

JOURNAL OF COMMISSION WORK SESSIONS
February 6, 2007

City Commission Work Session

Mayor Stebbins presiding

CALL TO ORDER: 5:30 P.M.

ROLL CALL: City Commissioners present: Dona Stebbins, Bill Beecher, Sandy Hinz, Diane Jovick-Kuntz and John Rosenbaum. Also present were the City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, Directors of Community Development, Planning, Public Works, Park and Recreation, Library, Park and Recreation, Police Chief, Acting Fire Chief, and the City Clerk.

1. FIREWORKS UPDATE.

Fire Chief McCamley reported to the City Commission that staff completed analyzing the results of a fireworks survey that was sent to 19,933 Great Falls residents in the October/November utility bill. 5229 surveys were returned resulting in a 25 percent return. 203 people completed the survey on-line.

The survey included the following options:

- Option 1: Returning Great Falls to the same fireworks regulations as Cascade County. (30 percent of the respondents selected this option)
- Option 2: Restricting the discharge of fireworks in the City to 2 or 3 days including July 4 and restricting the hours to avoid nighttime noise. (45 percent of the respondents selected this option)
- Option 3: Ban fireworks within the City except those launched by a licensed pyro-technician. (25 percent of the respondents selected this option)

Staff used the results of the survey and recommended the following changes to the fireworks ordinance.

- The selling and discharging of fireworks will be limited to 3 days with time restrictions: July 2 through July 4 from 8 am to midnight and December 31 from 10 pm to 12:30 am on January 1.
- Fireworks that would be allowed would be the same as Cascade County and the State of Montana. Additionally, children 7 and younger must be supervised.
- It shall be illegal for anyone to leave debris from discharged fireworks on any public place including but not limited to sidewalks, streets, and alleys, or on private property not owned by the individual discharging the fireworks
- Fireworks cannot be discharged from any public property including parks, streets, alleys and sidewalks.
- Proposed fines were as follows: 1st Offense - \$100; 2nd Offense - \$200; 3rd Offense - \$300 and 4th and higher - \$1000

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- Proposed increases for firework stand permits were as follows:

SIZE	FEES PROPOSED	
0 – 300 sq. ft.	\$100	\$250
301 – 1,000 sq. ft.	\$300	\$500
1,001 – 2,000 sq. ft.	\$500	\$750
2,001 – 3,000 sq. ft.	\$700	\$1000
3,001 sq. ft. or larger	\$900	\$1250

The funds collected for the permits would be used for enforcement and education efforts.

Commissioner Hinz suggested the firework stand permit fees were too high and asked staff to revisit them.

Mayor Stebbins stated the proposed ordinance offered a good solution to the issues that existed.

Commissioner Jovick-Kuntz asked if the fines for littering were the same as for discharging illegal fireworks. Chief McCamley stated they were. Commissioner Jovick-Kuntz also asked how the educational efforts would take place. Chief McCamley stated he did not want to write into the ordinance specific ways to educate the public. However, staff was prepared to print material for the firework stand owners to distribute to their customers and also do PSAs and interviews with the media.

Mike Maeder, firework stand operator, stated that Big Sky Pyrotechnic was preparing a safety brochure which could possibly include Great Falls ordinance information in it.

Robin Baker asked if the City would create zones for people to legally shoot off fireworks.

An unidentified audience member asked that block party organizers be allowed to discharge fireworks from the street. Commissioner Rosenbaum asked staff to research that suggestion.

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins thanked staff for the presentation.

2. SPRAY PARK UPDATE.

Deputy Park and Recreation Director Patty Rearden reported that staff had been researching possible locations for a spray park. Staff looked at several locations within Elks-Riverside Park

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and ruled them out because of issues pertaining to vandalism, access, cost and impact on other activities in the Park. They also researched the possibilities of adding spray parks in other locations. After extensive research staff recommended that spray parks be located at Jaycee and Water Tower Parks. Mrs. Rearden explained that after performing a cost analysis for these locations, Staff found that if the spray parks were added in conjunction with the improvements to be done with general obligations bonds, there would be adequate funds to add both spray parks versus one spray park in a more central location. She added that while the original intention was that the spray parks were free to the public, staff recommended that both parks be constructed within the fenced area of the neighborhood pools in order to reduce vandalism to the equipment.

The Commission concurred with this recommendation and asked to proceed with its planning.

ADJOURN

There being no further discussion, Mayor Stebbins adjourned the work session of February 6, 2007, at 6:45 pm.