



Agenda Item: Discuss and Consider Eligibility of Galveston Adventures Helicopter Tours for New Agreement

Background: The Park Board of Trustees contracts with local and regional small business owners, entrepreneurs and minority owned businesses to provide goods and services to island residents and tourists who visit Galveston Island.

Oversight of the Concessionaire Partner program is lead by the Guest Experience Manager with support from the Parks Coordinator. The Parks and Amenities Committee provides program guidance and reviews proposals for new types of concessionaire businesses. The Board of Trustees approves which concessionaire partners are awarded agreements.

In June 2021, Galveston Adventures Helicopter Tours joined the concessionaire partner program after the agreement with Oasis Helicopter Tours expired. Galveston Adventures holds an agreement which expires on October 31, 2022.

The Board of Trustees Bylaws allows for an offer of Right of First Refusal to be offered to concessionaire partner with expiring agreements if they are found to be eligible for such an offer. The criteria for eligibility include:

- Following the terms and conditions of the fully executed agreement
- Implementing and maintaining the Standards of Operation
- Proper remittance of payments
- Proper attention given to issues which arise
- Proper and valid permitting for the operation, as applicable

Galveston Adventures has been responsive to items needing attention including the Stewart Beach Drainage Project, permits needed for improvements to the site, noise complaints from citizens and remittance of fees. In October 2021, the Parks and Amenities Committee was presented with noise complaints and recommended Galveston Adventures be given opportunity to address the issues and implement new procedures.

Addressing the complaints included pilot training to reduce flap, testing for noise at different altitudes, review of routes regulated by the Federal Aviation Administration, examination of equipment and decibel readings in multiple neighborhoods. The number of complaints received in the first few months of operation in 2021 centered around two helicopters operating. The agreement specifies one helicopter may be in operation, and the second helicopter was taken out of service immediately upon clarification of the terms of the agreement. Complaints have decreased significantly over the past year of operation; however, staff does continue to receive comments about helicopter noise.

The Parks and Amenities Committee unanimously voted to recommend Galveston Adventure Helicopter Tours be eligible for Right of First Refusal and, upon waiving this right and accepting all terms and conditions, be awarded another concessionaire agreement.

Staff Recommendation: Approval of the recommendation by the Parks & Amenities Committee

Funding Source (if applicable): N/A