

2-16-2011 Comments from Charles Dreyfus

Here are some outspoken comments on how the City allocates park funds.
We can do better.

You are welcome and invited to edit as you see fit and take any or all of it as your own.

Supporting details attached with **added highlighting**:



1 PACS BUDGET 2011- General Fund-ADOPTED.pdf

2 Zoo contract M&C 2-27-10.pdf

3 Subsidy for Zoo M&C attachment.pdf

4 BRIT's \$ from Parks Gas Fund.pdf

The City Budget is at <http://www.fortworthgov.org/fy2011budget/>

Parks Budget Comments 2-16-2011 Suggestions for better allocations.

The PACS (Parks and Community Services Department) includes:

The adopted budget **increases by \$573,099 to resume right-of-way mowing.**

NOTE: This is Cowtown. Prairie grass is a big part of our heritage. For

the last year some people have enjoyed seeing prairie grass on road right of way (ROW). Artists paint our beautiful prairie grasses! ROW need not look like a lawn for children to play on. Perceived threats of vermin wild fire are false. **Here is money that can be spent better.**

The adopted budget **decreases by (\$257,254)** and one authorized position for elimination of the City **aquatics program**, including one Recreation Programmer position. ADDED NOTE: Forest Park Swimming Pool was the only pool opened in 2010.

The adopted budget **decreases by (\$182,812) and four authorized positions** for reduced operations at the Botanic Gardens, including one Administrative Secretary, one Gardener, and two Senior Maintenance Workers.

The adopted budget **increases by \$492,361 for contractual increases at the Fort Worth Zoo. Privatizing the zoo has not saved money** in the operating budget. Under the almost twenty year old contract the private Fort Worth Zoological Association, Inc. got annual increases from the City of Fort Worth in proportion to the United States cost of living index. Almost twenty years of annual increases not bad for any government budget item.

The City gave the Zoo Association total control of planning and building the zoo. The Association built more than could be kept well on the Zoo's revenue. The Association demanded more money and the City Council voted to promise large annual increases to the Zoo: **\$492,361** in 2011, **\$500,000** in 2012, then annual increases of **\$1,000,000 per year through 2015**. All these big raises **PLUS annual cost of living adjustments**. All with **no public input** before the City Council voted to do all this. Here is money spent by surprise.

Similar contracts for the Nature Center and the swimming pools will not save money in the General Fund Budget. **What will save City money for capital improvement is contracting to allow specific capital improvements to be built by the private support organizations**; as when the Fort Worth Garden Club built and donated to the City the Deborah Beggs Moncrief Botanic Garden Center and Conservatory. The Garden Club has some permanent rights in the building, but it is controlled and staffed by the City.

The City Council gave BRIT **\$609,551.53** for its special new parking lot. The money came the City's Park Gas Lease Projects Fund on 12/14/2010 in **M&C C-24660**.

Did the Parks Board knowingly vote for that? After almost a century of providing pools for learn to swim programs, is BRIT's parking lot really more important than applying the same amount toward pools and swimming instruction. Is our Trinity River Vision message to children who might learn to swim in muni pools "Come to the river and drown?" We can do better.