



# Agenda

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## **Parks and Open Space Advisory Commission**

**The Barn at Frenchy's Field**

**Corner of Osage and Agua Fria**

**Tuesday, August 17**

**3:00 -5:00 p.m.**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Review and Approval of the July minutes
4. Approval of the Agenda
5. Old Business
  - Parks Division Update
6. New Business
  - Prairie Dog Management – Paula Martin, Wildlife Biologist
7. Possible Reports:
  - Tom Agard: Organized Youth Sports and Survey / Workforce Development / Trails to Schools
  - Jessie Esparza: Community Gardens
  - Marge VeneKlasen:
  - Anna Hansen: Art in Parks / MPO Meetings and the MPO Bicycle Committee meetings Disc Golf
  - Daniel Coriz: NW Quadrant / BMX
  - Orallynn Guerrerortiz: Tierra Contenta Master Plan
  - Joe Lehm: Bike paths and connections / Skate Parks
  - Patrick Torres: Community Gardens /Tree City
  - Sandie Taylor: Ten Park Histories on the Portal / Tree City
  - Bette Booth: Graffiti / Youth Involvement / Prairie Dogs
6. Public Comments
7. Confirm date and time for the next meeting

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**CITY OF SANTA FE**  
**PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**AUGUST 17, 2010**

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**MEETING MINUTES  
FOR THE  
PARKS AND OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2010**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the City of Santa Fe Parks and Open Space Advisory Commission was called to order by Chair Bette Booth, on this date at approximately 3:00 pm at Frenchy's Field, Agua Fria Road, Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call indicated the presence of a quorum as follows:

**Members Present**

Bette Booth, Chair  
Tom Agard  
Daniel Coriz  
Oralynn Guerrerortiz  
Anna Hansen  
Sandra Taylor  
Patrick Torres  
Marg Veneklasen

**Members Absent**

Joe Mr. Lehm (excused)

**Staff Present**

Fabian Chavez, Parks Director, City of Santa Fe  
Jesse Esparza, Parks Department

**Others Present**

Paula Martin  
Justine Witlox-Becker  
Gregory Zeigler  
Councilor Patti Bushee  
Mayor David Coss  
Charmaine Clair, Stenographer

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES-July 20, 2010**

Under Member's Absent, Ms. Veneklasen should be shown as unexcused.

**Ms. Guerrerortiz moved to approve the Minutes of July 20, 2010 as amended. Ms. Hansen seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Chair Booth said she would move the Prairie dog Management Report up on the Agenda because Councilor Bushee had to leave early.

**Ms. Taylor moved to approve the Agenda as amended. Mr. Agard seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Prairie Dog Management – Paula Martin, Wildlife Biologist**

Ms. Martin thanked the commission and said it meant a lot to her to be able to do the presentation. A summary of her presentation follows:

- Five species exist of prairie dogs; the Gunnison species resides in Santa Fe and has been around for millions of years.
- All species of prairie dogs were in peril and the Gunnison prairie dogs were listed as endangered for a portion of their range. Genetic studies were being conducted to determine if they should be listed throughout their range.
- The Gunnison was known as a keystone species; they benefit everything in the eco system including vegetation, soil and other species, the burrowing owl and the black foot ferret among them couldn't live without prairie dogs.
- Gunnison prairie dogs take about 8 weeks to emerge from hibernation and females were only fertile for about two hours for a day out of the year and half of the females breed 3-5 pups survived.
- Gunnison prairie dogs live in complex social structures called wards and wards created a colony. It was important to understand how to work within that structure.
- The bulk of research was on the black tailed prairie dog, especially pertaining to management. There were many areas where the information could overlap or translate to the Gunnison prairie dog.
- In Santa Fe the Gunnison have experienced a serious decline since the 1990's and was estimated about 200 acres were destroyed. Small private land, school property, right of ways and parks were being looked at for small populations; the only colony was at the College of Santa Fe.
- At least six groups participated in considering which parks could be long term suitable for prairie dogs. Most were conservation areas on the College of Santa Fe campus, an area along Siringo Road and Frenchy's Field, Alameda River walkway, handball courts, Ashbaugh Park and the Chavez Center.
- The perception of prairie dog towns in town could look differently than in grasslands, but prairie dogs actually lived in healthy grasslands in town; each mound turned the soil and aerated the ground and promoted fresh, short term vegetation. It was important to develop a short and long term vision of where and how prairie dogs could remain.
- Research was being done on birth control for small populations of prairie dogs and on a substance that could be put in grain to help prairie dogs develop resistance to plague.

