

Park Board Applicant Questions – Answers due June 9, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.

ANSWERS PROVIDED BY, ROBERT BULLWINKEL <bobbullwinkel@gmail.com>

1. In your own words could you describe what you feel is the relationship of the Park Board to the City of Galveston.

The Park Board was established by law to control and manage certain City owned property to be designated as parks, including the beaches. The Park Board contracts with the City to maintain somewhat independently these parks on behalf of the City in accordance with the law and within proper budgetary and accounting guidelines. In addition, the Park Board collects the HOT taxes and manages permitting for short term rentals, among other functions as agreed to with the City. The relationship between the Park Board and the City should be mutually beneficial, whereby the Park Board endeavors to carry out its function (service if you will) in harmony with, and to the satisfaction of, the City Council, which in turn benefits the City and its residents and businesses. If there are disagreements between the Park Board and City Council, they should be worked out through compromise. The Park Board of Trustees should work diligently to ensure that the two entities work together to set objectives and achieve mutually acceptable goals.

2. Do you think the recent changes between the City of Galveston and the Park Board were necessary ? Please explain.

The City, as taxing authority and owner of the properties entrusted to the control and management of the Park Board (subject to Texas state law, including court rulings, executive orders and opinions of the office of Attorney General) should be entitled to act as the City Council deems fit. So, in my opinion, yes, the recent changes were necessary, and should be captured in an amendment to the contract between the City and the Park Board. Provided of course, that the Park Board is properly funded pursuant to Texas law and through proper budgetary process to enable it to fulfill its management function; and, in addition, to allow for budgeting of certain discretionary spending with respect to addressing any necessary but unanticipated events (whether foreseeable or unforeseeable), including taking appropriate legal action (preferably after discussion with City Council).

3. Do you feel that the promotion of Galveston Island is beneficial to our local businesses ?

Absolutely.

4. What are your thoughts on the recent severance packages approved by the Park Board ?

Severance packages are quite standard, in particular where employees are hired under contract. A reasonable severance package helps to motivate employees to work diligently and helps to foster integrity and fiduciary responsibility, especially where severance is voided when an employee is terminated for cause. In my opinion, any severance packages should be discussed with City Council and budgetary allocations should be addressed. Two weeks pay per year of service is typical but can be more lucrative where employment duration is limited or payment of severance is at risk for poor performance or improper conduct.

5. Do you feel that the number of visitors per year has become a concern for the Island and if so what do you feel are some actions by the Park Board that could address this ?

I personally don't see a concern, but then again I grew up on crowded New York City beaches. In all seriousness though, increasing numbers of visitors, although good for generating additional City revenue, can be a cause of concern. My emphasis would be on taking action to ensure the beaches are accessible and safe. The following list of things might be worth considering:

- ***Continued efforts towards beach re-nourishment in order to expand overall access to the beach;***
- ***Construction of walk-ways over the street along the seawall and westward over the vegetation line, which will improve pedestrian safety and bolster more frequent access to stores, restaurants and bathroom facilities along the seawall and protect establishment of dunes westward;***
- ***Construction of bath houses and lockers, which could collect fees to increase revenues and ensure adequate maintenance thereof;***
- ***A requirement that visitors endeavor to haul away garbage;***

- *Further limiting vehicular traffic on beaches, and designating special areas for surfing, fishing, jetskiing and boating on holiday weekends in order to protect swimmers by eliminating potential accidents;*
- *Deploy a sufficient number of lifeguard manned and manually propelled life boats on holiday weekends, just out beyond swimmers, to monitor swimming activity in close proximity in order to prevent drownings more effectively.*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. J. White".