

Park Board Meeting
July 8, 2013
Minutes

Meeting called to order at 3:00 p.m.

Members Present: Charlie Bruckner, Michael MacDonald, William Ramsey, Karen Harant, Patrick Carroll, and Shirley Davis

Members Absent: Russell Motschenbacher

Staff Present: Marty Basta, Patty Rearden, Giles Salyer

Others Present: Jim Frey, Natalie Riggin, Mark Willmarth, Rachel Kaiser, Mac Smith

Board motioned to approve the minutes from June, 2013 as written, motion seconded and carried.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Paris Gibson award given to Nancy and Ian Davidson at the Municipal Band concert on July 3.
- Roots sculpture has been installed at the entrance of Gibson Park, replicates the original entrance. Mike Hollern has the second lion to finish the project. (Karen – her family also has another lion from the bank.)
- Park and Recreation had huge budget cuts. Marty met with City Commission this morning. Park and Rec is taking the largest cuts, all related to Electric City Power settlement. Lost over \$500,000 in general fund support; which has forced us to use cash reserves to balance our budget. Reserves are mostly depleted. If a major failure occurs, there is no longer cash to fall back on. In addition, \$335,000 in budget requests were cut. We laid off four temporary employees that do mowing and irrigating, which will be an impact on parks. We are not being allowed to replace the Park Superintendent position when Giles retires. Other staff, already very busy, will be taking over some duties, Patty and Cindy will help with administrative duties, Marty will oversee Forestry, and John Smith, Park Supervisor, will be taking on more responsibilities. City-wide, there will be no pay increases, and potential furloughs. This is not only devastating to our budgets, but we are very concerned about next year; we're all in now. Marty will be looking into the creation of a Parks Maintenance District. The reality is that Public Safety has been the priority of the City Commission. 85% of the general fund budget is for public safety. The COPS grant was also part of the budget shortfall, with an \$325,000 for additional police officers.
- Park District -- city wide assessment (like street maintenance assessment). Need to develop a budget, assess that to all properties city wide. Streets Assessment is based on square footage. Would eliminate the Boulevard District. Can factor in a capital improvement percentage. Need to begin work on it. Park Board members asked what they can do to help with the City Commission. They are glad to advocate in any way needed. "Board is here to support what Park and Rec needs and to help push it through."
- The City will be conducting quarterly budget meetings with department heads and the City Commission.

- Talk of fee increases; Marty raised cautions and concerns that we don't increase fees to the point that it impacts usage. They do need to be looked at and we do have some areas that need to be increased. We won't ever be able to balance budgets without General Fund Support.

Park Board motioned to support the creation of city wide Park District to fund Park & Recreation. Motion seconded and carried.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Gibson Park Events Center

- Doug Oswood did not attend the meeting.

Box Car Mural

Rachel Kaiser has been fundraising to redo the mural at the Skate Park. She is changing directions and looking at a mural for the box car on River's Edge Trail – working with Doug Wicks. She will be using the funds she raised for the Skate Park. The fish under the bridge looks great. Water is hitting it; has a tough sealer on it, but the sprinklers are leaving marks on it. The irrigation crew will look at it and see if they can redirect water. Rachel will write a letter to all donors to let them know that the money is being redirected and to let Rachel know if they have any issues. Mural will be on the whole box car. Rachel requested more flexibility on the side facing river. Looking at September for doing the project. It's a big project and will take a lot of time and materials; will probably need more funding. Current funds would probably cover materials but no time. Sheree Nelson may collaborate with Rachel. Rachel will bring a conceptual drawing to the Board before proceeding. She will put a budget together to see what funds are still needed.

Board motioned to approve the transfer of funds from the Skate Park to the box car if donors are okay with it. Motion was seconded and carried

Great Falls Lions Club Funding Request

Mac Smith and Mark Willmarth attended the meeting to talk about a project of the Great Falls Lions Club for Lions Park. The club adopted Lions Park many years ago. They received money from the Park Trust in 2006 to install a new play structure (\$8,600 from the Park Trust, raised \$42,000 in 6 months). When looking for a new project, Giles suggested the Club pursue a climbing boulder. It is meant to be used for serious climbers to improve their skills as well as for children to play on. Project cost would be \$25,000-35,000; their goal is \$30,000, and could possibly reach \$35,000. The Lions Club already paid \$1,000 to design the project (company from Bozeman). They are designing a boulder unique to Great Falls; there will be no others like it. Mac is part of the climbing community, and is working with the design company in Bozeman. The climbing walls are designed at the same heights of play structures (not over 12' high). The company worked with Bozeman Park and Recreation to make sure insurance for play structures will also cover the climbing rocks. Design would start at the most basic level for kids and beginners, to intermediate and difficult for the climbing community. The designers are talking about putting in an arch also, which would make GF unique and would enable climbers to climb on inside. The surface below is generally wood chips with specific depths required. Some of the structural work will be done in Bozeman and it will be finished here. It will be maintenance free.

