

STORM MEETING 2/6/2006
PIZZA ITALIA 7:00 PM

President Charlie Cude opened February's meeting.

There were 18 participants, including guest Jeremy Wright who is involved with planning municipal rails to trails project. He stated that the Mac park bike skills area proposal had evolved from the original plans and was now a multiuse facility, not just an obstacle area. The bike rodeo training and seminars for kids has been moved to a safer location, providing a designated area for skills development, safety, and situations encountered on a trail. The clinics, seminars and group rides will be under the umbrella of Parks and Rec, and will be the first such project in the nation for a city-owned park. The construction, however, will be funded by volunteers, not the City. 70 percent of the programs and space will be devoted to children and beginners, 20 percent to intermediate riders, and 10 percent to advanced riders. Feedback from the public is welcomed.

The Pavilion near the proposed area is in bad shape and the City will probably move it or rebuild it. Carlos Mendez(s?), the architect, says electricity would be restored and bathrooms provided. A side benefit is that an area of illicit activities in of the Park will thus be reclaimed. Laura Matthews requested plans or diagrams, but they are not yet available. She further asked about structures, would there be teeter totters, bridges, etc. A comment was made that at Flat Rock kids spent 2-3 hours on the teeter totters.

Jaime Correa, proprietor of Drop Zone Cycling would prefer to consolidate everything in one area so everyone has a place to practice their skills. There is no room for a velodrome, and no funds for closing the area for 6-7 months to build the dedicated area. The idea is that natural areas are to be constructed first, incorporating dirt, rock, and both natural and man-made features. It is important the area is built with safety and ease of maintenance in mind, allowing rides various terrain in a closed environment, not only for mountain bikers but for BMXers, as the latter have been riding a the skatepark which is not designed for bikes.

Greg Atwell brought up specifications for structures. Jeremy said they would avoid lumber. With a dedicated area there would be no problems about losing newcomers in the park. Jaime said other similar skills areas might be added in additional City parks, if the club was willing (this was met with a universal show of support by the meeting participants). It was commented that STORM's support of the multiuse area will enhance our relations with the City and other Park groups.

Visitor Ray Knox, president of The Friends of Mac and vp of Advocacy of Friends of Parks, suggested that a committee made up of representatives of Park user groups approve any construction in the area. In response to the question about the existence of a model for this sort of project, Jeremy Wright replied none that intended to serve such a diverse population. In addition to volunteers and corporate donors, funds might be available from TXDoT, Texas Parks and Wildlife, and KONA.

Jeremy noted that the Rails to Trails route on I-10 had been donated by TXDot. In the course of installing a ditch to alleviate flood issues in the Dominion and Raymond Russell Park, the DoT had acquired more right of way than the City had requested in their plans. The bike trail is to extend to Boerne Stage Road, and the original 10 miles has been extended to 34 miles. SA is working with the city of Boerne, and influential people such as Howard Peak, former SA mayor, are on the committee. Charlie noted that said Albuquerque had a nice "rails to trails" system.

David Foegelle, vice-president, announced that the City's Walk n' Roll month was coming up soon, and that STORM is participating on May 13th at Maverick Park. Club riders will lead a beginner-level ride of 5-6 miles to Brackendridge Park.

The item of additional Club meeting sites was discussed next. Suggestions included the soon-to-be opened Back Yard near Mac Park; MoMac; Blue Star; Logan's Roadhouse; EZ's at the Quarry, Stoneworks; Texas Hamburgers at Babcock & Huebner; Fuddrucker's on I-10; La Madeleine; and Hooter's. At the next meeting we will vote on new meeting locations and how often to rotate them.

The club's membership drive was discussed next. We need to get cards to new members sooner. George has not checked the online registrations yet so did not know how if this new option was successful. Lynn Lopez, Webmaster, cautioned that many members would not renew without the solicitation letter, online registration or not.

B.J. Neesvig, co-P.R. chair and teacher at Northside Elementary, announced the school was holding an environmental fair February 23rd from 6:30 -7:30 p.m, and that STORM could have a booth, distribute flyers, and promote off road biking activities. Northside is also organizing a bike rodeo April 27th, featuring a police officer videotaping her spiel about safety. It was noted that the Baptist Health System organized a bike rodeo which attracted neighborhood residents in the southeast. B.J. thought it was likely that principals from any school system would approve STORM publicity. He also mentioned that Chili's in Boerne might be agree to be one of the race sponsor, as he has a contact there.

David Foegelle expressed concern that we have no coordinator for Stormkids. David will contact Emily Johnson again, since we are at a stalemate in going forward with the charitable offshoot of STORM. He mentioned he has spoken to Joel Falcon, a meeting guest last year who was eager to promote the project for underprivileged kids.

