



News from the Board Room

August 22, 2023

These updates highlight the key decisions and reports from the meeting of the Park Board of Trustees held on August 22, 2023.

Park Board Recognizes Jeff Mullin for 5 Years of Dedicated Service to Beach Patrol

The Park Board recognized Supervisor Jeff Mullin for five years of full-time service with Galveston Island Beach Patrol. Mullin joined the Park Board in March 2016 as a Seasonal Lifeguard. He was hired full-time as a Senior Guard in October 2018 and promoted to Supervisor in September 2019. He is a certified Emergency Medical Technician and a certified peace officer with the Park Board Police Department. Chief Peter Davis shared his admiration and gratitude for Mullin's work at the meeting, saying "He jumps in and leads whenever we give him the opportunity, which is awesome."

Park Board to Update Tourism Wayfinding Signage

The Park Board is planning an overhaul of the tourism wayfinding signage to improve visitor navigation in Galveston and support sustainable tourism efforts and has hired Corbin Designs to provide project services. Melody Smith, Director of Marketing for Visit Galveston, and Rebecca Dixon, a representative from Corbin Designs, presented updates to the proposed three-phase masterplan for updated traffic and pedestrian signage, which included final renderings and placement of the proposed signs. According to Smith, the goal is to facilitate seamless exploration: "It's about getting people moving through the island." The initiative includes a wayfinding taskforce that emphasizes strategic placement of destination signage and highlights key decision points. Taskforce members includes city staff, Park Board tourism development staff, Tourism Development Advisory Committee (TDAC) members, as well as key community stakeholders like Trey Click, Executive Director of the Historic Downtown Galveston Partnership.

Park Board Awards Contract to E.L. Robinson Engineering for Disaster Consulting Services

The Galveston Park Board convened to discuss and consider the approval of a contract award for disaster consulting services, aiming to enhance its disaster response and recovery strategies. The board voted unanimously, based on staff's recommendation, to award the contract to E. L. Robinson Engineering for its strong grasp of disaster management, technical expertise, and familiarity with Galveston's landscape. E.L. Robinson Engineering was one of five firms that responded to the Park Board's Request for Qualifications that

circulated in July 2023. Following Hurricane Ike's devastation in 2008, the Park Board urgently sought consultants to aid in property and beach recovery. Collaborations with emergency management consultants have continued since, centered on FEMA and TDEM's Public Assistance program.

Park Board Continues Active Collaboration with Texas General Land Office

On August 16, Park Board Interim CEO Kimberly Danesi, General Counsel for the Park Board Jim Byrom, and the Park Board's State Legislative Representative Ryan Brannan met with the Texas General Land Office (GLO) in Austin. During the Park Board meeting, Danesi provided the trustees with a brief update on their discussion with the GLO, which centered on connecting with new leadership and discussing ongoing beach nourishment projects supervised by the land office. The Park Board holds the federal permit for beach construction, underscoring their central role in these endeavors. The Texas Land Commissioner, Dawn Buckingham, is scheduled to speak at Galveston Island Rotary on September 26.

AIA Sandcastle Event at East Beach Yields Positive Outcomes

Vince Lorefice, Park Board General Manager of Parks, unveiled key insights into revenue and attendance of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) 36th Annual Sandcastle event held Aug 19 at East Beach. Lorefice reported a 6% increase in car attendance compared to 2022. The event generated \$70,360 in revenue, representing 15% of the park's annual income. The Park Board, including Galveston Island Beach Patrol, received praise for their smooth execution and traffic management. Lorefice expressed intentions to explore competition expansion opportunities with AIA, acknowledging the event's significance and popularity.

