



# **GALVESTON** PARK BOARD

## **News from the Board Room**

These updates highlight the key discussions from the meeting of the Park Board of Trustees and City Council of Galveston held on July 31, 2023. The Park Board and the City met to discuss a series of items of interest for both groups; no voting took place.

### **Beach Patrol Operations Temporarily Located in Trailers**

In a recent decision by the Trustees and Council, the purchase of Beach Patrol temporary trailers was approved and orders for units will be placed as soon as possible. During the next Trustee meeting, Park Board staff will provide updates on the ongoing process.

### **Park Board to Report HOT to City Biannually**

Park Board staff will collaborate with City staff to potentially reduce the transfer of Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) funds to the Park Board from four times a year to two times a year. Reporting of quarterly expenditures will continue as usual. Both entities' staff will work together to address HOT deposit, collections, and allocations, aiming to minimize transfers and improve efficiency. The outcome of these discussions will be updated at the upcoming Trustee meeting. In 2015, the City of Galveston transferred the collection of HOT to the Park Board, resulting in a successful increase in HOT collections by \$14.3 million (94%) from FY2016 to FY2022.

In fall 2022, City Council passed an ordinance mandating that all HOT funds collected by the Park Board be held within the City's bank accounts. As part of this process, the City will distribute operational funds to the Park Board on a semiannual basis. Reporting of quarterly expenditures will continue.

### **Park Board and City to Continue Collaborating on Capital Improvement**

City Council agreed to prompt discussion with the Park Board about any item that does not receive unconditional approval from the proposed Capital Improvement Plan. This dialogue will be scheduled either during one of their regularly convened meetings or at the next joint meeting between the Park Board and the City Council. Park Board staff will closely monitor this approval process and keep Park Board staff informed about the subsequent steps and actions.

### **Park Board and City to Update Interlocal Agreement**

Park Board staff will engage with City staff to modify the current interlocal agreement between the two organizations, incorporate operational agreements, and work together to establish a timeline for the execution of changes. Park Board staff will update trustees on these discussions at the next Park Board meeting.

### **Park Board to Lead Efforts on Seawall Emergency Ramps**

Park Board staff proposed the establishment of two emergency ramps to increase accessibility for first responders and emergency personnel. Park Board staff is currently in the process of creating an IDIQ

(indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity) to identify professional services such as engineering firms capable of executing the required permitting and regulatory tasks. Before the next joint meeting, staff will provide updates on the progress.

The necessity for emergency access has risen due to beach nourishment west of 61st street. Presently, in the event of an incident anywhere along the two-mile stretch of newly created beach between 61st and 89th street, the 61st street access ramp is the sole point of entry for lifeguards, EMS, and fire personnel, creating a potentially hazardous situation during busy summer days.

#### **Park Board to Begin Planning and Construction of East Beach Main Entrance**

The Park Board is prepared to initiate all approved processes outlined in the current fiscal year budget to relocate the Grand Entrance of East Beach to the western gate. Anticipating City Council's approval, the expenditures for finalizing this transformation are included in the fiscal year 2023-2024 budget. A report on the progress will be presented to City Council during the next joint meeting.

Currently, the primary entrance to East Beach is located off Boddeker Road on the far eastern edge of the park, which often experiences flooding, making access to the park challenging. The Park Board will enhance the gate on the western edge of the park, adjacent to Apffel Park Road, making it the new primary entrance. Additionally, the Park Board's tourism department is currently undertaking a wayfinding project that will consider the need to direct traffic down Apffel Park Road, assuring previous visitors to East Beach redirect from Boddeker Road.

#### **Park Board to Revisit Access at East End Lagoon**

Park Board staff will commence the development of access plans for East End Lagoon, one of the only remaining coastal prairies in Texas. The Park Board will conduct studies and explore alternatives for Boddeker Road and its declining condition. Trustees will ensure that this study is incorporated into the capital improvement plan for the years 2025-2028 or as directed by City Council. The Park Board was awarded a \$1.4 million grant to construct an open-air pavilion, extend the trail system, and enhance the amenities available at East End Lagoon.

#### **Park Board Proposes Alcohol Sales at Dellanera Park**

City Council will assess the potential approval of alcohol sales at the park through an ordinance. Park Board staff will closely monitor these deliberations and inform trustees of any updates at the next Park Board meeting. Dellanera RV Park is the only RV Park in Galveston that offers direct access to the waterfront. Pocket Park 1 also attracts many visitors to the Park Board managed gift shop at Dellanera. There is a notable demand for alcohol sales within the park, presenting an opportunity to significantly increase unrestricted revenues.

#### **City of Galveston Proposes Wastewater Treatment Plant at Seawolf Park**

The City proposed implementing an expandable wastewater treatment plant at Seawolf Park. Park Board staff will closely monitor this discussion and inform Park Board trustees of City Council's deliberations regarding approval at the next Park Board meeting.

Following the destruction caused by Hurricane Ike, the wastewater treatment plant at Seawolf Park was rendered inoperable. The absence of proper infrastructure has resulted in the use of port-o-potties and

manual waste transfer within the park. The high visitation rates to this popular destination, known for its fishing and museum attractions, have put considerable strain on the temporary facilities, significantly affecting the visitor experience.

#### **City of Galveston to Present Stewart Beach Master Plan in October**

City staff will present a comprehensive plan for Stewart Beach to City Council in October. Beyond procuring temporary beach patrol facilities, the Park Board's future involvement in the project is to be determined by City Council.

#### **City of Galveston and Park Board to Consider Task Force for Short-Term Rental Management Efforts**

Park Board staff will coordinate with City staff to form a potential task force to collaborate on issues regarding the management of short-term rentals in Galveston. Park Board and City staff are currently collaborating on the call center reporting measures and call flow. City Council will engage in discussions about penalties and punitive actions for consistent violations and unresponsive local property contacts. To address concerns regarding collections, compliance, legal matters, and enforcement actions, Park Board staff will offer standing meetings for concerned stakeholders.

#### **Park Board to Propose Trash Management Solutions at San Luis Pass to City Staff**

At San Luis Pass, the Park Board will continue to support non-governmental organization partners in their efforts to address short-term trash issues. Collaborating with City staff, they will explore potential options to tackle the trash problem effectively. Progress on these discussions will be reported at the next Trustee meeting.

Recent coastal conditions enable vehicular access north of the toll bridge, which was previously accessible only by foot, and has caused a surge in visitation to the pass. However, due to dangerous currents, swimming is strictly prohibited at San Luis Pass. The Park Board's jurisdiction does not extend south of the County Toll Bridge, and therefore funding does not currently exist for the maintenance of this area. This area encompasses 0.17 square miles, which is larger than East Beach. Proper trash management and maintenance are crucial to preserving the delicate ecosystem present at San Luis Pass.

For more information and updates, please visit our official website at <https://www.galvestonparkboard.org/>

Park Board and City Council of Galveston joint meetings are typically held quarterly at Galveston City Hall in room 204.

