

Media Contact

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Galveston Park Board Update: July 27, 2017

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees held its regular meeting at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday, July 25 at Park Board Plaza. Below is an update of news from the boardroom.

Park Board Develops Plan for Beach Cleaning Vendor Program

On Tuesday, the Park Board gave direction to staff regarding a long-term plan that will allow third-party vendors to operate heavy beach cleaning equipment on the island under the Park Board's federally authorized permit. The vendor program would allow the Park Board to assign geographic areas of the beach to vendors who agree to abide by permit requirements with no liability to the Park Board. The Park Board is the only entity on the island that has a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for mechanized beach cleaning – the result of a lengthy application process that cost \$100,000. The permit, valid through 2022, requires strict compliance to environmental regulations, including rules related to operating equipment and protecting wildlife.

Park Board Sets Allowances for Employee Pay Increase Program

The Park Board has approved new parameters for the organization's merit-based annual pay increase program. On Tuesday, the board set a cap on the amount of funds that can be applied to annual raises for full-time employees, providing each Park Board department with a pool of money equivalent to 3% of combined departmental salaries. From that pool of money, annual merit-based pay increases can be awarded to eligible employees at the discretion of the department director. In order to be eligible to receive a pay increase, employees must work year-round and meet or exceed expectations as outlined in annual employee appraisals. The increases must fall within predetermined salary ranges assigned to each position and will take effect during the 2017-2018 fiscal year. Until last year, the Park Board awarded its employees an annual cost-of-living increase plus bonuses and incentives. In 2016, the organization adopted an annual merit-based system designed to reward performance and align employees with the organization's mission.

Park Board Reports Record Tourism Over July 4th Weekend

According to an analysis of hotel statistics, a record number of visitors came to Galveston over 4th of July weekend this year. Hotel occupancy increased 14.1%, average daily rate increased from \$185 to \$202 and hotel revenue increased 20.3% from \$3,723,123 in 2016 to \$4,478,719 in 2017. The Galveston Island Visitors Center received 1,177 visitors during the weekend compared to 545 in 2016. Revenues at Park Board-managed beach parks increased 103% to \$253,148 from \$124,512 in 2016. Beach Patrol staff responded to 33 medical calls, performed 23 rescues, and 55 enforcement actions. Beach Patrol staff also performed 16,779 preventative actions that included moving swimmers away from potentially hazardous areas. Convention and Visitors Bureau Director Meg Winchester said good weather, fireworks shows and special events at the beach parks were factors for the increases.

Park Board Elects Officers

On Tuesday, the Park Board elected the following officers: Joyce Calver McLean, Chairwoman; Spencer Priest, Vice Chairman and Maureen Patton, Secretary/Treasurer.

Park Board Appoints Committee Members

At its meeting Tuesday, Park Board Chairwoman Joyce McLean Calver appointed trustees to Park Board advisory committees:

Tourism Development Advisory Committee: Maureen Patton, Chairwoman; John Zendt, Vice Chairman; Will Wright and Victor Viser committee members

Beach Management Advisory Committee: Victor Viser, Chairman; Rocky Sullivan, Vice Chairman
East End Lagoon Advisory Committee: Steven Creitz, Vice Chairman
Parks and Amenities Advisory Committee: Spencer Priest, Chairman; Steven Creitz, Vice Chairman
Downtown Oversight Committee: Joyce Calver McLean, Chairwoman; Maureen Patton, Vice Chairwoman
Finance Committee: John Zendt, Chairman; Rocky Sullivan, Spencer Priest, Will Wright and Victor Viser, committee members
McLean appointed the following Park Board staff and trustees to serve as members of the following citywide committees:
City of Galveston Trolley Ad Hoc Committee: Kelly de Schaun
Cavalla Historical Foundation: Spencer Priest
Moody Gardens Foundation: Joyce Calver McLean
Galveston Industrial Development Corporation: Spencer Priest
Galveston Island Convention Center Oversight Committee: Joyce Calver McLean

Park Board Approves Amendment to Concessionaire Agreements

At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board approved an amendment to its concessionaire agreements that will cause them to expire after peak season on Oct. 31. Previously, the contracts expired based on the date they became valid. Park Board staff reported that 44 existing agreements will be amended. The changes are aimed at reducing business disruption in cases when concessionaires change hands during the peak season.

About the Park Board of Trustees

The Park Board of Trustees oversees beach maintenance and tourism development on Galveston Island, including operations for beach cleaning, the Galveston Island Beach Patrol and the Galveston Island Convention & Visitors Bureau. For more information on the Park Board of Trustees, please visit www.galvestonparkboard.org.

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