



MINUTES

CITY OF BRENHAM PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

November 29, 2023

A regular meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was held on Wednesday, November 29, 2023, beginning at noon at Brenham City Hall – Conference Room 2-A, 200 W. Vulcan Street, Brenham, Texas.

Members Present:

Andrea Fischer; Bill Betts, Courtney Mason, Dusty Robinson, Lee Chalmers

Members Absent:

Delbert Boeker; Ginger Bosse; Tina Henderson; and Wendy Buth

City of Brenham Staff Present:

Director of Public Works Dane Rau, Casey Redman, Tammy Jaster and Kyle Branham

Citizens/Others Present:

JC Robinson; David Robinson; Linda Yochim; Melinda Faubion; Mark Klimowicz; Sally Mitchell; Tom Yochim; Mary Anne Moran; Shannon Santly; Linda Thomas; Paula Whittaker; Vicki Bruce; Keith Kietlinski; Lisa Keesler; Kevin Boggus

Media Present:

KTEX/KWHI –
Brenham Banner Press – Sarah Forsythe

1. Chairman Bill Betts called the meeting to order

2. Citizen/Visitor Comments

No comments outside of the agenda items were discussed.

WORK SESSION

3. Discussion Regarding Expansion of Pickleball Facilities in the Brenham Parks System

Public Works Director Dane Rau started this discussion. Dane thanked all that came and were in attendance for the Parks Board Meeting. There has been much discussion recently about the expansion of pickleball in the Brenham Parks System. Over the last couple of months staff was presented with an expansion plan of additional courts at Jackson St Park by local pickleball advocates. We have evaluated the plan that was presented and read carefully over all the comments that were received. We have taken them into consideration as we decide on when and where the next pickleball expansion will be. Currently, pickleball expansion is farther out in the Parks Capital Improvement Plan (28-29).

With the first plan and approach that was submitted to city staff it was understood that significant private funds may be able to move expansion of pickleball courts up in the capital plan. After seeing the plan, it initially had pickleball expansion toward the east side of the park with no mention of additional parking or a resolution on where basketball courts would move? There is much discussion to be had regarding is Jackson St Park the right place for expansion and how will the park and surrounding area absorb an expansion of 20-22 courts? Or does this expansion need to wait for possible expansion at the Brenham Family Park? Or does expansion take place at Jackson to meet community needs but only an additional 6 courts?

City of Brenham staff has been looking at options to present to the Parks Board and City Council if significant private funds were available and only earmarked for Jackson St Park. In order to accommodate some of the concerns related to basketball and parking we have come up with another plan that could potentially work if Jackson St Park was selected as expansion of pickleball. This is only a 2nd look at where pickleball could be expanded at Jackson and not affect basketball and add additional parking. This is not moving forward, only ideas to consider.

With Phase 1 of Jackson St Park beginning in 2024 which will involve ADA upgrades, restroom/pavilion enhancements, electrical upgrades, and new play areas for young children this would be the time to look at the entire park. You will see a different version of expansion of pickleball which shows it moving to the middle of the park. This is an open space that does not host competitive play and needs improvements as it relates to electrical upgrades to the field lighting. This area is used by youth football and a couple select soccer teams for practices only and they could be easily relocated to other open-space areas in Brenham. City staff believes that this space would be better as it would move pickleball to the middle, farther away from the residential homes and will allow basketball to stay where it is at. It will allow expansion of parking where the current pickleball courts are at as well as easily expand parking at the current parking lots off Mansfield St. This is a very doable option if private funds were received, and it was decided that expansion of pickleball was best for Jackson St Park.

The two big questions that we need direction on is:

- Is significant private funding going to be available and is that tied to Jackson St Park for Pickleball Expansion?
- Is Jackson St Park the right place to expand pickleball with 20-22 courts or do we look at another park with more space? (Maybe at the city's expense)

JC Robinson reiterates pickleball is a family activity. He starts listing all the sports that are currently at Jackson Street Park and feels that adding pickleball only benefits the park because it allows for activity. JC feels that the park seems safer, and they have influenced more people to come out and use it. JC also believes that drug use is down. He discusses the traffic pollution stating that it really is not significant because it is not just a residential road as there are large trucks driving down it all the time. JC mentions how he went to a residential community for a pickleball tournament that had over 50,000 people attend and talks about how he thinks if there is traffic control the parking should not an issue. Pickleball has surpassed tennis for players. Kids are beginning to show interest in pickleball and states that the Board needs to set direction and allow expansion of pickleball into the community.

Board Member Andrea Fischer asks if they are hosting a tournament, will the organization be implementing some type of shuttle program? A question was also asked about the average number of people that would be coming out for the tournament, and has anyone done a traffic study on that street?

JC Robinson says that there is a possibility of providing a shuttle but probably a minimum of 1,000 people a day on the upper end.

