

Friends Of McAllister Park
September 14, 2005

Ray Knox called the meeting to order at 7:00pm. He introduced individuals representing park user groups: Laura Matthews - S.T.O.R.M.(South Texas Off Road Mountainbike), Pat Riordan - San Antonio Road Runners, Mike Forsyth - Sante Fe Trails Homeowners Association, Pat Atnip and LaRee Blackburn - Mad Dogs (McAllister Park Dog Owners), Steve Salas - City of San Antonio Parks Department, Frank Cockrell - Park Police, Jerry Morales - NEYSO (North East Youth Soccer Organization).

Ray then gave a brief summary of activities regarding Friends of the Parks. A memorandum of understanding is being written that will give each 'Friends' group a voice with the San Antonio Parks Dept. and the Friends of the Parks organization. Ray will represent Friends of the Parks when they are given a seat on the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Friends of McAllister Park and other park user groups will continue to meet and discuss needs and concerns. These will then be taken to the Parks Board.

Doug McMurry, member of Friends of McAllister Park, District 9 representative and chairman of the Parks Board, recently held a news conference/park rally to bring to the attention of the city the growing needs of all parks. Kevin Wolff, Distr. 9 Councilman was in attendance and voiced his support of increased money for park maintenance and other needs. Ray Knox represented Friends of McAllister Park. Ray also informed the group that a web page for Friends of the Parks is being designed. All Friends groups will have a link and can have maps, schedules of events, directions to the park, etc. An update of the various park projects included the timeline for the rebuilding of the Al Becken Pavilion (Pav. #1) by the San Antonio Chapter of the Associated General Contractors. This project will probably begin within the next couple of weeks. Bids have been sent out on other park projects and they will probably be started after the first of the year.

Frank Cockrell, San Antonio Park Police officer, reported that many officers have been put on 12 hour cycles at the Levi Strauss evacuee center. He is not aware of any major problems at McAllister Park.

Pat Riordan mentioned that the gate at the intersection close to the new parking lot is often locked when the main entrance gates are open. He asked if a key could be made available to anyone arriving early and finding the locked gate. Steve Salas, Parks Dept., said he would look into the matter. [Follow-up: Mr. Salas, via email, received approval and has left 2 keys at the front desk of the Police Substation.]

Jerry Morales, NEYSO, stated that the speed humps in several locations need to be striped and/or restriped. [Follow-up: Mr. Salas has submitted a work order to the painting supervisor to have this issue addressed.] Jerry also asked if any changes have been made to the improvement project plans. Ray informed him that no further changes have been made.

Fran Tomsett, Blossom Park neighborhood, questioned Officer Cockrell concerning police vehicles behind the subdivision that seemed to be in pursuit of someone. Officer Cockrell will check into the matter.

Pat Riordan, San Antonio Road Runners, gave a report on meetings he is attending regarding the construction of linear parks. These parks will be along flood prone land acquired with bond money. He is concerned that the trails in these parks will be constructed of concrete making them less conducive to use by runners and walkers. He is recommending asphalt trails with concrete curbing or footers. These trails have worked well in other flood prone areas such as McAllister Park. He encouraged everyone to attend the next meeting of the Advisory Board for Linear Parks which will be Tuesday, September 27, at 6pm, at City Hall.

Ray also encouraged everyone to attend a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to learn how the board works. These meetings are the third Monday of each month at Lions Field on Broadway. The San Antonio government web site gives meeting times and agendas.

Laura Matthews, STORM, reported on the recent (Aug. 17) McAllister Park Cleanup Day. Ten community service workers and 12 bikers/walkers/runners worked until 3pm clearing trails and picking up trash. A trail, which was previously closed, was reopened. Thank you to the following folks who helped with the project: Lynn Lopez, David Hunter, David Foegelle, Sebastian Skerhut, Mike Cantrell, J.F. Matthews, Laura Matthews, Ray Knox, Melinda Schwab, Gerry Schwab, Joel Batalsky and Mardale Wilson. Thanks to STORM for coordinating this cleanup day. A BIG THANKS to STORM for donating \$250.00 to Friends of the Parks.

Ray encouraged everyone to become a member of the Friends of the Parks group. There are different levels of membership and the money you donate can be designated for use in McAllister Park. The goal of the this group is preservation and renovation. Bonnie Conner is head of the group and is working on renovating the Japanese Tea Garden at this time.

Mike Forsyth, Sante Fe Trails, asked about the completion date for trail renovation. Ray gave a quick recap of which trails will be redone and a possible start time.

Someone mentioned that the Parkside Subdivision has been blocked off from McAllister Park by a fence put up by San Antonio River Authority.

The Leon Creek Greenway Association, in conjunction with National Public Lands Day, will hold a celebration on Saturday, Sept. 24, at the park located at 13101 Babcock. To register or for more formation, phone (210)207-5621.

Jazz'SAlive will be held this weekend at Travis Park with activities for the whole family. Ray encouraged everyone to attend. The event is cosponsored by the San Antonio Parks Foundation and the City of San Antonio Parks and Recreation Department.

A water leak and damage to the main park road was reported. [Follow-up: Mr. Salas will go out to the park and investigate the problem].

Some fencing along the berm of the dam was cut but has been replaced with heavier material. A 'No Trespassing' sign has been placed in the area.

Stephanie Bocanegra, representing Councilman Kevin Wolff, reported that a proposal has been made to increase the budget for parks maintenance by \$500,000.00. A proposal has also been made for about \$1.5 million to be used for restoration of the Ruiz House at the Witte, the Japanese Tea Garden, Sunken Gardens and the Conservatory at the Botanical Center. She also stated that a full-time EMS at Stone Oak is planned.

Ray Knox adjourned the meeting at 8:20pm.

NOTICE: The next meeting of the Friends of McAllister Park will be Wednesday, November 9, 2005, at 7pm, at the Northeast Police Substation on Jones Maltsberger.