



**CITY OF NEW BRAUNFELS, TEXAS
SPECIAL JOINT CITY COUNCIL MEETING
WITH RIVER AD HOC COMMITTEE**



**NEW BRAUNFELS CIVIC/CONVENTION CENTER
375 S. CASTELL AVENUE**

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2011 at 5:00 P.M.

Gale Pospisil, Mayor
Richard Zapata, Councilmember (District 1)
Mark Goodner, Mayor Pro Tem (District 2)
Mike Ybarra, Councilmember (District 3)

Sandy Nolte, Councilmember (District 4)
Bryan Miranda, Councilmember (District 5)
Steven Digges, Councilmember (District 6)
Michael Morrison, City Manager

MISSION STATEMENT

***The City of New Braunfels will add value to our community
by planning for the future, providing quality services, encouraging
Community involvement and being responsive to those we serve.***

CALL TO ORDER: December 12, 2011 @ 5:00 P.M.

CALL OF ROLL: City Secretary

1. WORKSHOP

- (A) Presentation and discussion regarding recommendations from the River Ad Hoc Committee.
(A. Sansom, Committee facilitator)

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify the above Notice of Meeting was posted on the Bulletin Board at the New Braunfels Municipal Building on December 8, 2011, at 3:30 p.m.

Patrick Aten, City Secretary

NOTE: Persons with disabilities who plan to attend this meeting and who may need auxiliary aids or services such as interpreters for persons who are deaf or hearing impaired, readers, or large print, are requested to contact the City Secretary's Office at 221-4010 at least two (2) work days prior to the meeting so that appropriate arrangements can be made.



**City Council Workshop Item Report
December 12, 2011**

Agenda Item No. _____

**Presenter: Andrew Sansom, ED River Systems Institute
Contact: Nathan Pence, Watershed Program Manager
(830) 608-2166 – npence@nbtexas.org**

SUBJECT: Presentation and discussion regarding recommendations from the River Ad Hoc Committee.

BACKGROUND/RATIONALE:

During the summer of 2011, the Comal River experienced large crowds, tubers exhibited unacceptable behavior, litter awareness in the community was heightened, and traffic and parking issues persisted; resulting in the community and City Council desiring a solution to address the concerns. On September 6, 2011, Council accepted the slate of recommended committee members presented by staff and thus established the City of New Braunfels River Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee is composed of 13 members representing various stakeholder groups throughout the tourism industry and is facilitated by River Systems Institute Executive Director, Andrew Sansom.

Council set four goals for the River Ad Hoc Committee:

1. Establish River Management Operations as revenue neutral or profitable
2. Improve safety for policemen, city staffers, tourists and residents
3. Improve parking and traffic flow
4. Implement a marketing strategy and education program to inform citizens and tubers about changes

Committee members have worked aggressively to meet the December 12th deadline set by City Council and will have met 7 times prior to presenting recommendations to City Council; including one public input meeting where public comment was accepted and then utilized in final formulation of recommendations.

Attached are recommendations as agreed to by consensus of the River Ad Hoc Committee on December 7th. It is anticipated the attached list of recommendations may be modified to clarify language only. If clarification occurs, an updated list of draft recommendations will be provided ASAP.

An action item has been placed on the 6:00 p.m. regular agenda in order to provide the City Council with the opportunity to act on the proposed recommendations if so desired. Council has the option to accept the recommendations in totality as presented, to select and approve only a subset of the recommendations or make adjustments to any individual recommendation.

ADDRESSES A NEED/ISSUE IN A CITY PLAN OR COUNCIL PRIORITY:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	City Plan/Council Priority:	Strategic Priorities:

FISCAL IMPACT:

As proposed the recommendations would be an overall positive to the River Operations Budget. Currently river operations result in approximately a \$500,000 annual deficit. It is projected that the proposed recommendations could increase revenue to cover the annual deficit and fund new recommendations.

BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

The City of New Braunfels River Ad Hoc Committee recommends approval of the recommendations as presented.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

N/A

**City of New Braunfels
2011 River Ad Hoc Committee
Recommendations
12/7/2011**

During the summer of 2011, the Comal River experienced large crowds, tubers exhibited unacceptable behavior, litter awareness in the community was heightened, and traffic and parking issues persisted; resulting in the community and City Council desiring a solution to address the concerns. On September 6, 2011, Council accepted the slate of recommended committee members presented by staff and thus established the City of New Braunfels River Ad Hoc Committee. The Committee is composed of 13 members (Gale Pospisil, Richard Zapata, Colie Reno, Mathew Pusateri, Tony Sellers, Kevin O'toole, Tom Wibert, Cecil Eager, Mary Jane Nally, Terri Adams, David Davenport, Darryl Shaper and Craig Hall) representing various stakeholder groups throughout the tourism industry and is facilitated by River Systems Institute Executive Director, Andrew Sansom.