Patron states how they live in that area that the traffic is an issue especially on Jackson Street.

Director of Public Works, Dane Rau states that they have tried to have PD out there before to work on the traffic issue. It is a recreation area and not a truck route, but it is open to all drivers. PD has worked on that. Dane states that there has not been a traffic study on this street. Dane also explains how other sports/fields make parking work.

Dane continues to state that like other parks, if we can get an economic value or benefit from additional courts/fields, then it is something for us to consider; and how big do we want this to be. Jackson Street Park is a good option for growth but not necessarily for a huge tournament.

Board Member Andrea Fischer asks if the club is currently doing any outreach and if that can continue with the current 6 courts. JC states that they currently offer a free introduction on Thursday evenings. The ambassador program works with the City to offer an intro to pickleball.

Tammy Jaster states that the City works with the Pickleball Club to offer an Intro to Pickleball 3 times a year. The first Saturday in February, March, and April and this past year all 3 sessions were full with people on waiting lists.

Parks Board Chairman Bill Betts reminds everyone that Jackson Street Park is the next park for renovations, and we are just in the early stages of planning so this is great discussion leading into this project.

Director of Public Works Dane Rau, states that the City is working with Engineers who did a master plan on hold until we get some direction or recommendation from the Parks Board and City Council so we can move forward with engineering plans to see what it could look like.

Parks Board Member Lee Chambers asks if the city has done a survey for the revenue of pickleball. What does pickleball bring to the city during the tournaments?

Dane Rau stated that Pickleball Member Keith Hoffman had a spread sheet with numbers that show what / who a tournament may bring in.

Parks Board Chairman Bill Betts states that when you have more courts it can appeal to larger groups and more high-level people. It appeals to the older generation that would have people stay for longer periods, overnight stays, eating out, seeing the town.

Patron stated that he & his wife travel and they travel to tournaments. They stay overnight, ate out in other communities, did Wine tours, and saw the sights of the city, spending their money in other communities. They easily spent \$1000 or more for the weekend. And there were 400 people in the tournament.

Another Patron stated that she likes to attend tournaments, but if you go to the website there is a tournament every weekend somewhere and some tournaments are not being held due to the number of tournaments being put on. So, it may be hard to fill a tournament in Brenham. But the number of courts we have determines the type of tournament we could host.

Patron asked if the issue is funding and does funding determine what can or cannot be built? Is there a way to phase in additional courts? She states that she is not sure we need a Pickleball Palace, but additional courts are a need.

Another Patron also asked if the Pickleball Palace need to be at Jackson Street Park? Or could it be built at another park?

Patron stated that due to the number of pickleball players the need for more courts is high and the majority of players do not want to wait 5+ years for something to be built.

Board Member Andrea Fischer asked if something could be phased in or would it be better to do all at once while crew are in there building.

Board Member Lee Chalmers stated that adding courts 15-20 would allow for some tournaments to be held but maybe not the 50,000+ people tournament. Allowing for some revenue to come into the community.

Melinda stated that we could go back to the tournament and geo track the participants to see where they stayed, where they went, and how much they might have spent.

Director of Public Works Dane Rau stated that if the Club or someone takes this on and promotes the tournaments, etc it could be beneficial. However, if the volunteer does not push and promote it, then we may not drive the people into the community. This is not something that the city would be doing this. Without funds or the option of funds, it is hard to put this on the front scope of work when there are other priorities that need to be addressed. If there is private funding available then that open doors to bring things in phase II or III further up the to do list.

We want a Pickleball expansion, we just want to know how big we need it to be and if Jackson Street Park is the right park to expand.

Board Member Andrea Fischer asked what the biggest community event is bringing people to the community. Dane stated that the Blue Bell Fun Run is probably the largest followed by baseball and softball tournaments especially the younger kids that bring families to the community.

Director of Public Works Dane Rau asked if Jackson Street park is a park we want to consider for expansion of pickleball courts and if so what / how many or to what extent.

Patron asked if the New Brenham Family Park if pickleball is top on the construction list and Dane stated that it is not there are some amenities that we need to address first. Brenham Family Park is about 2028-2029 for construction of additional phases. Chairman Bill Betts stated it took 6 years to get the Federal Government to come down to determine the water source was ok. Dane stated that he felt first phase would start end of 2024 possibly.

Patron asked if any other parks would be big enough for a large pickleball complex outside of the Brenham Family Park. Dane Rau stated that we did not, but Jackson Street could house some expansion to give the community additional playing courts.

JC Robinson stated that he was in a pickle that he could not ask for financial funding from people for a possibility or option. He needed concrete plans to present to people.

Patron asked if the Brenham Pickleball Club would be responsible for setting up tournaments and making sure courts are full. Dane stated that they would not be, but anyone could take on hosting tournaments by renting the courts and handling all the logistics.

