

Zilker Park WG Meeting #3 Notes

November 5, 2018 12-2pm

Temporary Secretary: Mike Cannatti

Requests for information/data from staff are highlighted below

Welcome and Introductions

At 12:14, the meeting was called to order upon determining that the required number of organizational representatives for a quorum were present, and a sign-in sheet was circulated for taking attendance.

James Russell (Chair) stated that the Working Group would be open to public participation by allowing members of the public to attend and listen to deliberations discussions, but there would be no formal public input mechanism for Working Group meetings. James asked if there were any members of the public or present at this meeting, but none were identified.

Michael Cannatti (BSC) agreed to serve as acting secretary for the meeting.

Challenges Facing Zilker Park

Mark Gentle (BHNA) requested information on when a tour of the Great Lawn could occur before the Zilker Park Trail of Lights set-up begins and to hear about plans, cost and timeline for repairing Zilker Park after the ACL Music Festival. Jason Mauer (PARD special events office) agreed to arrange a tour for interested working group members. James Russell noted that staff would not be required for the tour. The Working Group agreed to conduct a tour for interested WG members on Monday, November 12 at 2 PM, starting at the Barton Springs Pool Philosopher's Rock statue.

In connection with the chart of Zilker Park events and attendance provided to the Working Group, Gail Rothe (ZNA) requested a list of vendors also be provided to the Working Group to better reflect the activities in Zilker Park. Clark Hancock (Vice Chair) noted that should also include events at the Zilker hillside theater, such as the Austin Shakespeare Festival. Staff agreed to provide the requested data.

Brief Report of Sub-Group A: Butler Landfill Cap and Improvements

There was no report from Sub-Group A, as the first meeting has not occurred. Jennifer Steverson (staff) will circulate a doodle poll to identify a meeting date.

Presentation by Austin Transportation Department and Q&A

While waiting for set up of the Presentation by Austin Transportation Department (ATD), each Working Group representative introduced themselves by name and affiliation.

ATD staff member Leslie Altamirano (Leslie.Altamirano@austintexas.gov, ATD Traffic Engineering Division, PH. 512-974-7990) provided a PowerPoint presentation overview of the transportation and parking issues at Zilker Park, providing an overview of the responsibilities of ATD for promoting mobility and accessibility through a multi-modal transportation system. With maps showing the Zilker Park area and roadway classifications for roads in the Zilker Park area, Leslie reviewed the attendance figures for Barton Springs Pool in recent years and provided

an overview of the parking spaces and usage in the park area, including average use parking numbers for paved and unpaved parking in the park. In presenting the parking data, Leslie stated the assumption that parking in the Polo Field Area was “off the table” going forward. In addition, Leslie reviewed the transportation challenges presented by having special events at Zilker Park, as well as parking management strategies implemented by ATD to address same, including (1) creating one-side street parking in the neighborhood streets near Zilker Park, (2) promoting multi-modal options for special event transportation (e.g. buses, shuttles, walking, biking, rideshare, cabs, etc.), and (3) future plans for addressing parking and traffic challenges, such as creating protected bike lanes on Barton Springs Road, creating an urban trail or shared used path on Azie Morton Road, creating a crosswalk at Azie Morton and Lund, and improvements on South Lamar/Barton Spring Road intersection from the 2016 Bond Corridor project.

Roy Waley (Sierra) asked if ATD had plans to provide Cap Metro shuttle service to promote park-and-ride solutions to Zilker Park. Leslie stated that there were some (unspecified) efforts underway to create park-and-ride options through cap Metro.

Clark Hancock (Vice Chair) requested that data for average peak use parking during summer weekends be provided. **ATD agreed to provide these numbers.**

Angela Richter (SBCA) asked about the parking data for the entirety of Zilker Park, and not just Barton Springs. **PARD agreed to provide the requested information.**

Mark Gentle (BHNA) asked if ATD can help the Working Group with identifying solutions. Leslie reported that she has been assigned as a staff resource for the Working Group, but noted that there are many competing constraints that apply to solving the parking and traffic issues at Zilker Park.

Mark Gentle (BHNA) asked if the city has shuttles that could be accessed to provide remote parking solutions. Leslie stated that the city does not own any shuttles, but ATD does have experience with shuttle services and locations that could be considered, and she recommended that a “trip demand study” be conducted before attempting to identify specific shuttle service solutions.

Roy Waley (Sierra) stated that the main focus of the Working Group should be finding a shuttle solution to the parking and traffic needs at Zilker Park, and asked about the timing requirements for a trip demand study. Leslie stated that a study could be conducted in 2 to 3 months, though up to six months would be required to go through the city’s contracting process. According to Leslie and PARD, the city’s rotation list of providers might not be available to provide a “trip demand study” of the transportation issues.

Leslie noted that the city has special events experience to draw on in identifying shuttle services, and suggest that a pilot project could be proposed for consideration if the Working Group is interested.

