



Parks & Recreation

To: Mayor and City Council Members
Doug Faseler, City Manager

From: Jack Jones, Director of Parks and Recreation

Through: Rick Cortes, Assistant City Manager

Date: May 17, 2016

Subject: **Approval of a pilot Park Ranger Program to operate through the Labor Day Holiday at all City parks and trails.**

With construction completed on the voter approved Parks Bond Projects, numerous Seguin residents and visitors are now enjoying several new park amenities in town. Those new amenities include the following:

- Park West
 - Lighted Splash pad
 - Large Inclusive/Accessible Playscape
 - Three Multi-Use Recreational and Athletic Fields
 - Lighted Skate Park
 - Lighted Basketball Court
 - Off-Road Bicycle Trail
 - Two Large and Four Small Picnic Pavilions including the old Hoermann House area.
 - Restroom/Concession Facility
- Max Starcke Park
 - New Kids Kingdom Playscape addition and medium sized pavilion.
 - New restroom at Max Starcke Park East replaced the old one by the large playscape.
 - New/renovated restroom at Max Starcke Park West replaced at the Bowl area.
 - Tennis Court Improvements at Max Starcke Park West.
 - An 18-hole Disc Golf Course at Max Starcke Park East is under design at the Pecan Bottom and will be opened in June.
- Manuel C. Castilla Park
 - New restroom at Manuel C. Castilla Park replaced the old one at the park.

With so many residents and visitors utilizing all Seguin parks now (especially on weekends) and more use coming in the summer months, staff is proposing to implement a pilot Park Ranger Program. The program is designed to provide park safety/security, education, and information. The goal is to help keep Seguin residents and visitors safe/secure as they enjoy all of the amenities Seguin's parks offer. In addition, the Park Ranger Program will help protect the more than \$7 million worth of recent taxpayer investments in the park system. This includes patrolling the new Walnut Springs Trail.

As proposed, two temporary/seasonal Park Rangers would be hired and will work through the Labor Day Holiday, September 5, 2016. The two Rangers will be paired together (buddy system) in driving, walking,

and possibly bicycling all Seguin parks and trails. Being teamed up is important so that they are not alone in patrolling the parks after dark. In addition, in case of an incident or emergency one person can be addressing the situation and the other person can be contacting the proper authorities and can be a witness to an incident. The Rangers will be issued a hand-held radio and can contact Police Dispatch directly, if needed.

The Rangers will be issued a colored staff T-shirt that is highly visible with the new City logo on the front and the words STAFF on the back for easy public identification. The Rangers will receive training by both the Parks and Recreation Department and the Police Department. Various training scenarios will be covered to help prepare the Park Rangers of possible encounters with the public and best practices to handle scenarios. The program is designed to the park's security/safety, education, and information. As such, the Rangers will not be issuing citations.

The proposed working hours are as follows (weather permitting):

- Friday: 6 p.m. – 10 p.m.
- Saturday: 10 a.m. – 10 p.m.
- Sunday: 10 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Staff recommends approval of a pilot Park Ranger Program to operate through the Labor Day Holiday, September 5, 2016 at all City parks and trails.