

MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Trails Advisory Committee

Wednesday, January 13, 2021 6:00 pm

3 Civic Center Drive San Marcos, CA 92069 – Meeting held remotely via GoToMeeting.com

CALL TO ORDER: Parks & Recreation - Recreation Coordinator, Taylor Oshinski, called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

ROLL CALL:

TAC Members: Adam Watkins (Chair), Torrey Olson (Vice Chair), Rich Amiton, David Simpson & John Walsh

Parks & Recreation Commissioner: Jay Franklin

City of San Marcos Staff: Buck Martin, Andrea Gonzalez & Taylor Oshinski

Guests: David Warren, Eric Nelson, Nick Buck, Scott Denton, Susie Murphy, Traci, Caller 02 & Caller 03

Not Present: Parks & Recreation Commissioner Travis Lindsay

OLD BUSINESS

1. Taylor welcomed all City staff, TAC members and guests to the January 13, 2021 TAC meeting. Callers 02 and 03 did not speak during roll call so they remained anonymous for the meeting. Taylor notified guests that they would be muted during the meeting and would only be approved to be on the meeting to listen in. He also requested that members of the group keep their microphones muted until speaking so there are as few interruptions as possible. Taylor also explained that he would be looking down at his notepad while members are speaking so he can accurately document their statements for meeting minutes.
2. Taylor notified the TAC members that an email will be sent prior to each meeting. He requested to receive feedback if you are unable to attend the meeting. All meetings for 2021 have already been scheduled and are available on the first page of the agenda. Meetings will be held remotely on GoToMeeting until in-person meetings are approved.
3. The TAC members spoke about the heavy trail usage since COVID began in March 2020. All have experienced an influx in the trails that they regularly use. Adam Watkins and John Walsh explained that they have witnessed an increase in vehicles parked in the neighborhood surrounding Lakeview Park. However, the majority have experienced friendly trail users that are respectful of nature, surrounding neighborhoods and other trail users. Taylor let the TAC know to please contact him with any trail concerns and he will forward to the proper agency for clean up or repairs. Taylor explained that the trails are still in good shape even with the heavy use. Buck Martin commented that the San Marcos Public Works team does an excellent job of maintaining the trails. Rich Amiton stated that the lack of rain has also contributed to the trails holding up well.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Taylor notified the group that the City hike series has been postponed until further notice. The hike for March has not been cancelled yet but it is likely that the hike program may not be able to return until the summer or possibly later depending on the COVID-19 pandemic. Taylor also notified the group that the City is always looking for passionate volunteers to join the hikes as hike leaders or sweeps. He requested that any interested folks reach out to him and he can assist them with becoming an official City volunteer as a part of the Reserve Ranger Program.
2. The majority of the meeting was spent discussing e-bikes and the measure proposed by the TAC to allow Class 1&2 e-bikes on trails. Taylor read a total of forty-two public comments aloud and the TAC had a discussion following the public comments. TAC members requested to know the final tally of public comments that were for and against allowing e-bikes. Taylor counted the public comments while the TAC members continued their discussion on potential concerns moving forward. Taylor notified the group that there were twenty-one comments for allowing e-bikes and twenty-one comments against the proposed measure. After the public comments were read aloud, the TAC considered potential concerns with all trail users moving forward. The TAC suggested that there may be some trails that e-bikes should not be approved to allow for continued enjoyment of all trail users. Buck and Taylor let the group know that there are always options for not allowing e-bikes on certain trails based on recommendations from the TAC. There were questions on how e-bikes would be regulated and enforced. Taylor notified the group that allowing Class 1&2 e-bikes would not mean that Class 3 e-bikes, homemade e-bikes, electric scooters, mopeds, skateboards, hover boards or any other electric vehicle would be approved. This measure is strictly related to Class 1&2 e-bikes. TAC members explained that they feel that e-bikes have a place and do not want to exclude certain groups that rely on e-bikes for exercise. Jay Franklin questioned how Ranger enforcement would know which class of e-bike is being used. Taylor notified the group that e-bikes come from the factory with a tag permanently fixed to the frame with their classification so this is an easy way to check which classification is being used. John Walsh explained that if e-bikes are allowed on the trails that proper education would be key to ensuring the safety of all trail users. The TAC questioned if it would be possible for all e-bike riders to take a class prior to being allowed to ride their e-bikes on San Marcos trails. Taylor explained that this would be extremely difficult for the City to manage. Adam Watkins questioned a couple of the public comments regarding equestrian folks on the trails. Adam stated that the TAC may need to look into trails that may not be conducive to horses due to potential impulsive and swift moves that could create a dangerous situation for the rider, hiker or biker. Jay Franklin questioned if this measure would go against the County Board of Supervisors. Buck Martin responded by saying that it would not and that the County is currently in a trial period with Class 1&2 e-bikes. Buck also stated that working with all trail users would be a key component to deciding which trails would not allow e-bikes. He explained that some flat trails around Walnut Grove would not make sense to allow e-bikes due to the heavy

volume of hikers and equestrian users. The topic of which trails would allow e-bikes recurred multiple times so Adam Watkins reminded the group that this vote was strictly the start of the process and the TAC can decide on certain trails at a later date. All agreed with Adam on this comment that we shouldn't get ahead of ourselves.

3. Jay Franklin questioned how the e-bike information was disseminated to the public. Taylor explained that the City's Communication team made posts on their social media platforms and on the City website so there was full transparency on the topic. Taylor commented that he was intrigued by all of the feedback received and that he believes this is an important part of the process to ensure all voices are heard. He also noted that the TAC was created for the purpose of representing all groups and that the public comments should be taken into consideration when voting. Taylor also notified the group that if they feel a flyer is necessary that he would assist them in making the flyer along with the assistance of the City's Communication team. He requested that members do not make or distribute their own flyers including City information.
4. Taylor asked if the group had any final comments for discussion prior to voting. The group did not have any further comments so Taylor called on each of the five TAC members for their vote. The measure passed with five yes votes and zero no votes. Taylor notified the group of the next steps in the process. He stated that this would be an agenda item at the February or March San Marcos Parks and Recreation Commission meeting. Taylor assured the TAC members that he would send them an email with the confirmed date of when e-bikes will be on the agenda. He also stated that there will be more opportunities for public comment at the next level. Taylor reiterated to the group that if they notice any concerns with the trails to please contact him immediately and don't wait until the next TAC meeting.

CONSENT CALENDAR

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Trails Advisory Committee

October 2020 TAC meeting minutes were approved. John Walsh motioned to approve and Adam Watkins seconded.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:

1. No additional information was presented or requests made.

TAC MEMBER COMMENTARY

Next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14, 2021 at 6:00pm

ADJOURNMENT

Taylor Oshinski adjourned the January 13, 2021 San Marcos Trails Advisory Committee meeting at 7:46PM.

ATTEST:

TAYLOR OSHINSKI, RECORDING SECRETARY
CITY OF SAN MARCOS
TRAILS ADVISORY COMMITTEE