

Media Contact

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Galveston Park Board Update: March 3, 2015

The Galveston Park Board of Trustees held its regular meeting at 10:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 24 at Park Board Plaza. Below is an update of news from the boardroom.

Park Board Begins Registering Short-Term Rental Properties

In an effort to establish rules and regulations and increase Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT) collections, the Galveston City Council has instructed the Park Board to begin registering short-term rentals in Galveston. On Tuesday, staff accountant Kay Terry explained that individuals who provide short-term rentals for less than 30 days are required to register their property with the Park Board and pay HOT taxes based on their revenue. New registrants will be required to pay a one-time \$50 registration fee and those who have already been paying HOT taxes are exempt from the fee. The Park Board will serve as a resource for registrants and will help guide them through the registration process. The deadline for registering short-term rental properties is March 1. Information and registration forms can be found at www.galvestonparkboard.org.

Park Board Agrees to Support Galveston's Trolleys

The Park Board Tuesday agreed to pledge \$200,000 annually in support of Galveston's trolleys. Out of service since Hurricane Ike in 2008, the trolleys connected riders to the city's downtown, Seawall and the University of Texas Medical Branch campus. The City of Galveston has received funding from the federal government to repair the trolleys and is faced with having to return the funds if they do not begin work to bring them back. The funds from the Park Board will help to reduce operational deficits.

Park Board Endorses Compensation Study

At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board agreed to participate in a compensation study being led by the City of Galveston. The study aims to identify areas that the city, the Port of Galveston and the Park Board are inconsistent in their compensation and benefits practices for employees with similar job descriptions. Another goal of the study is to devise ways to retain employees. The Park Board's human resources manager, Jill Dworsky, explained that the Park Board has already undertaken several tasks identified in the study's scope of work. Board trustees instructed staff to determine a timeline for implementation and negotiate a reduced price with the outside firm who will perform the study.

Park Board Awards Contract for Strategic Planning

The Park Board Tuesday voted to award a contract for \$13,500 plus direct expenses to Dr. Glenn Freedman for board development and strategic planning. Freedman is a retired university professor and founding partner of EduSafe Systems Inc. a corporate and higher education management consulting firm specializing in strategic planning, public-private partnerships and economic development initiatives. Among his many accolades include earning the National Aeronautic and Space Administration's Distinguished Service Medal. Last year, Park Board staff identified board development and strategic planning as organizational growth areas for fiscal year 2014. Park Board Executive Director Kelly de Schaun noted that many of the organization's successes over the last few years can be attributed to having a strategic plan in place. Freedman will work with Park Board trustees and staff to create a strategic plan, a board orientation plan and a board and staff development plan. These plans are expected to be completed by September 2015.

Park Board Receives Annual Audit Results

At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board heard highlights from its annual audit. Performed by Galveston-based DRDA Associates, the audit was positive and showed no significant findings. Total net assets for the Park Board increased \$2.7 million from fiscal year 2014.

Announcements

- At its meeting Tuesday the Park Board approved to spend \$15,000 for a tourism summit to be held May 5.
- At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board approved to spend \$30,400 for an East Beach music series this summer.
- On Tuesday, the Park Board approved to spend \$4,000 to support the 2015 Galveston Island Beach Revue.
- At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board approved to spend \$4,000 to support the 2015 Ja-Ga Reggae Festival.
- On Tuesday, the Park Board approved to spend \$10,000 to support the 2015 Divas' Half Marathon and 5K race.
- At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board approved to spend \$8,000 to support the 2015 Galveston Food and Wine Festival.
- On Tuesday, the Park Board agreed to spend \$22,000 to support the 2015 Fourth of July fireworks display.
- At its meeting Tuesday, the Park Board agreed to spend \$27,742 for a contract with JMC Express Constructors for work on the Mardi Gras warehouse.

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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