



AGENDA MEMORANDUM
City Council Meeting of March 7, 2023

DATE: March 7, 2023
TO: Peter Zanoni, City Manager
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Resolution adopting the Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan

CAPTION:

Resolution adopting a Master Plan for Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park (SVMP) consistent with the Veteran Stakeholder Group and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC).

SUMMARY:

Currently, Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park (SVMP) does not have a master plan. In December 2022, the City retained Turner-Ramirez Architects for the development of a conceptual design of SVMP master plan. The Parks and Recreation Department, along with Turner-Ramirez Architects, conducted two (2) public stakeholder meetings with Corpus Christi area veteran's groups to gather feedback on proposed concepts. This item is a resolution to approve the Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park Master Plan located in District 1.

BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS:

Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park is located on the City's bayfront adjacent to the Art Center and Marina and is approximately 2.7 Acres. The park was dedicated in March of 1952 and was named after Joseph Warren Sherrill, a U.S. Navy Officer who died in service aboard the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor. In 2017, the park was renamed to "Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park". The park is a place of honor and reflection for residents and visitors to pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice in military service. The park provides an atmosphere of natural beauty and peace for quiet meditation. At present, Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park does not include memorials dedicated to each branch of the armed services. The intention is to provide appropriate memorials to honor each military branch and the contributions of every veteran – past and present for their service and sacrifice for this country.

Existing Monuments/Plaques:

- Warren Joseph Sherrill Memorial
- World War I Marker
- World War II Memorial
- Global War on Terrorism Memorial
- Prisoners of War Marker

- Coast Guard Memorial
- Korean War Memorial
- Pearl Harbor Survivor Memorial
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Birmingham Marker
- Lions Club Bench honoring all Veterans.

The conceptual renderings for SVMP detail the proposal of additional monuments and amenity improvements. It is proposed to rearrange the placement of the existing monuments to provide a more organized and thoughtful approach to the course of the park. It is also planned to elevate existing memorials that are placed in the ground to allow for improved viewing.

Several additional monuments have been offered to enhance the park. One being and a "main-sail" from the USS City of Corpus Christi submarine; a US Army UH-1, Bell Huey Helicopter; a "Lone Sailor" statue. The main sail will be a new memorial dedicated to sub-mariners of the US Navy who served along shoreline/grounds of SVMP. The helicopter will be a monument to the local/national armed forces of Corpus Christi Army Depot (CCAD) and Naval Air Station Corpus Christi (NASCC). A larger shade structure is also proposed and highlighted as a central gathering point of the Park. It is designed with amphitheater like seating with electrical improvements to accommodate events and the Veteran's Band; to provide sufficient shade/wind protection. A number of current amenities for the park include three, moderate shade structures (one shade structure added in early 2022), an eternal flame, a single restroom facility, walking paths and palm trees.

A Community Engagement Group (CEG) was created by the City's Executive Leadership Team and consisted of representatives from each of the following groups:

- Mayor's Committee on Veteran Affairs
- Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee
- Veteran's Roundtable
- Corpus Christ Veterans of Foreign Wars (three chapters)
- Veteran's Band
- USS Sea Turtle Base Corpus Christi
- South Texas Military Task Force (STMTF)
- Nueces County Veterans Services Office

The City along with Turner-Ramirez Architects hosted two community engagement events in which the CEG attended, each open to the public, that took place on February 15, 2023 & February 23, 2023, at the Art Center of Corpus Christi from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. These meetings were held to gather community input to identify existing amenities and deficiencies in the park. Recurring comments included extra ADA accessibility for parking/paths, way-finding signs/interactive features, shade structures/benches and restroom upgrades. Other comments mentioned concerns for security, maintenance, and lighting. There was also discussion regarding fundraising mechanisms for items such as engraved benches/pavers and having memorials be of substantial size. Participants were also asked to identify the absence of specific memorials. Suggested memorials to compliment the Park include representing the Iraq/Afghanistan War, Woman of War, Fallen/Missing in Action Soldiers and Purple Heart/Medal of Honor recipients.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee held a special meeting on March 1, 2023, to provide input and recommendations on the Sherrill Veterans Memorial Master Plan. The comments were positive on the final draft master plan presented by Philip Ramirez. The Committee favored the idea of interactive features such as "QR Codes" to provide educational information. A question was raised asking if City Staff has considered expanding SVMP to include Old City Hall Park. It was also suggested that tree planting include other local trees other than palm trees. Near the end of the Special meeting, PRAC unanimously approved a motion of support for the conceptual Master Plan and the City's effort to enhance Sherril Veterans Memorial

Park. PRAC further asked City Staff that they be periodically updated regarding project schedule and milestones.

The 10-year Parks & Recreation Master Plan identifies opportunities for improvement to replace existing wooden benches with shade at SVMP. Most other existing amenities, such as trails and accessibility are listed as “moderate condition”. Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park is categorized as a Special Use park designed to accommodate varied recreational interests to attract regional/statewide audiences and serve as revenue-producing amenities for the community. A principal strategy in the 10-year Parks & Recreation Master Plan is to prepare illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of municipal parks.

Additionally, the Master Plan supports the mission of the City of Corpus Christi’s Parks and Recreation Department and will enhance the City’s opportunity to qualify and compete for state funding through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). The Parks & Recreation Department will maintain accreditation by the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

Funding to construct the proposed improvements will be taken to the City Council for consideration during budget cycles.

ALTERNATIVES:

Mayor & City Council can modify or request staff to revise the proposed Master Plan. This alternative will add a duration period on the overall project timeline for SVMP.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact associated with this item. The Master Plan will be used as a guide to develop future capital improvement projects.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommendation is to approve this resolution, adopting a Master Plan for Sherrill Veterans Memorial Park consistent with the Veteran Stakeholder Group and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, as presented.

LIST OF SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

- Resolution
- Presentation by Turner-Ramirez Architects
- Feedback/public comment catalogue
- PRAC special meeting agenda
- PRAC special meeting minutes