Chair Bushee said she understood the Gunnison prairie dogs wouldn't carry plague.

Ms. Martin explained they were victims and died from the plague.

- Everyone agreed that prairie dogs if on athletic fields and areas designated for other uses shouldn't stay. It was important to manage prairie dogs as a colony in their social structure and to collaborate with adjacent land owners to prevent need for relocation.

Ms. Martin said the Adios plan in 2006 addressed the prairie dogs in town. She thought prairie dog advocates, city officials and attorneys for the grant foundations should be incorporated into long-term plans in areas developed for relocation, to address issues that were a threat to the prairie dogs.

Management recommendations were to manage the prairie dogs as colonies, not separate designations; decide which locations could continue to reside; integrate management of the prairie dogs as opposed to doing something that caused conflict and having to remove them. The prairie dogs should be considered along with the other planning measures.

Ms. Martin said a list of parks where the prairie dogs existed and might remain was being updated. She talked about potential sites.

Chair Bushee asked how the prairie dogs could be managed as colonies if they were in different places.

Ms. Martin said there were so few prairie dogs left in Santa Fe the number of times that would have to be addressed was six or seven and would be simple to view on the map.

She said the Fish and Wildlife Service determined the Gunnison prairie dog was *warranted precluded* and they were on the candidate list. She said the game and fish studies had a state plan to recover the species and determined about 2,200 prairie dog acres was lost to development and prairie dogs continued to be eliminated them from private and public sites.

Ms. Veneklasen said she sat on a board that struggled to get fields where children wouldn't break their ankles and it appeared Ms. Martin thought there wasn't a problem. She said there was a problem.

Mayor Coss said playing fields were the most difficult to manage and it was frustrating to put \$5 million into Franklin Miles Park and have it chewed up before it opened. He said there had to be a way to keep prairie dogs off of the playing fields. He asked if other cities had success with barriers to keep the prairie dogs off the fields.

Ms. Martin said that no one would suggest prairie dogs stay on athletic fields. She said Boulder (Colorado) had been successful and managed a giant prairie dog colony with several hundred acres of open space next to a playing field. She thought flat barriers on the fields helped. She suggested complementary measures be used that had been successful in Boulder, like reverse dispersal. She said biologically prairie dogs had fewer offspring with that.

Councilor Bushee said Councilor Trujillo's ordinance had opened the dialogue for discussion that in the past was centered on private development and was now centered on public land and parks within the city. She thought the discussion should take place at the full council level. She said the list (of prairie dog sites) would probably be amended as councilors who represented different parks were heard from.

She said the ordinance had to be amended when any redevelopment was done, like the Alameda River walkway or Chavez Center. She said she would ask that a series of public hearings be held because there were things to be taken into account and the entire management plan should be re-looked at.

Councilor Bushee wanted specific sites and said 599, possibly the airport; Frenchy's and the College of Santa Fe could be sites. She said appropriate habitat should be looked at and should be close enough to town for human interaction.

Ms. Martin thought with discussions there was a way to address the issues, concerns and needs.

Ms. Veneklasen asked Mr. Chavez to comment on the cost to relocate prairie dogs.

Mr. Chavez said over the past few years' the relocation, including the airport, cost \$299,000. He said it was difficult to determine the survival rate because it was difficult to monitor. The current site could provide more accurate records because BLM numbers would be accurate.

The reason a comprehensive management plan was needed was discussed along with the size of areas and the number of prairie dogs in one area. It was noted that multi-jurisdictional cooperation to remove prairie dogs was important to prevent the need to relocate them; prairie dogs would regulate their numbers if prevented from dispersing.

Effective barriers were discussed and that working within the social structures could possibly eliminate the need for barriers.

Chair Booth reviewed the available sites: Frenchy's Field, the handball courts and Chavez Center.

Mr. Agard said the prairie dogs were the issue today and it was really an urban wildlife management plan and had to do with the importance of preserving green and open spaces.

Mayor Coss said he appreciated Ms. Martin's presentation. He suggested the airport and the state trust land be added to the list of sites. He said he would work with the Parks Commission to decide where prairie dogs should be and not be. He said when a park was rehabilitated barriers should be put up to keep the prairie dogs out and Santa Fe should have a good plan of where prairie dogs would be and ensure that cost was built in.