In response to questions about whether there are agreements between the city and TxDOT for the areas under MoPac, Leslie stated that the city has agreements for the MoPac bridge north of Lady Bird Lake, but not on the south side. **The Working Group requested that any Memorandum of Understanding between the city and TxDOT for MoPac be provided.**

James Russell (Chair) noted that having shuttle service on one-way roads can be can create significant congestion for traffic flow, and asked if the park roads could be configurable as two-

way roads to improve accessibility for shuttle service. Leslie stated that ATD has not looked at that issue because ATD does not have jurisdiction over park roads. A discussion ensued about which city department has responsibility for park roads and public right of way, including Stratford Drive.

James Russell (Chair) noted that a shuttle service which identifies parking areas close to Zilker Park will likely add to the congestion problems in the area, and recommended that shuttle parking locations be considered that are further away (e.g., Burger Center) to reduce localized traffic congestion near the park.

Gail Rothe (ZNA) asked if signage can be used to show the parking status and recommend “park and ride” locations to park visitors. Leslie agreed that computerized or dynamic signs would be a suitable approach, but not static signs which do not reflect the actual parking conditions should not be used.

Roy Waley (Sierra) noted that special needs parking at the park should be increased, even if overall parking number spaces are reduced.

Clark Hancock (Vice Chair) requested that the Working Group be provided with information on the baseline parking data, as well as peak time, non-special events parking data in terms of dates, times and hours, and identification of parking opportunities outside of the park (e.g. private parking lots). And to provide recommendations for any pilots parking projects, the feasibility of such projects should identify the cost of shuttle service and specific timing for a win shuttle services will be provided.

James Russell (Chair) noted the Working Group discussion seemed to be focusing on running Zilker Park like a special event where shuttles are running during peak times, and asked if city staff had any concerns. In response, Frances (?) suggested that the Working Group identify other successful city shuttle programs to understand the opportunities for shuttle services, but recommended that the Working Group should also look at other transportation options, such as bike, bus, cab, ridesharing, etc. She also recommended that the Working Group conduct a survey of park users to get other ideas and to understand what would motivate different transportation usage from traditional car parking behavior. Leslie Altamirano (ATD) stated that the demand study can help identify users and their preferences to help guide the Working Group’s work. James Russell (Chair) noted that the various stakeholders groups represented by the Working Group could be solicited for survey responses.

Mark Gentle (ZNA) asked about the timeline in the City Council resolution in terms of the City Manager’s responsibility for conducting a “traffic and parking study” by December 31, 2019. City staff stated that preliminary information has been collected on the parking study, but additional analysis will be directed to assess neighborhood parking impacts from eliminating Polo Field parking or otherwise reducing parking opportunities in Zilker Park. The Working Group discussed the challenges with meeting the deadline requirements in the City Council resolution, but Lem Williams (Council Dist. 6) noted that it is not unusual for city task forces to require additional time.

James Russell (Chair) noted that the Working Group’s short term recommendations can include recommendations to conduct a “trip demand study” to assess traffic and parking. Liana Kallivoka (PARC) explained that the Working Group can provide short-term recommendations in keeping with the March 1, 2018 deadline for providing a report to Council, and can also

provide input for the Zilker Park master plan which will provide long-term recommendations addressing the broader needs of the park, including parking and traffic.

Mark Gentle (ZNA) expressed the strong desire of the Zilker Neighborhood Association to remove parking from the Polo Field area. Bill Bunch (SOS) stated that data may support using a managed parking solution at the Polo Field area, and that additional input should be solicited from park users to understand the impact of closing the Polo Field parking area. According to Bill Bunch, the environmental impacts to Barton Creek need to be balanced with preserving the prime lakefront area at Stratford Drive. Chris Harrington (Austin WPD) expressed a strong preference for closing parking on the Polo Field area due to the environmental impacts on Barton Springs and Barton Creek.

Angela Richter (SBCA) recommended that the Working Group look beyond just shuttle service solutions, and consider a broad range of short term solution's, such as by using the "Smart Trips Austin" program (smartripsaustin.org/).

Clark Hancock (Vice Chair) recommends that the Working Group needs to identify a common vision and set of values before identifying any short-term recommendations. Gail Rothe (ZNA) suggested that each subgroup could work out its own set of values and goals. Roy Waley (Sierra) suggested that the Working Group or subgroups should start by identifying overall goals and then consider phasing in solutions as part of our recommendations.

James Russell requested that city staff provided data to support understanding the shuttle service solution by specifying the months, days and times when parking demand is most intense.

Gordon Kelly (Disc Golf) suggests that any parking reductions should be phased in over time, and that the city should allow any shuttle service solution to lose money in the short term as the public is educated and trained to change their behavior, noting that growing pains are likely to occur.

Angela Richter (SBCA) noted that the Working Group recommendations should include proposals for facilitating circulation inside the park, since the shuttle service may not bring visitors directly to every park attraction.

Clark Hancock (Vice Chair) empathized the Working Group recommendations will need to include education to the public about the parking limits in the park, and requested that staff provide a report on the status of their traffic and parking study.

Discussions of the Sub-groups

There was no substantive sub-group discussion since no meetings have occurred. Regarding the scheduling for meetings of the sub-groups, Jennifer Steverson announced that a meeting date doodle poll for Sub-Group B was completed, and that a meeting date doodle poll for Sub-Group A will be circulated shortly.

The Working Group sub-groups will attempt to meet before our next meeting on December 3.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 PM.

Agenda items for next meeting