Park Board Staff Provides Updates on City Deliverables

Park Board Interim CEO Kimberly Danesi and CFO Bryson Frazier updated the Park Board trustees on staff deliverables formulated at a joint meeting held with the Galveston City Council July 31. These deliverables included:

1. **Beach Patrol Temporary Facilities:** Trailers are on track for delivery in the spring.
2. **Hotel Occupancy Tax Transfers:** Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) transfers are presently submitted to the city on a quarterly basis, and discussions are still open regarding biannual transactions.
3. **Interlocal Agreement:** Danesi and City Manager Brian Maxwell are meeting at the end of the month to review the interlocal agreement, with plans for an update at the September meeting.
4. **Short Term Rental Compliance:** An ongoing public outreach campaign, led by city and Park Board staff, involves engaging community input to streamline the short-term rental compliance process. Presentations in early August, including arrangements for speaking engagements and a presence in the Galveston County Daily News, are underway.
5. **San Luis Pass Trash Collections:** Danesi reported active collaboration with Maxwell and county representatives regarding each entities' responsibilities for waste management near San Luis Pass. Danesi and Maxwell plan to develop a strategy, and potentially modify the interlocal agreement, to mitigate the trash that exists in the natural area.

Park Board Advocate Updates on Legislative Affairs

State legislative advocate for the Park Board, Ryan Brannan, provided an update on the 2023 Texas Legislative Session and the status of the Park Board legislative agenda items. Brannan's presentation offered insights into the Park Board's legislative pursuits and collaborations, reflecting the commitment to safeguarding Galveston's



interests including; HOT allocations, Babe's Beach ownership, TWIA Reform, Battleship Texas restoration, Gulf Coast protection programs, and the Pelican Island Bridge project.

Park Board Explores Additional Financial Transfer to the City of Galveston

Chair Jason Hardcastle proposed that the Park Board of Trustees instruct staff to research additional revenue streams for immediate and long-term financial transfers to the City of Galveston. Chair Hardcastle expressed sympathies "to the strains that record tourists do bring and exhibit on the city's general fund." A one-time payment could be designated by the city council for a specific use, like supporting local beautification efforts, or generally increase funding to the city for other initiatives. In recent years, the Park Board has collected record revenues from visitation to Galveston and is seeking to share the wealth with the city. The majority of funds collected via tourism are highly restricted in use, and the board discussed ways those surplus revenues might be shared. Currently, the Park Board of Trustees provides transfers funds to the City of Galveston as part of the existing interlocal agreement. Transfers in the proposed 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Budget total \$1,021,800 and include: \$199,900 from Tourism Development from advertising revenue shares, \$300,000 from Seawolf Park revenue shares and \$521,900 from Urban Park for the Capital Reserve and Maintenance and Repairs Funds. The Park Board voted unanimously for staff to research additional funding sources for a one-time payment to provide financial benefit to the city in the interim as the interlocal agreement is being revised.

Park Board Completes Appointments to CEO Search Committee

The Galveston Island Park Board has appointed members to the CEO Search Committee, a crucial step in selecting the organization's next leader. The committee comprises individuals with diverse expertise and community engagement, ensuring a comprehensive search process. Trustees Gerald Wilson and Bill Clement were voted unanimously to be appointed members of the CEO Search Committee. Wilson brings extensive experience as an HR executive and Clement is known for his robust community background and active participation in various Galveston boards and committees.

In addition to the above updates, Park Board Interim CEO Kimberly Danesi made several announcements including:

- Galveston Island Beach Patrol (GIBP) sent a team of lifeguards to compete at the United States Lifesaving Association (USLA) National Lifeguard Championships. GIBP placed 6th out of 37 teams from across the nation. There were 5 podium finishes from GIBP junior guards and more than 7 collective podium finishes between the senior guards. The Park Board extends its congratulations to the team.
- Lexipol honored GIBP with the Award for Excellence in Training. Lexipol serves more than 2 million public safety and government professionals with a range of informational and technological solutions.
- The National Association for Interpretation (NAI) honored the Park Board's Women in Coastal Science informational program with the Award for Excellence in Interpretive Support. NAI is a non-profit professional organization dedicated to advancing the profession of heritage interpretation.

For more information and updates, please visit our official website at www.galvestonparkboard.org. Park Board meetings are typically held on the fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:30 p.m. at 601 23rd Street.