He said he had worked with the state land office for a long time and there was never a documented case of any kid or animal that broke their ankle in a prairie dog hole. He thought it was a management question and said a reasonable management plan could be developed.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- Parks Division Update

A summary of the Parks update follows:

*Ragle Park*- started; the batting cage was down. Western Summit had the plan for the BMX and would provide a letter of intent and the contractor at Ragle agreed to build the track. New irrigation and sod had to be put in for play by March.

*Larragoite Park*- finished; fences would be down in a couple of weeks.

*Frenchy's Field*- two weeks from completion. Tuesday, September 7 at 10:30 a.m. a special opening would be held with a ribbon cutting. The hope was it could be coordinated with the National Parks Service Director's Conference held in Santa Fe at the same time. A solar light would be put in for people to see how the lighting worked. A national magazine would do an article on the product.

*Candalero Park*- design ready and waiting on cost estimates.

*Calle Loca Park*- under design.

*GCC Park*- plan designs were finished and waiting for signatures.

*Colonial Prisma Park* and *Tierra Contenta*- schematics were finished. A meeting would be held with the architects to go into construction documents. The survey would be ordered for the *Tierra Contenta* activity node regional parkway and an RFP would go out in the next week.

*Power Plant Park*- opens September 1 with an opening ceremony to be held later.

*Ashbaugh Park*- construction documents finished.

*NW Quadrant* - the fence kept illegal dumping, illegal camping, trespassing, etc. out and now had a weak link on the east side. A meeting would be held to decide security and signage to be done.

*Las Acequias Park*- under construction; should be finished in a month.

*Park at Del Rio*- plans for the other sections had passed design review and moved to construction documents with the hope to be in construction in the fall.

*Pueblos Del Sol Trails*- should be finished in three weeks.

*Prince Park*- on hold. Teens wanted a memorial for the kids killed in the car accident and a place was found that could work. A movement from the National Parks Service (NPS) on the books for signage along the pathway had to clear archaeology and would be paid for by NPS.

Mr. Chavez said the commission would see maintenance drop as priorities changed with schools opening, Indian Market and Zozobra and the safety issues on the trails would take precedence over the parks.

#### **REPORTS:**

- Tom Agard: Organized Youth Sports and Survey / Workforce Development / Trails to Schools

Mr. Agard brought in the CDC (Center for Disease Control) report on obesity. He said it was important to everyone and was one reason he got involved with youth sports. He said 30% of the population in New Mexico was considered morbidly obese and anything that could be done to get the kids out and engaged in the environment was important.

He said New Mexico was cited for a federally funded program. He asked to have Patty Morris, the coordinator for Healthy Kids, on the agenda to do a presentation. He agreed to contact her.

He said he was the coordinator for Chaparral for Safe Routes to School and 90% of the routes were identified that were safe routes. He said they would ask for volunteers to position along the way. Safe Routes would have a big rally in October and was gearing up to have routes established and parent volunteers and a telephone and email tree.

He said at the elementary school, the front access was widened to 10 feet to make bicycle and pedestrian accessible and to match a southern route through Ragle Park and a northeastern route to the back of Chaparral Elementary School that connected to a city trail.

- Jessie Esparza: Community Gardens

There was no report.

- Anna Hansen: Art in Parks / MPO/Bicycle Committee / Disc Golf

Ms. Hansen said the MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) meeting cancelled; the bicycle committee would meet next month. She said she reported on art in the parks last month and tried to contact Ms. Pratt and would continue to try.

- Daniel Coriz: NW Quadrant / BMX

Mr. Coriz said the BMX Fifth Annual 2010 Trail Jam was held July 31 and 75 people attended. He said the work was all volunteered by BMX jumpers and mountain bikers (ages 15-20) and took 2-4 hours every night for three weeks.

He said a parent (Randy Flores) at the BMX track at MRC (Municipal Recreation Complex) was interested in starting a racing program. He would go through the ABA (American Bicycle Association) to set up the races. He said ABA would lease the track from the city and hold races one or two times a week and charge a few dollars for an event per rider. There would be a \$40 membership fee.

Mr. Chavez said the track was free but the MRC was an enterprise and to enter a sanction event there was a charge. He said if the track was leased, that required a permit because the track was open to the public.

Chair Booth asked if the water issue was resolved and was told it hadn't been checked. Mr. Coriz was asked to call John Allen, the golf course supervisor, if there was still a problem.

- Joe Lehm: Bike paths and connections / Skate Parks

Chair Booth said she met with Mr. Lehm and Mr. Coriz for lunch to discuss moving DeVargas, etc. and Brian Drypolcher wanted to meet with them on September 3. He said his concern was that nothing could be done for \$100,000. She thought small things could be done to make the kids happy that wouldn't cost a lot of money, similar to what was done at Franklin Miles Park. She said there were high expectations something would be done at Franklin Miles this summer.