Dane asked if Jackson Street was the favorable park for some expansion, then we can address the engineers to see what that option looks like. This is good timing as we are in the engineering phase and see what the best utilization of the space and the full benefits of the park is.

The main question is whether we happy with expansion at Jackson Street. The room was in favor of expansion but not in favor of a pickleball complex.

Mark stated that Jackson Street Park is a family park and Pickleball is a family sport. After Thanksgiving he enjoyed a game with his grandchildren and his children, and it was fun to play with multigeneration.

Parks Board member Dusty Robinson stated that he sees the need for expansion for pickleball but at the same time if we are talking about long term economic growth and impact it might bring the people and the money to the community.

Dane stated that we could look at private development. There has been some discussion among people about private development.

Parks Board member Lee Chalmers asked why Jackson Street isn't the best option for Pickleball expansion. Patron stated that they felt some expansion was necessary, but a Pickleball Complex isn't needed. That we need to keep Jackson Street a family park in a city neighborhood.

Discussion continued that there is a need for additional courts for the community as well as the possible need for courts for tournaments.

Parks Board Member Courtney Mason stated that we are looking at two things. We want expansion but we want a complex as well.

Discussion ended with Parks Board members in agreement with some pickleball expansion at Jackson Street Park but in favor of not a Pickleball complex. Upper City Management is in favor of some expansion but without outside funding we would not be able to support a complex.

4. Discussion Regarding Operating Hours of the Blue Bell Aquatic Center for Calendar Year 2024

Aquatic & Recreation Superintendent Tammy Jaster started this discussion. The Blue Bell Aquatic Center was tasked to evaluate the current budget, operating hours, and programs and compare operations to similar facilities. If possible, to present ways to increase revenue and/or lower daily operation cost. Staff dug deep with research and site visits to similar facilities, finding not many with the amazing amenities the City of Brenham has to offer.

- City Council, Parks Board & BCDC approved a Resident / Non-Resident Daily Admission Fee Schedule for the Blue Bell Aquatic Center at the City Council Meeting 11/16/23. As well as a Resident / Non-Resident Monthly and Yearly Fee. The last increase to the Blue Bell Aquatic Center memberships were in 2012.
- City Council, Parks Board & BCDC approved a slight increase or change to the Carousel fee changing from \$1/rider per day to \$1/ride at the City Council Meeting 11/16/23.
- A Charge for Floats-N-Flicks movie nights at the BBAC was approved at the City Council Meeting 11/16/23. Normally this event is free to the public, but due to the fact that the event requires Lifeguards it was recommendation from staff that we charge a regular entrance fee or pool pass.

Finally, Staff has been asked to consider closing one day per week and what that might look like. Currently, the Blue Bell Aquatic Center is open during the peak of the season (June-August) in all 3 pools; 7 days a week. We average 27 – 86 people per hour during this time.

In the Fall/Spring we are open 6 days a week with 2 indoor pools, averaging 10 – 14 people per hour. Staff has looked at all programming, schedules, staffing, etc. and is recommending the following. Here are a couple of possible options to consider and the impact it would have)

- Closing ½ day during the off-Season proposal Friday afternoons 4-7pm. Would save the city around 912 part time hours saving the city around \$9,120.00.
- Starting Pool Opening Times moving from 6am to a 7am start time. This option would save around 260 hours of staff time (which this time is normally hard to find staff to work before school at 530am) and would save the city around \$2,600.00.
- A final option would be a Year Round Closing on Mondays or another day of the Week. This would affect aerobic schedules, swim team schedules, programming for camps, etc. However, it would have a savings over the year of 3714 staff hours with \$37,140.00

Dane stated that our operating budget is a little over 1.1 million and our revenue is around \$350,000. Dane stated that we are trying to narrow the gap between the income/expense; we know this is a quality of life but are there some ways we can assist the budget. Dane stated that we would not choose A,B, and C but is there something we can do to

Ms. Linda Thomas stated that it would only take her about 4 minutes, but she wants to make us aware of some things that the board may not be aware of. In 1999-2000 that the group knew that it would be an amazing facility for the community and that it would always be a money pit

for the community. She is asking that we don't make any decisions drastic. Staffing is an issue but is the program we use for training the best option out there. She stated that the location of lifeguard rotation is losing the city 2.1 hours of staff time daily. The staff rotates every 15 minutes then are off for 15 minutes, if you look at an 8-hour period only 5 ½ hours are actually being paid. Linda asked if this was the only option and if there are other options out there. We are wasting time/money daily.

Linda also asked if the management ever considered going out of the box to recruit staff. Example Police Department, EMS, Fire Departments as they work shift work but have time off could they come work as lifeguards. Tammy Jaster stated that we think outside of the box all the time, but those professionals do not want to come spend their days off working for \$10/hour. Linda asked if we had looked at that pay scale.

