

**DRAFT - MINUTES
OF THE NEW BRAUNFELS RIVER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING OF THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19, 2024**

AGENDA

1. CALL TO ORDER

River Advisory Committee Chairman, David Davenport, called this meeting to order at 4:00PM.

2. ROLL CALL

River Advisory Committee Members present: David Davenport, Sarah Shea, Shane Wolf, Scott Roots, and Dick Hillyer.

City Staff present: River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles; River Operations Specialist, Katie Johnson; Watershed Supervisor, Phillip Quast; Parks and Recreation Assistant Director, Geronimo Aguirre, Park Ranger Superintendent, Marika Misangyi; Assistant Park Ranger Superintendent, Meaghan McDonald; Patrol Lieutenant, Jace Hobbs; and Patrol Lieutenant, Joe Robles.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman, David Davenport, called for a motion of approval for the July 18th meeting minutes. Committee member Shane Wolf made the first motion to approve and committee member Sarah Shea seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

A) Approval of Meeting Minutes for July 18, 2024 for the River Advisory Committee 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.

There was no Citizen's Communication at this time. Though New Braunfels resident, Colie Reno, was present and participated in discussion throughout the meeting.

6. STAFF REPORT

A) 2024 River Season Update

River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles, presented to the committee a quick overview of the end of season reports, stating that she would

go more in depth at the upcoming joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on October 8th, 2024. She gave a summary of the River Management Fees collected for the river season, emphasizing July was a very slow month due to rain and the hurricane in the Houston area. Niles reported that the River Outfitter guests brought in about 78% of River Management Fees and the City owned river booth guests brought in about 22%, which has been the standard for the past few years. Niles stated that even with a lower collection of River Management Fees, the parking revenue for the season was still good. She reported that the SCUBA numbers in August went up for litter collection within the Comal River, and noted that lifeguard saves and assists, like the previous year, were minimal because of slow river flows. Niles emphasized that there were fewer police overtime hours working rivers this season, but more citations were written than last year. Park Ranger Superintendent, Marika Misangyi, spoke on parking citations that her team wrote for the season, stating that they wrote less than last season, but are not seeing as many parking spaces being turned over, emphasizing that more people are coming to stay for the whole day in Hinman Island Park.

5. DISCUSSION AND ACTION

A) Presentation and Discussion of Faust Street Bridge Staff Recommendation

River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles, explained to the committee that the area around the Faust Street Bridge has become more of a problem over the years and especially this summer. It's become a popular place for people to visit presumably because it is free and it is a relatively hidden area. Niles listed the issues of concern which included: the safety of visitors, the safety of staff - specifically first responders, the exorbitant amount of trash left behind by visitors, consistent trespassing on private property, and vandalism to the historic bridge as well as the mill property. Committee member, Dick Hillyer, asked if the City of New Braunfels was paying to have this area cleaned up even though the majority of the property is state owned. Niles confirmed that the City has always had some trash and litter clean up there, but due to the increase the City had to pay a trash contractor an additional \$13,000 just to go down to this area and pick up litter and service six trash receptacles. To supplement this, Parks and Recreation staff goes down and picks up trash as well. Niles presented a PowerPoint of pictures that showed the committee the

issues at hand. She emphasized that outside of the bridge itself, this area was not designated park land and only a portion of the land under the bridge was city right of way. She discussed the number of calls the police department and fire department receive, noting that the calls have significantly increased since 2020. Niles also explained that the majority of citations written are for non-residents. Committee members asked what the City's recommendation was. Niles and Patrol Lieutenant, Joe Robles, said they would recommend closing it off by using a gate similar to what was put up during the pandemic, but with sturdier material and with a gate entrance for City staff and emergency responders. Committee member, Dick Hillyer, asked if the fence would be monitored once it is installed. Robles replied that it would be monitored by police, but he is hoping they can reduce the number of officers there which would allow them to focus on other important matters. Hillyer also asked how much a fence would cost in which Niles stated \$23,000. She added that she was not sure where this money would be funded from yet, but likely a River Fund expense. Niles concluded this presentation by stating that this topic would be revisited and discussed at the joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on October 8th, 2024.