Mountain bike patrol coordinator, Carlo Franco, will participate in the Basura Bash on March 25th, which takes place the same day as the Marathon. He asked if anyone else was interested in bike patrol, and that we needed to get the Bike Patrol website up. David Foegelle asked if first aid training would be provided. Carlo said yes, that trainers and medics from Lackland Air Force Base would help.

Laura Cude announced a StormChicks ride at Flat Rock on Saturday 11th and Sunday the 12th of February.

Doug Patrick announced there would also be trail building work day at Flat Rock Saturday 11th, and that the project was progressing well. A duathlon is scheduled on Sunday 25th, so there would be no trail building activities on Saturday the 24th.

Jimmy Dreiss, owner and operator of Flat Rock Ranch, mentioned that bike marathons becoming more popular, especially in Europe. There were 559 registrants at Tapatio. The ongoing drought is causing trail damage. Laura Matthews said she saw an area where there had been a fire on Thousand Oaks at Mac Park. Jaime suggested that kids may be setting the fires.

Doug said he no news about the YMCA project. He is waiting for Flaming Arrow to take back the Y property. He said that Anthony from Camp Eagle mentioned that 10 miles of trail had been connected there. This will replace the former Kerrville race at Kelly creek. There are many interns working at Camp Eagle.

Ray Knox mentioned that Park advocate Lila Cockrell had founded the Friends of Parks to help create a city-wide advocacy group for all park users. Each group has a voice in City Hall. For example, Bonnie Connors [Cotter?] of District 8 is promoting the restoration of the Japanese Gardens and the Sunken Gardens. Ray is trying to visit as many park users groups as possible, hence his appearance at our meeting. The FOP hopes the multiuse project will have minimal impact on the rest of the park, and will serve all park user groups. Additional suggestions are seminars promoting bike education and etiquette for children and grown-ups, analogous to golf etiquette. The Friends would prefer that the project not be a leased property, so that P&R would be responsible for maintenance and liability, and that all user groups form a club for the skills area to ensure good communication and coordinate activities. He noted that STORM was well regarded by the FOP, and that he was a cycling enthusiast from way back. He further mentioned how much he appreciated Jaime's efforts.

Doug would like trails in parks which are not in the flood plain. San Antonio not considered a cycling friendly town, and he wished it could become more like Austin.

Treasurer George Longoria reported a \$8773.70 balance in STORM's bank account. He raised the issue of website hosting fees. He said Alan Sansome had requested \$150.00 a year to host the site. The club agreed this was a very reasonable fee.

Tobin and Greg will need to discuss the race registration. They have sent emails to sponsors, and one of them, James webb is contributing \$250.00. George cautioned that we would need to rein in our expenditures for this race. In fact, numerous cutbacks have been made since last year. We expect fewer racers, and will cut back on awards. The Cost of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place medals is about \$2.00 dollars per medal.

Once again the Boy Scouts are handling the race concessions. STORM needs to claim a cut of the profits to help defray our own race expenses. George commented that he would rather support children's nonprofit biking activities, and that we need the Scouts to run the food booths. We might let the BSA keep a certain amount up to a point, and keep the remainder for the club.

Flyers are being finalized for the Cross country and the Marathon. All permit requests have been submitted. There will be two races on March 18th 19th, followed by the Marathon on the 25th. Rick Riegert will see if his friend going to run the medical support. Greg is in the process of lining up the medical team. Jimmy Dreiss has contacted the Ambulance Company. Alamo Cycleplex will provide the four-wheelers. The Start location has been changed on the lower loop, moving the feed zone to the bottom near the creekside. All fencing will already be up, requiring only require minor changes. Volunteers are needed, especially Course Marshalls. The number of necessary water bottles needs to be determined and ordered from two different vendors. George suggested they bear the club logo so we can use leftovers. We will not provide water bottles at the Marathon, just self-serve cups. NORBA National will send out mass emailing recruiting more volunteers. The ROTC group from Boerne, and Schreiner College are also sources. We need at least 10 course marshals, and registration staff. Registration will be held only from noon to 5 p.m. because there are fewer activities this year. New features include a team relay race and kids' cup on Saturday, a three-mile course for children aged 10 and under, and an exhibition by Scott Wallis, a mountain bike unicyclist.

Laura mentioned that the women would be sent out on the lower loop women's course so as not to be run over by the men, and Greg Atwell said that 30 volunteers would be needed on Sunday the 19th at the race.

The next race meeting is scheduled Monday 13th.

After a short discussion about redesigning the website, the meeting was adjourned until Monday, March 6, at Pizza Italia.