

**SENATOR FRANK L. MADLA, JR. NATURAL AREA
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
ESD 8, 18515 SCENIC LOOP RD, GREY FOREST TX 78023
MAY 18, 2021 at 6:00 P.M.**

MINUTES

- I. CALL TO ORDER BY CHAIRPERSON at 6:01 PM
- II. RECORDING OF BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT- Jennifer Nottingham, Susan Beavin, Kate Feist, Anne McCarthy, Chris Porter (via Google Meet); also present is non-voting member and Grey Forest mayor, Mitch Thornton
- III. DECLARATION OF A QUORUM
- IV. PRESENTATIONS BY CITIZENS AND VISITORS- not applicable
- V. DISCUSS AND ACT ON APPROVAL OF MINUTES: April 20, 2021- minutes were approved with amendments.
- VI. FINANCIAL REPORT- Jennifer Nottingham advised the GF City Secretary is in the process of drafting the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget and the city is converting to QuickBooks.
- VII. CONSERVANCY REPORT- not applicable
- VIII. BOARD MEMBER REPORTS
- IX. DISCUSS AND TAKE ACTION (IF NECESSARY) ON THE FOLLOWING TOPICS: This notice is posted pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act-Texas Government Code 551.
 1. Biological and Landscape Management- Jennifer Nottingham advised she has learned Government Canyon has been trying to eradicate Johnson Grass for 10 years, with no success.
As such, Government Canyon has resorted to using chemical herbicides. She pointed out that Madla Park has Johnson Grass near the pavilion; it is difficult to eradicate because of rhizomes.
 2. Cottage Committee- Kate Feist advised she will be checking on the cottage soon.
 3. Trails Committee- Susan Beavin says she has some of the signs but she still needs 10 “dogs on a leash” signs and more “stay on the trail” signs. Jennifer Nottingham advised

they have been ordered, along with “no bikes” signs. The member discussed concerns about unauthorized trails being created by park-goers who go off-trail. The decision was made to explore options of using cedar logs to line the sides of the authorized trails. Kate Feist suggested native plants be identified and small signs placed near them, similar to what is seen in other local parks.

Jennifer Nottingham states she has noticed evidence of increased bike usage. Susan Beavin suggested additional signage denoting bicycles are prohibited and that photography permits are required. She also suggested reflective tape to help make the current brown signs more visible. Anne McCarthy suggested making sure signage has logos such as cameras or dogs to help draw attention to the signs.

Susan Beavin also recommended some park information, such as a map, be shared with emergency personnel. Jennifer Nottingham has advised she previously suggested emergency personnel conduct some training at the park so they can become familiarized with the park’s layout. She further advised the ESD-8 personnel have recently driven their Engine 1 in the park to maneuver around the boulders. She plans to request another drive-through session to further assess the boulders’ placement. Additionally, there is a low-hanging oak limb which will need to be trimmed for better access.

Jennifer Nottingham advised a sign needs to be placed on the service gate so that park-goers do not go into the prairie.

4. Communications Committee- Anne McCarthy states the website has some sort of back-end error which she has yet to identify and repair. Also, she has acquired past years’ mailing lists and will integrate them all and remove duplicates. She mentioned seeing a Google review this week which contained a question about whether the sunrise can be viewed from the park. She will post a reply reminding park-goers that the park does not open until sunrise. (After the meeting’s adjournment, a board member mentioned the sunrise actually comes from Rancho side.)

Anne McCarthy also recommended making the flyers (which are placed on park-goers’ cars) double-sided, with the front asking for donations and the backside explaining the rules about no bicycles, dogs being on-leash, etc.

5. City Police Department- Jennifer Nottingham recently walked the park trails with Sgt. Scott Ristow and Chief Rene Rodriguez, discussing the park rules and the instruction that should be given to the officers when they patrol the park. She advised she has observed officers park their cruisers but not exit them.

6. City Public Works- Jay Shipley and his crew have helped remove garbage and applied vinegar to weeds. Jennifer Nottingham expressed appreciation for their efforts.

X. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Fundraising discussion – the fundraising notices placed on park-goers' cars have been getting good results.

Susan Beavin suggested that the event proposed by Stuart Birnbaum, at the last meeting, be held in the winter as there may be less competition with other events. Kate Feist mentioned there is pent-up demand for in-person events, so it may be wise to capitalize on that desire and hold an event in September after all. Members also discussed holding skygazing events, or a slab cinema outdoor movie viewing at the helipad. There was discussion about disallowing parking in the parking lot but, rather, have participants park on Menchaca and then have golf carts to shuttle people in. Members also discussed having food trucks in the parking lot and charging them a percentage of their sales. Anne McCarthy and Kate Feist will explore the possibility of having such an event on September 18th (this date is near a full moon) and will report their findings at the next meeting. Anne McCarthy did a preliminary online search and determined an outdoor movie screen rental would cost \$450 +a \$30 fee for being outside Loop 1604.

Anne McCarthy mentioned the website, 32auctions.com, may be a resource for auctioning off the gala items which have been in storage since the 2020 event was cancelled. The site listing is free for the first 20 items. Jennifer Nottingham estimates there are 32 potential auction items. Anne McCarthy suggested utilizing some of the gala items as raffle items at the proposed September event.

Jennifer Nottingham mentioned the possibility of holding a Halloween-themed event.

XI: NEW BUSINESS

1. Discuss and act upon cave grate- Jennifer Nottingham advised Storms Duthie is looking for a welder with portable equipment. Mitch Thornton suggested the possibility of using limestone blocks (also known as butter blocks) to help block access.
2. Discuss and act upon removal of fallen cedar (done), & removal of Johnson Grass & beggars lice at the pavilion, and removal of oak limb which impedes fire dept. access- need permission from Arborist, Laurie Hawkins, to cut oak now, or wait until Oak Wilt restrictions are over.
3. Discuss and act upon tagging or removal of more invasives.

4. Discuss and act upon vinegarizing poison oak- this was discussed in the Biological and Landscape Management section (IX, 1) above.
5. Discuss and act upon trash removal- at next work session, members should bring trash bags to help remove trash.
6. Discuss and obtain members' written acknowledgement of the City of Grey Forest's memorandum regarding retention of work-related electronic messages/texts/emails- members were given copies of the memorandum to read and complete, signed copies were collected by Jen Nottingham to give to Miguel Cantu.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:02 PM

Meeting Minutes documented by María Ammerman

Meeting Minutes Approved by Chairperson:


