

## MINUTES

Regular Meeting of the Trails Advisory Committee

Wednesday, April 14, 2021 6:00 pm

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

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**CALL TO ORDER:** Parks & Recreation - Recreation Supervisor, Taylor Oshinski, called the meeting to order at 6:04pm.

### **ROLL CALL:**

TAC Members: Adam Watkins (Chair), Torrey Olson (Vice Chair), David Simpson, John Walsh, Mary Stanford & Nate Hatfield.

Parks & Recreation Commissioner: Jay Franklin & Travis Lindsay

City of San Marcos Staff: Buck Martin, Taylor Oshinski and Hugh McMenamin

Not Present: John DeBevoise

### **OLD BUSINESS**

1. Taylor welcomed all in attendance to the April 14, 2021 TAC meeting. All members were present with the exception of new member, John DeBevoise. Taylor notified the TAC that if guests join, 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. He also wanted to ensure that new members don't hesitate to ask questions if they have them.
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. Taylor is hopeful that the July meeting will be held in person.
3. The TAC members spoke about the heavy trail usage since COVID began in March 2020. 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. Mary Stanford brought up the issue of adding a couple trash receptacles around the Walnut Grove area. Taylor explained that San Marcos Public Works plans to add two additional receptacles in the area by the end of the fiscal year. However, if she has additional recommendations after these are placed, please don't hesitate to reach out. John Walsh commented that he returned as a Reserve Park Ranger on April 1 and was intrigued to see how well the parks have been maintained. Taylor reminded the group that this is the "Trails" Advisory Committee but to please reach out to him if you notice any issues in the parks as well.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

1. Taylor asked if there were any questions regarding the January Minutes. There were no questions or concerns so he asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Adam Watkins motioned to approve and John Walsh seconded.
2. Taylor spoke about the City hike series returning in March. He notified the group that the March hike was an easy-moderate hike that drew over 70+ hikers split up between two groups. Taylor explained the excitement for the return and how various city swag items were offered as a “welcome back” to the participants. The April hike was a more difficult and strenuous hike that drew over 30+ in attendance. Taylor notified the group that the City is always looking for additional hike assistance, so if you are interested in joining, please contact to him.
3. 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 talked about the history of the proposal to the new members and how this proposal has been in the works for roughly eight months. Taylor notified the group that a total of 120+ comments were received from members of all trail user groups. He reminded the group to keep these public comments in mind when considering the proposal moving forward. Taylor discussed the City staff’s recommended proposal for allowing e-bikes on various trails. He explained that he met with Lead Rangers Hugh McMenamin and Cortney Pache to discuss potential trails where e-bikes would not be permitted. He notified the group that the three staff rangers represent all trail users so this was an unbiased proposal of trails that are already quite busy with hikers, pedal bikers and equestrian riders. Adam Watkins began the dialogue explaining AB1096 that had been passed by the State of California. He does not feel that it is the duty of the TAC to discriminate certain trails based on this ruling. Taylor explained that the City Attorney reviewed the current San Marcos Municipal Code and AB1096 does not represent or override San Marcos’ Municipal Code so this measure would need to be passed by City Council to officially allow e-bikes on the trails. Adam also reminded the TAC of JPIA’s assessment of e-bikes. Taylor then stated that Adam is correct and JPIA does not have any issues with allowing e-bikes as long as the measure is passed through the proper channels. JPIA provides insurance to a number of California municipalities and as of six months ago did not have a single claim related to e-bikes. Travis Lindsay asked why certain classes of e-bikes are different than mechanical bikes for trail use limitations. He remarked the danger of each for equestrian encounters. Adam stated the County of San Diego has documentation of success and no major conflicts with e-bike use in their region. Nate Hatfield asked if there is documentation of e-bike conflicts in this area. Taylor explained that there have been few incidents reported to the City. Nate explained that IMBA does a resource study that can be helpful to review regarding speed of e-bikes and how they do or do not contribute to conflicts with other trail users. Taylor then replied to Nate’s comments above and John Walsh questioned various aspects of e-bikes. Adam replied to John’s concerns and clarified Class 1 and 2 e-bikes as it

refers to their speed and classifications. He also commented he was in favor of speed limits for e-bikes. Nate said they are also limited by wattage output and a governor limiting their speed. Travis clarified his question was about what are the dangers to equestrians for each e-bike classification as opposed to mechanical bikes. Adam commented speed cannot be sustained on e-bikes which means he doesn't think the speed becomes dangerous. John asked what criteria was used to select limited trails for e-bike use. Taylor explained that the Parks and Recreation Commission gave guidance to consider equestrian and heavy pedestrian use trails. Class variations have already been voted on and Class 1 and 2 e-bikes were approved at the January TAC meeting. The issue on the table is to confirm, add or subtract the recommended trails for non-usage. Mary Stanford, an equestrian and e-bike user in the Walnut Grove and Twin Oaks areas, said e-bikes are on the rise and here to stay. She has more conflicts with regular bikers and joggers who go too fast and don't have trail courtesy or etiquette. She is in favor of e-bikes used respectfully and enjoys seeing seniors using them on the trails. She suggested more public education as a remedy to those who don't respect others on the trails. Jay had a question about shared trails in the City of Poway. Taylor explained that the City of Poway and City of Encinitas also have shared use trails and encounter similar trail usage concerns. Taylor explained that the City of Encinitas is going through the same discussion as we currently are with enforcement. Taylor said our current enforcement is by staff Park Rangers using verbal education and provided some quick background about the Ranger Program being responsible for patrolling 38 parks and 70.5 miles of trails.