Council set four goals for the River Ad Hoc Committee:

1. Establish River Management Operations as revenue neutral or profitable
2. Improve safety for policemen, city staffers, tourists and residents
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4. Implement a marketing strategy and education program to inform citizens and tubers about changes

The following are the list of recommendations agreed to by consensus of the River AD Hoc Committee. The geographic scope of these recommendations are to encompass the Comal River (confluence of Dry Comal Creek to the Confluence of the Guadalupe River) and Guadalupe River (Gruene Rd Bridge to Cypress Bend Park).

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Goal #1 – Establish River Management Operations as Revenue Neutral or Profitable.

- Raise the River Management Fee collected by outfitters from \$1.25 to \$1.50 per person. Wristbands would be issued by the outfitter for monitoring purposes, not enforcement.
- Charge a River Management Fee of \$5.00 for all private tubers entering the river across City property. Park users with other uses besides tubing would not pay the River Management Fee. Wristbands would be issued for monitoring purposes and an additional River Management Fee would not be charged for tubers opting for a second tube trip if wearing a wristband. River Management Fees would be collected April –October.
- A Season Pass, not to exceed \$20 in price, would be available for New Braunfels citizens. The season pass would allow for tubing access across City property only and would not be valid at Outfitter locations.
- River Management Fees collected at City property would be effective seven days a week. Allowing for operational and cost effective consideration by the managing entity.

- Direct City staff to develop details of River Management Fee implementations.

Goal #2 – Improve Safety for Police, Other City Staff, Tourists and Residents

- Redesign Last Tuber's Exit. Short term priority should focus on lowering the landing platform to below water level to facilitate safe and efficient exiting of the river, taking into account fluctuating river flows.
- Add additional Park Rangers at the Tube Chute, Stinky Falls and Prince Solms Park. Rangers could serve as fee collectors, ambassadors and lifeguards.
- Recommend PFD's for weak swimmers.
- Regulate access at the Boy Scout Hut.
- Amplified Music devices for tubers should be limited to no larger than 16 quarts in volume and specific dimensions describing the 16qt volume should be developed and included. Additionally the current ordinance prohibiting amplified music on the rivers from 10:00pm to 8:00am should be extended to consider weekends during the summers; weekends of the year and extension of time of day should be based on Police Department data related to calls for service, citations and arrests resulting from the current Noise Ordinances.
- Ensure that Law Enforcement has the resources they need to conduct operation on the rivers.
- The City should make available PFD's to those who desire to utilize them.
- Buoys should be added at Stinky Falls.
- Double passenger tubes should be prohibited; limiting inflatable devices used for floating to 5ft across at their widest point.

Goal #3 – Improve Parking and Traffic Flow

- Utilize Landa Plaza as a centralized parking location. Way-finding signage should be installed directing tourists from IH 35 to the parking locations. Infrastructure at this location to facilitate operations would need to be added. Outfitter participation and logistics would need to be determined. A parking fee at this location should be charged.
- Charge parking fee at Prince Solms Park for existing parking spaces located on concrete or pavement.
- Utilize existing parking permit system in residential neighborhoods.
- Extend 2hr parking in downtown.
- Separate vehicle and shuttle traffic routes in Prince Solms Park.
- The current water recreation shuttle seat allocation system needs to be reevaluated and possibly modified to accommodate newly implemented river operations based on Ad Hoc Committee recommendations and to establish restrictions at entry points rather than exit locations.

- Have City, Police Department, Schlitterbahn and Outfitter representatives work together to identify changes to traffic operations in and around the Last Tubers Exit. Specific consideration should be given to increasing safety and efficiency; considering at the same time, possible alternatives to one-way traffic.

Goal #4 – Implement a Marketing Strategy to Inform Citizens and Tubers About Changes

- Development of specific marketing efforts must await final City Council action on recommendations.
- The River Ad Hoc Committee should continue to work with the Conventions and Visitors Bureau in development of a simple marketing plan that is positive in tone.
- Behavioral expectations should be a component of the overall Marketing program.
- Recommending that weak swimmers use PFD’s should be a component of the overall Marketing program.

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

Research

- Develop a system to measure baseline use of and establish a carrying capacity of the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers and adjacent facilities.
- Conduct traffic and parking analysis related to river tourism.
- The Ad Hoc Committee should continue to serve through implementation and future analysis.

River Infrastructure

- Undertake a master planning process for the rivers, adjacent areas and facilities: including parking infrastructure, access points and other amenities.
- Explore additional river exits downstream of Last Tubers Exit.
- Undertake modifications to the Tube Chute and Stinky Falls similar to those at Rio Vista Falls in San Marcos. This recommendation was identified by the Committee as a priority.
- Explore options to improve safety related to tying tubes together.
- Consider instillation of Closed Circuit TV’s to facilitate law enforcement operations.
- Consider instillation of emergency call boxes at key locations on the rivers.
- A Season Pass for tourists should be considered.
- Consider Parking Meters in the downtown area.
- Consider possible Mill Street access for tubers.
- Redesign Last Tuber’s Exit. All aspects should be evaluated and considered, including the possible need to remove the ADA ramp and install additional stairs and an ADA chair lift.

