

**DRAFT - MINUTES
OF THE NEW BRAUNFELS RIVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING OF THURSDAY, AUGUST 17, 2023**

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

River Advisory Committee Members present: David Davenport, Darren Hill, Sarah Shea, Scott Roots, Keith Fontenot, Shane Wolf and Christopher Werk

City staff members present: River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles; Watershed Supervisor, Phillip Quast; River Operations Specialist, Katie Johnson; Patrol Lieutenant, Joe Robles; Park Ranger Superintendent, Marika Misangyi; and Park Ranger Assistant Superintendent, Meaghan McDonald

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A) Approval of Meeting Minutes for May 9, 2023 for the Joint River Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting.

4. CITIZENS' COMMUNICATIONS

This time is for citizens to address the Committee on issues and items of concerns not on this agenda. There will be no Committee action at this time.

No citizens' communication at this time.

6. STAFF REPORT

A) River Season Update

River Manager, Amy Niles, updated the committee on the 2023 river season so far. The lifeguards on the Comal are no longer on duty, police boats and police personnel are no longer in the water, there are no paddle boats on Landa Lake, and as observed by park rangers, more tubes are popping at the Weir Dam. These changes all correlate with the low water levels and slow river flow on the Comal River. Niles presented revenues and statistics recorded so far for the summer of 2023. For river revenues, July has brought in the most parking revenue since the City has started paid parking. In addition, the city

and river outfitters River Management Fees have been high compared to other river seasons after the reimplementation of the disposable container ban. Niles addressed river trash collection and concerns with the inaccuracy of date reporting in the past. Wanting feedback from committee members, she suggested that moving forward, the litter report will address only the number of mesh bags filled by trash contractors rather than attempting to convert that to a weight. Niles also discussed revamping a city wide, education campaign focusing on disposable container rules and regulations as there has been a higher amount of litter left behind in the last few years. Lastly, Niles showed a table depicting lifeguard saves and assists for the past five years. This table showed a steady decrease in both the number of saves and assists throughout the years.

Patrol Lieutenant, Joe Robles spoke on public safety and traffic concerns regarding river operations. He noted that guests' attitudes and behaviors have been fine, but there is a bigger concern around heat exhaustion and increased sun exposure. They are seeing more tubers get out at Prince Solms Park, because the float is long, and the weather is hot. Robles also expressed moving the public pick up closer to the Last Public Exit and to potentially have a designated spot for ride share pickups. Overall, Robles disclosed that traffic control has not been as challenging as in past river seasons, especially with Texas Tubes' patrons getting out at a separate exit.

Park Ranger Superintendent, Marika Misangyi, spoke on parking violations. She discussed how her team has been monitoring different parking zones, keeping track of warnings, and have written about 3,600 notices of violation this year. Misangyi predicted that notices of violations will be close to what they were in 2022. Most of the parking notices of violation are coming from the Prince Solms parking lot. Misangyi also noted that this year specifically, the park rangers have incorporated handheld translators to assist them in communicating with guests that do not speak English.

5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A) Discuss Possible Changes for Next Season

Niles opened the floor to committee members to brainstorm and discuss changes and possible recommendations for the 2024 river season. Staff will be able to take this feedback to collect more information and data to present back to the committee for

consideration at a later meeting. The changes discussed were the price increase of supplies, and thinking about reviewing the River Management Fee.

B) Discuss Possible Combination of River Advisory Committee and Watershed Advisory Committee

Niles discusses the idea of potentially combining the River Advisory and Watershed Advisory Committees. She stated that there would be an addition of watershed topics, including but not limited to storm water management plan, conservation plan, and drainage plan. Both committees would be dissolved, and the reapplication process would start. Committee members discussed having a couple of joint meetings before deciding and wanting to retain 3 members that are of a tourism or water recreation background.

7. **AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The following agenda items were stated for the next meeting:

A. Review the river fund and discuss increasing the River Management Fee

B. Review a five-year projection and budget plan

C. Improvement on signs

D. End of season Review

E. Continue discussion on possible changes for next year

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

This regular meeting adjourned at 4:55 P.M.

By: _____
DAVID DAVENPORT, CHAIR