Looking at program days, like Kid Fish Day, do we need staff to work on those days. We need to look at staff that aren't high school age as they are hard to get and don't stick around. Linda stated she had some issues with consumables such as the lounge chairs, picnic tables, furnishings, do we really need that money to for those items for summer usage only. I know you have bases covered but we need to look at that cost. Tammy stated that those funds are from BCDC. Linda stated that maybe those funds could be used for something else.

Linda then asked when we asked the patrons about the possibility of taking Mondays off cause there was a lot of regular users that did not like that option. When the information was shared not one person was happy about that. People that use the pool need the pool to walk, move and just live.

Tammy stated that we looked at usage on a daily basis for the off season as well as summer season and Mondays seems to be the least usage of patrons if we looked at the overall week.

Linda stated that recently we had an issue with sanitation issues. That patrons can tell when the cleaning crews come as there can be trash in the trash cans for 2 to 3 days. Dane stated that we just recently increased the cleaning crew to 3 days a week due to the increase usage. Tammy stated that the Lifeguards clean after their shifts at 1pm and in the evenings at 7pm. Linda stated that she asked the staff and they said that is not something they do anymore. Tammy stated that the staff is responsible daily for cleaning duties.

Dane stated that looking at a closing on Monday would allow pools to rest and recover but we are cutting off the revenue side of that.

Linda Thomas asked again about the rotation for inside and outdoors and if the 15 minutes is required for staff as we are wasting 2.5 hours of staff time daily.

Dane stated that it was a requirement, and we certify thru American Red Cross. Tammy Jaster stated that prior to her onboard the city was using Ellis & Associates which required a couple more guards. Tammy stated that the State & Federal Government; the capacity of the pools there are laws that require staff to have a break every 30 – 45 minutes so they do not get fatigued. Also, that position on break serves as the second responder so in the case of an emergency they are the ones calling 911, they are grabbing backboards and equipment.

REGULAR SESSION

5. Discuss and Possibly Act Upon the Approval of the Minutes from the October 18, 2023, Regular Meeting

A motion was made by Board Member Lee Chalmers and seconded by Board Member Andrea Fischer to approve the minutes from the October 18 , 2023, regular meeting.

Chairperson Bill Betts called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Board Member Andrea Fischer	Yes
Board Member Bill Betts	Yes
Board Member Courtney Mason	Yes
Board Member Delbert Boeker	Absent
Board Member Dusty Robinson	Yes
Board Member Ginger Bosse	Absent
Board Member Lee Chalmers	Yes
Board Member Tina Henderson	Absent
Board Member Wendy Buth	Absent

6. Approval of 2024 Meeting Dates

Aquatic & Recreation Superintendent Tammy Jaster started this discussion. Meeting are normally Scheduled: Every other Month, 2nd Wednesday at Noon. Due to the change with the November meeting set dates for 2024 would look like:

- January 24, 2024
- March 13, 2024 (Spring Break) **CHANGE TO MARCH 6**
- May 8, 2024
- July 10, 2024
- September 11, 2024
- November 13, 2024

A motion was made by Board Member Courtney Mason and seconded by Board Member Lee Chalmers to approve the presented dates with the exception of March date. Chairperson Bill Betts called for a vote. The motion passed with the Board voting as follows:

Board Member Andrea Fischer	Yes
Board Member Bill Betts	Yes
Board Member Courtney Mason	Yes
Board Member Delbert Boeker	Absent

Board Member Dusty Robinson	Yes
Board Member Ginger Bosse	Absent
Board Member Lee Chalmers	Yes
Board Member Tina Henderson	Absent
Board Member Wendy Buth	Absent

7. Parks and Recreation Staff Updates

- Public Works Director Dane Rau tagged on to Casey & Tammy with updates to the Parks and Recreation Team.
- Aquatics & Recreation, Superintendent Tammy Jaster reported statistics for the Blue Bell Aquatic Center, staffing, maintenance, programs for recreation, and usage/participation. Locker-room project still ongoing; 2 new free little libraries up at Hohlt Park soccer side and Blue Bell Aquatic Center. BBAC staff is the workers/logistics for the Christmas Lighted Parade. with 103 entries this is the biggest one to date.
- Parks Superintendent Casey Redman reported on maintenance updates. Concrete for tables at Hattie Mae & Fireman’s Park; Removal of Dead Trees; Fireman’s Restroom Floor and door refurbished; Linda Anderson fields converted to turf; and several other projects and maintenance.
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7. Adjourn

Chairman Bill Betts adjourned the meeting.

Bill Betts

Chairperson

ATTEST:

Tammy Jaster

Staff Liaison