Mr. Coriz said he had another ledge maintenance problem and was told to call Mr. Chávez.



- Patrick Torres: Community Gardens /Tree City

Mr. Torres said the committee hadn't met since April because the crew was busy during the growing season. He said Mr. Bob Wood was working with an artist to get the Tree City banner developed.

- Sandra Taylor: Ten Park Histories on the Portal / Tree City

Ms. Taylor said she and Ms. Esparza were waiting until things slowed down, probably October.

- Bette Booth: Graffiti / Youth Involvement / Prairie Dogs

Previously discussed.

- Oralynn Guerrerortiz: Tierra Contenta Master Plan

Ms. Guerrerortiz said the Southside Plaza was being worked on and asked Mr. Chávez the schedule.

Mr. Chavez said it was Chip Lilienthal's project and was about a 90 day build out. The footprint was identified and the features were picked up by the artist but renovation cost had to be determined.

Chair Booth asked that the infrastructure for the fountain be available if money was found. She was told there was enough money for the pipes.

Ms. Guerrerortiz said she wanted to get involved and she talked with Dave Thomas. He felt he had everything needed. She said on the regional park, the city wouldn't let go of the land until the land was transferred to the city and it was still held by the Tierra Contenta Corporation.

Mr. Chavez met with Jim Squires on the disc golf course and was given a plan for a 27 hole course with the costs. He said he gave Councilor Dominguez a couple of locations and said a 18 hole course with bare necessities ran \$20,000-\$25,000.

He said ADA issues hadn't been addressed and the regulations were vague. He said disc golf was a hiking/walking sport and trails wouldn't be built. He asked Mr. Squires to re-design the course once the GIS for 18 holes was received and for him to be specific about the tees and pins. That would be taken back to Councilor Dominguez.

Ms. Hansen asked if 18 holes would be enough to hold a tournament. Mr. Chavez replied it was enough for a tournament but several courses were needed for a regional or national tournament.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Justine Witlox-Becker said she asked Mayor Coss for some parks to be made tourist's attractions. She said prairie dogs were the top attraction in Lubbock in different parks and at the zoo. She suggested Siringo Road and Frenchy's Field be included in the sites and said the community should celebrate that such a living American heritage was in their town.

Mr. Ziegler said he was a fanatical prairie dog feeder. He said Ms. Martin accented the positive but there was a nasty element of the American culture that slaughtered prairie dogs. He told of hundreds of prairie dogs killed in a few minutes and entire colonies wiped out. He said it was why relocation was kept a secret and why a fragment of the Gunnison prairie dogs should be preserved in the cities until

they could get them protected. He said that sadistic behavior translated to a similar behavior against people.

Laureen Peppersack said she was a videographer with a background in science. She said the prairie dogs were an amazing eco system and offered an opportunity to show children firsthand how societies of animals could live together. She said she worked on a documentary of the Alameda colony because they were unique and it was appropriate to take measures to ensure the small societies were protected.

She thought the prairie dogs could be a great marketing and promotion tool and an opportunity for children to see that a city's urban growth could live in cooperation with the indigenous population. She said old buildings, old trees and certainly the wildlife had to be respected. She thought for children to respect the animals and get involved in their habitat could often be used to break cycles of abuse.

Denise Saccone said she met Friday with Councilors Calvert and Bushee and members from the conservation community. She requested the decision to remove prairie dogs on West Alameda be delayed until that area could be re-evaluated. Ms. Martin agreed to look at the area. She said Councilor Calvert was open to re-visiting the plan and it would be a disservice to prairie dogs and the community if every alternative and possibility wasn't looked at.

**DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT MEETING:** Tuesday, September 21, 2010.

Chair Booth confirmed the next meeting on the September 21<sup>st</sup> and said the commission would visit some of the parks as suggested. Ms. Esparza agreed to arrange transportation and would contact everyone with a time and place.

In the October meeting the commission would discuss healthy kids and art in the parks.

**ADJOURN:**

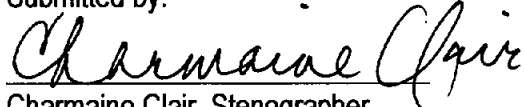
**Ms. Hansen moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Agard seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous voice vote.**

*Having no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 4:54 p.m.*

Approved by:

  
Bette Booth, Chair

Submitted by:

  
Charmaine Clair, Stenographer