Mr. Rodriguez stated the school district is continuing to use the Municipal Pool for their 4th grades learn to swim programs. Mr. Frank Carmona, Aquatic Superintendent sent out invitations to last season's aquatic staff inviting them to apply for the upcoming 2005 Aquatic season.
- D. Parks: Mr. Rodriguez reported the Park Division is currently still maintaining the parks throughout the city. Park staff helped at Night of Lights event. The staff began leveling the mound of dirt next to the World Birding Center.

ITEM IV PRESENTATION ON PARKS & RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Mr. Juan Lopez, Director of Planning and Zoning introduced Bret Keast and Karen Gregory. They presented on the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Edinburg. Mr. Keast informed the board with the Master Plan the Parks and Recreation Department is able to acquire points for grants to the Parks and Wildlife Organization. Ms. Gregory gave a brief description of the six chapters in the Comprehensive Plan for the Parks and Recreation Department.

- Chp. 1 – Introduction: Purpose and Objectives, Values and Benefits
 - Description of scenarios/ projections of Edinburg citizen's income/employment and population scenarios
- Chp. 2 – Community Snapshot: Location, History, Historic Population, Projected Change in Population, Implications, Population Characteristics, Household Composite, Income and Poverty, Housing, Education, and Employment of the Community
- Chp. 3 – Goals and Objectives: Specific goals and broad intentions/ objectives-ways to address goals
 - Overall goals: improve existing parks and recreation facilities through intensification, maintenance and development of parks and facilities.
 - Goal 1 – Improve the City's parks and recreation facilities through intensification and maintenance of the existing parks.
 - Goal 2 – Development of new parks by monitoring growth, and by coordinating parkland coast and acquisitions.
 - Goal 3 – Establish an improvement program to revitalize the current parks and recreation facilities to achieve improved safety, accessibility, and aesthetic value.
 - Goal 4 – Develop an interconnected system of ADA accessible paths and trails to connect City parks with neighborhoods, schools, and other community activity areas, and to provide non-vehicular access to the parks and recreation system. This was top of the list for citizens.
 - Goal 5 – Promote and engage in the conservation and enhancement of natural and cultural resources. This is to educate the public.
 - Goal 6 – Develop partnerships to achieve greater efficiencies in parks and recreation facility acquisition, maintenance, and development.
- Chp. 4 – Environmental Scan: assessment of grounds, inventory of all existing parks, park conditions and an overview of findings.
- Chp. 5 – Facility Standards: National standards, Park classification system, park

facilities and improvements, recommendations for facilities, and site selection criteria.

Chp. 6 – Needs Assessment: Supply and Demand

ITEM V OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Update On Parkland Dedication: Information on available funding was provided to the board members along with their packets.

- B. Next Meeting: February 16, 2005.

- C. Adjournment: There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Arnulfo Martinez and seconded by Nick Cantu. Motion passed unanimously, meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

APPROVED BY

PREPARED BY

Peter De La Garza, Chairman

Angela Avitia
Senior Secretary I
Parks & Recreation Department

**EDINBURG PARKS & RECREATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
MINUTES**

COMMUNITY RECREATION CENTER
315 EAST PALM DRIVE
APRIL 12, 2005
6:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mr. Peter De La Garza, Chairman
Mr. Gilbert Guerra, Vice-Chairman
Mr. Nick Cantu, Board Member
Mr. Arnulfo Martinez, Board Member
Mr. Mike Rios, Board Member
Mr. Robert Garcia, Board Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Mr. Roy Garza, Board Member
Mr. Fred Guerra, Board Member
Mr. Gilbert Enriquez, Board Member

STAFF:

Mr. Luis A. Rodriguez, Parks and Recreation Director
Mrs. Marty Hernandez, Telephone Operator/Typists I

GUESTS:

Karen A. Gregory, Senior Planner,
Lane Kendig, inc. (LKI)
Bret C. Keast, Vice President, LKI

ITEM I CALL MEETING TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Peter De La Garza at 6:15 p.m.

- A. Roll Call: Marty Hernandez conducted roll call. Motion to excuse Roy Garza, Fred Guerra, and Gilbert Enriquez was made by Arnulfo Martinez and second by Gilbert Guerra.

ITEM II APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR MEETING OF MARCH 16, 2005.

Motion to approve minutes for the meeting of March 16, 2005, was made by Arnulfo Martinez and seconded by Robert Garcia. Motion passed unanimously.

ITEM III MONTHLY AND SPECIAL PROGRAM REPORT FOR MONTH OF MARCH 2005.

- A. Recreation Report: Mr. Rodriguez reported the Spring Men's Basketball and Adult Softball Leagues have begun. There are 51 registered softball teams and 20 Men's Basketball teams.
- B. Community Recreation Center: The Recreation Spring Programs began on March 14, 2005. Classes currently offered include Karate, Gymnastics, Dance, Cheerleading, Folklorico, and adult Aerobics. The Goju-Ryu Karate competition

team competed at the Mid Valley Annual Open Martial Arts Karate Competition. The department held its annual Easter Egg Festival which was attended by approximately 800 children. The department has begun its hiring process for the summer program.

- C. Aquatics Report: Mr. Rodriguez stated that Municipal Pool opened to the public on April 2, 2005 on the weekends. Mr. Frank Carmona has begun to hold Water Safety Instructor classes and is continuing to hire summer lifeguards.
- D. Parks: Mr. Rodriguez reported the Park Division is continuing to maintain all fields for EPBA.

ITEM IV PRESENTATION ON PARKS & RECREATION COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Karen Gregory presented on the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Edinburg.

Chp. 6 – Needs Assessment: Deterring the needs for public parks, current and future needs, Evaluation of Park Service Areas, ECISD partnership, Parks and Recreation System Plan, Facility Needs, Equipment Needs, Community feedback, Barrier Assessment, Accessibility for person with disabilities.

Chp. 7- Implementation: Key Factors, Success Factors, Implementation through Partnerships, such as City of Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Regional Municipalities, ECISD, Public, Quasi-Public and Private Entities, State and Federal Governments; Implementation Priorities: Municipal Park, South Park, Dr. Diaz and Bicentennial Park, Park Accessibility and Signage Improvements, Community Recreation Centers – Remodeling and Construction, Land Acquisition and Redevelopment, Schoolyard Redesign, Trail System Development.

ITEM V OTHER BUSINESS

- A. Update On Parkland Dedication: Information on available funding was provided to the board members along with their packets.
- B. Next Meeting: Meeting scheduled for May 11, 2005.
- C. Adjournment: There being no further business to consider, a motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Arnulfo Martinez and seconded by Peter De La Garza. Motion passed unanimously, meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

APPROVED BY

PREPARED BY

Peter De La Garza, Chairman

Marty Hernandez
Telephone Operator/Typist I
Parks & Recreation Department