Mary asked what is the main issue regarding e-bikes on the trails. Taylor said equestrians generally stated in their public comments that they are opposed to e-bikes on trails. Adam questioned the opinion of equestrians since he has seen very few equestrian riders on these trails being recommended for non-use. Mary, even being a member of the equestrian community, doesn't want to see current e-bike users eliminated from using trails. Again, she is in favor of them as she has not witnessed major conflicts. John Walsh stated the spirit of these discussions is for safety for all when using the trails. He brought attention to the trail triangle signs that define courtesies that should be followed and gave a few personal examples of encounters with speeding mechanical bikes. Travis stated heaviest equestrian use is in the north part of the City where Mary lives and echoed fears of equestrians in that area. He suggested a test period to see how interactions between equestrians and e-bike riders would actually occur. Adam recognized trail etiquette importance. He sided with what the County of San Diego is doing with e-bike use and education which he feels is working successfully. He is concerned about limiting trail use due to connectivity corridors. Torrey stated similar views as Adam's. Adam believed San Marcos is in a position to take the lead on this issue especially highlighting trail education to the public. Mary concurred with both Torrey and Adam, especially on education and safety. Adam asked where the guidance came from for limiting certain trail uses. Jay stated that from the Parks & Recreation Commission they wanted all voices to be heard and gave the Commission's reasoning. Mary spoke about the difficult issue surrounding excluding certain users from trails. Travis responded to Adam's state legislation reference and said

we had freedom to exercise the safety we deem necessary. The legislation has more to do with traffic patterns and safety. Our task is to strike a balance between trail usage and safety. The European model discussed is noteworthy but not a bulletproof idea according to Adam's firsthand experience in Europe. Adam believes the trails can be shared without the conflict.

4. Taylor said the list of recommended non-use trails will most likely not be favorable to the TAC Commission due to the discussion this evening. He clarified the graphic map for Mary and that this was the recommendation from City staff but ultimately the TAC will make the recommendation to the Parks & Recreation Commission. John repeated his concern for speed of bikes causing conflicts. He felt the equestrian representation on the Commission is underrepresented. David Simpson didn't believe the danger in our City is that extreme. Taylor acknowledged Adam's comments about some folks needing to use e-bikes due to physical limitations preventing them from riding a pedal bike.

Taylor asked about moving ahead or not on recommended trail non-use by Commission. Adam doesn't believe we have the right to limit e-bike use. Taylor clarified City legal has given the Commission approval to make recommendations. Torrey asked if these trails are currently restricted to bikes or not; if so the same would be for e-bikes. Taylor explained that the trails are not restricted to pedal bikes. Mary recommended a trial use on the trails. Buck Martin commented that if you restrict one bike type all bike types would have to be restricted. Adam asked if there are stats on representation of equestrians in the City. Taylor said there is not any official data. Mary said equestrians have different restrictions than bike users have in San Marcos that must be considered and would like to see San Marcos keep equestrian presence strong especially in the Walnut Grove Park area. Taylor was in favor of a trial use period to test trail usage. Adam reinforced education for common trail use. The discussion then moved to the group recommending to scrap the City staff recommended trails and approve all trails in San Marcos for Class 1 & 2 e-bike use.

Taylor asked for a motion to approve Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on all trails and remove the staff's recommended trails for non-use. Adam motioned and Torrey seconded. The vote then took place and was called for by each member to give their vote. The results were 5 yes votes and 1 no vote. Taylor notified the group that he will prepare the Minutes the following day and provide the recommendation to the Commission at their meeting on April 21<sup>st</sup>. Taylor ensured that he would keep the TAC members up to speed on the process and emails will be sent each step along the way. He also let the group know that members of the public will be able to provide public comments as this measure moves forward.

5. Buck and Taylor thanked everyone for their time and a very productive meeting. We hope to resume in-person meetings soon!

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

**1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES** – Trails Advisory Committee

January 2021 TAC meeting minutes were approved. Adam Watkins motioned to approve and John Walsh seconded.

**2. E-BIKE VOTE**– Trails Advisory Committee

The TAC voted 5 yes votes and 1 no vote to recommend to the Parks & Recreation Commission to allow Class 1 and 2 e-bikes on all City of San Marcos trails.

**ORAL COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. No additional information was presented or requests made.

**TAC MEMBER COMMENTARY**

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Taylor Oshinski adjourned the April 14, 2021 San Marcos Trails Advisory Committee meeting at 8:06PM.

ATTEST:

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