

Meeting Minutes
Fairview Park Board
March 4, 2013

Board members present: Chairwoman Beverly Totty, Vice-Chairman Jack Cannon, Bob Benson, Mark Dietze, Secretary Richard Edmondson, Neil Rice, plus Park Director Keith Paisley

Absent: Samantha Towler, Patti Carroll

Also present: City Manager Andrew Hyatt, members of the Friends of Bowie Park

I. Meeting was called to order by Chairwoman Totty. Agenda was approved as were the minutes of the 2-4-13 meeting.

II. General park updates—Paisley announced that mulch day—a day set aside annually for spreading new mulch on the park playground—will take place this year on March 23, from 8 till noon, and that MayFest is scheduled for May 18. He also announced that summer camps are about 27 percent full at present, and then went on to compare figures for public attendance at park programs during the first two months of the years 2011-2013:

2011—43
2012—116
2013—471

III. Old business—Pine thinning plan: Totty said the plan approved by the Park Board at its 2-4-13 meeting has since received “preliminary approval” from the Board of Commissioners, at which time it was passed onto the Land Trust for Tennessee, which also gave approval to the plan.

IV. Citizens survey and master plan—Totty said a survey had been conducted back in 1996 in connection with the old master plan that was drawn up at that time. The survey was conducted by the University of Tennessee’s Municipal Technical Advisory Service. Totty suggested it would be worthwhile to draw up a formal comparison of the results of the two surveys—the 1996 survey and the most recent survey—to see if there are any common threads. She asked Rice if he would be willing to do such a comparison. He said he would attempt it.

Totty also said she is hopeful of launching a new survey, one covering the entire park system, by the end of March, and she asked for Park Board input on how the survey should be organized and the wording of questions. Benson answered that the first thing the new survey should do is inform the citizens of the additional parcels that have been designated for park use. Dietze said the survey should include a black and white overlay, so that people will be able to see where the parks are located.

Rice said it would be appropriate to explain that the Triangle property is restricted to historically related things. He said the questions should also be worded in such a manner so as

to make it possible for people to state their preference as to which parcels they think would be most ideally suited for certain activities. Edmondson said the survey should be divided into two, or possibly three parts. The first part should be limited to questions specifically pertaining to Bowie, while part two of the survey should ask people what they would like to see in the remaining parcels, he said. Or, optionally, he added, a “part III” of the survey could address solely the question of the out parcel, considering it separately from the other remaining parcels, to determine public support for a campground or lodge. In either case, the survey should explain to the public that the out parcel, while a part of Bowie Park, is not covered under the conservation easement and that therefore it can accommodate certain things that cannot go in the main part of the park, he said.

Totty asked whether the survey should ask people their zip codes. Edmondson said it could, or that, alternately, it could simply ask people to say how far they live from the park. A discussion then ensued as to whether the survey should be offered only to Fairview residents or to those who live outside the city as well. Totty said it should not be limited to city residents, because many people who live outside the city still shop here and their kids go to local schools; Rice, however, said the views of Fairview residents should be given greater priority, since they pay taxes. Dietze pointed out that the 37062 zip code extends beyond the city limits. He also said the survey should state what the “priorities” are, based upon results from the previous survey. Rice said that to ensure the preferences of Fairview residents are given top priority, the survey should ask respondents to sign their names, while Cannon said that ensuring anonymity would result in greater public participation. Hyatt said the survey could ask, “Are you a Fairview resident or a Williamson County resident?” Dietze said he didn’t see anything wrong with requiring respondents to sign the survey. He also suggested the survey be limited to the Elrod property, the out parcel and Evergreen. This would eliminate Bowie Park and Triangle School—the two properties that have restrictions on what can be placed in them. Rice said he felt public preferences on Bowie Park had been adequately expressed in the previous survey, and that it was not necessary to revisit the issue in the new survey.

V. Bowie Lake Road widening—an update on the status of the project was given by Kevin Holsinger, city community services supervisor. Focusing mainly on phase one of the project (widening of the road from Fairview Blvd. to the park entrance), Holsinger said he had spoken with Middle Tennessee Electric and that “we’re going to get rid of all the power poles that are currently down this way.” Comcast and AT & T also have lines strung along the same poles, but Holsinger is in talks with them as well. There is also a cell tower involved, the power to which is currently being upgraded from a 3G to a 4G LTE. He said there are plans to put lamp posts along the road, and also said phase one should be completed by this spring.

VI. Community garden—discussion on the community garden proposed for the Elrod property. Uncertainty was expressed over whether there is sufficient public interest to make the project go forward. However, the Fairview Observer is expected to publish an article, and hope was expressed that the publicity may get more people interested and involved.

VII. Trails—Paisley said the Redbud trail had been closed temporarily so as to install a culvert to facilitate water drainage. He said having more people on staff assigned exclusively to trail maintenance would be a big help toward keeping the trails opened more often. Totty said that

“marketing” the park—via such means as signs on the interstate—is made problematic by trail closures due to weather. Keeping the trails open has to be a “priority,” she said, “because if we’re marketing and putting money out there to get people in, we don’t want to turn them away.” Cannon raised the possibility of getting state prison inmates assigned to help with trail maintenance, but Hyatt said the state has scaled back the program under which inmates are made available. Hyatt also added: “It takes about two or three of our officers to help guard and help do what needs to be done, especially when you get into a forest like that.” Dietze asked Paisley if the current trail policy is working. Paisley said it is. A brief discussion ensued over the issue of weather-related trail closures and the resultant inconvenience to horse riders. Dietze said the park is a nature park first. Totty said that to close the park “due to lack of maintenance is not the right angle.”

VIII. New Business—Lake Van ADA Trail project—Totty said this is a new directive referred to the Park Board by the Board of Commissioners. The project had initially been part of the Greenway Project, but the bids came back too high, and for this reason the construction of the handicap-accessible trail around Lake Van had to be separated from the Greenway Project, enabling the latter to go forward, she said. Park Ranger Roy said an ADA-compliant trail around the lake would be of tremendous benefit to people with limited mobility, whether they may be wheel-chair-bound or simply have trouble walking. Hyatt said the project was put out to bid and that the cost, of around \$400,000, was considered excessive. Totty said the Board of Commissioners has asked the Park Board to “rethink it and re-package it” with the goal of bringing the cost down. Dietze suggested building the ADA trail around the Dome instead of Lake Van, saying that it would reduce the cost because the topography on the Dome is relatively flat. Holsinger suggested another alternative, i.e. putting the ADA trail at Evergreen Park, noting that the park has a lake.

IX. Meeting was adjourned.