B) Discuss and Consider Edits to the Code of Ordinances Chapter 138-167 (e)2 and 138-167 (f)2 to Change the Annual Water Recreation Shuttle Vehicle Permit Deadline to May 15th.

River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles, explained to the committee that at the beginning of this year's river season, a few river outfitters requested that in the future, the deadline for their shuttle insurance to be due later in May. They explained that it is expensive to pay for the insurance days to weeks in advance of them actually starting to shuttle patrons. Niles stated that May 15th would be the preferred date since it would help the outfitters and still give ample time for City staff to review insurance documents and get everything organized for shuttle permits. Chairman David Davenport asked the committee members if they would like to take action and approve the date change. Committee member, Shane Wolf made a motion to approve, and Scott Roots seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

C) Discuss and Consider River Fund Revenue Fee Recommendations for 2025 for Paid Parking and the River Management Fee.

River and Watershed Manager, Amy Niles, presented the committee a proposal to raise the River Management Fee (RMF) from \$2.00 to \$3.00. She explained that it has remained \$2.00 for the past nine years and

raising it to \$3.00 would help create revenue that could be used toward recurring yearly expenses. Niles stated that there were projects done this year that should be done every year. These projects include: annual funding for education and outreach of City Ordinances, parking lot maintenance, sign replacement, one-time repairs and improvements, river infrastructure project, and crosswalk and striping maintenance. Niles explained that when the River Fund was receiving a General Fund Transfer, some of these projects were being cut to make it by financially. Moving forward, the City would like to do these things annually, and increasing the RMF could help ensure they get done. Committee member, Scott Roots, asked if the River Fund was still receiving a Solid Waste Transfer. Niles confirmed but stated that things could change in the future. Committee member Sarah Shea made a motion to approve this increase, and Scott Roots seconded. However, committee member, Shane Wolf made a motion to table this item until the next meeting, stating that he would like to take this information back to the river outfitters and revisit it before the joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on October 8th, 2024. The motion passed unanimously.

The second item Niles presented for discussion was expanding paid parking on Fair Lane to seven days a week. Currently, this parking zone only charges on weekends and holidays from May 1st-Labor Day. This location would continue to be free for residents who have a Resident River Parking Pass. Niles explained that to make this switch a City Ordinance would need to be changed and there would be minimal expenses to change current signage.

Lastly, Niles presented for discussion, the idea to expand paid parking to Cypress Bend Park. The proposal would be to have paid parking seven days a week for \$20 per space. Residents would be able to park for free with a Resident River Parking Pass. Niles explained that there are currently 83 defined parking spaces with about 25 additional unstriped parallel spaces. She stated that the River Fund currently pays for staff and a trash contractor to be at Cypress Bend without generating revenue at this location. Adding paid parking could generate revenue that could be put back towards much needed projects and encourage residents to come to the park. The committee members stated that they would like to discuss the paid parking matters with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee on October 8th, 2024.

New Braunfels river outfitter, James Reno (Colie), attended the meeting and asked if the River Fund was paying for cleaning up litter and trash in Cypress Bend Park. Niles confirmed that the City did pay a

trash contractor to go out there. In addition, seasonal park rangers are also stationed there throughout the river season. Reno then stated that he would like to see the River Advisory Committee and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee consider adding paid parking in Cypress Bend, with the idea that non-residents who spend the day there enjoying the park, could help create revenues used to keeping it clean and well maintained. Before concluding this agenda item, committee member Shane Wolf asked if the City had considered reopening Hinman Island Dr. on the weekends, noting that there are paid parking spaces there that are not utilized on the weekends. Niles replied that having that street opened caused a lot of traffic congestion and there was not enough staff available to monitor the area.

D) Discuss and Consider Joint River Advisory Committee and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Meeting on October 8, 2024.

Based on Items A, B, and C, the committee decided what they would bring to the joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board on October 8th, 2024. The River Advisory Committee will meet an hour before the joint meeting to discuss increasing the River Management Fee and revisit adding paid parking to Cypress Bend Park.

7. **ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

1. Discuss paid parking at Cypress Bend
2. Discuss increasing the River Management Fee to \$3.00

8. **ADJOURNMENT**

This meeting was adjourned at 5:19 P.M.

By: _____
David Davenport, Chair