The Lions Club takes care of the flowers and flags in the park and spent \$10,000 on parking lot. They also considered a path for the park; but thought the rock would be a bigger hit and also easier to sell to donors. Lions Members contributed \$10,000 to the play structure plus the Club gave another \$5,000. The Park Board thinks the climbing rock would be an outstanding addition to the park.

The Lions Club is requesting matching funds in the amount of \$10,000 through the Park Trust. They anticipate raising another \$20,000-\$25,000. Upon approval, Marty will have to let the City Manager know, but it is an appropriate use of the funds. The balance of the Park Trust is a little less than \$400,000. They are optimistic that they can get the project done this fall or early next spring. Once installed, local climbers will do demonstrations and possible instruction to promote the new feature. At Lions Family FunFest, coming up on Saturday, the Club will give out 8 brand new bikes, 2 trikes, scooters, and sports equipment. A raffle for an iPad Mini will kick off at Lions Family FunFest as a fundraiser for the climbing rock; the drawing will be held on July 24. Tickets are \$2.00. The rock will attract climbers from around the area. It was suggested that the rock possibly be designed after Tower Rock; Mac will talk to the company. Donors will be listed on the rock or on something in front of the climbing rock. Marty will brief the City Manager and get final approval from the City Commission.

Board motioned to approve the Park Trust Grant up to \$10,000; contingent upon the Lions Club raising at least \$20,000 in funding. Motion was seconded and carried

Broadwater Bay Jet Ski Proposal

Proposal from Reese and Natalie Riggins – the Riggins are considering purchasing two deluxe personal watercraft (jet skis) to rent for use at Broadwater Bay. They would need 150' of land by the fee shed. They are in the infant stages of an idea and are exploring their options. Riggins' currently own two businesses: Chiropractic Clinic and Flippin' Family Fun. They have insurance that would cover rental of jet skis. They could store at the site or haul them down daily. There was some discussion on the congestion in that area with lots boats and jet skis on the water. Could look at another dock area. Riggins would develop some criteria for use of the water craft, such as 16 & older, licensed driver, any requirements the insurance company would suggest; would also not allow use of alcohol. Can put governors on the jet skis to limit speed. It was also suggested that they look at renting them at their business for use on the river; would have to factor in travel time. They could buy a season pass for each jet ski. Can't leave boats or jet skis in the water – the dock is for load or unload only. Canoes, kayaks, and paddle boards would be fun to have available for rent.

Pizza Baron Push Cart

Jim Frey with the Pizza Baron is interested in having a concessions trailer to be used in parks during events such as skating events at the Skate Park and Municipal Concerts at the bandshell. Will sell pizza by the slice. Mr. Frey has already talked to the City's Community Development Office and the Health Department. He is having his final inspection from the Health Department on Tuesday. Approval would take Park and Recreation Director's approval. Marty has not approved any to date because Park & Ponder and Tropicool had exclusive leases. If it is approved, we may have others come forward, so we would need to develop criteria on who would be allowed. Alive@5 only allows a specific number for each event. Bill Ramsey said that Missoula has lots of them in their parks. Pat said he was in favor and suggested they let Marty work out the details. Would need several things from Mr. Frey including a business license (safety certificate), insurance with us named additionally insured and some sort of payment structure. We need to discuss with staff. Cart would stay on paved surface and go down to the

parks a couple of hours at a time. The board is comfortable with the proposal and would leave it up to staff to work out details. Other events Mr. Frey plans to be at include Farmer's Market and Taste of Great Falls. Good promotion for his business. He will work on permits and get back to Marty and staff will discuss.

MISCELLANEOUS REPORTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Giles Salyer, Park Superintendent

Crew is out doing the best they can with what they have to work with. There is going to be some issues; we cannot take two irrigation staff out of the mix (two to do the work of four) without a significant impact. We will be rotating staff through the parks; instead of four days a week, they will be down to two days a week in the parks. There will be dramatic differences in some of the older parks in town. As far as the cuts in the mowing crews, we are trying to figure out some of the things we can drop off our list. Using volunteers creates some issues with unions and liability. People are very protective of their parks and we are already hearing from residents. One of our staff was confronted just today from a resident near a park that is showing signs of stress from lack of watering. We have never been overstaffed. A Park District would definitely help.

Patty Rearden, Deputy Director

Summer programs are all going very well. Camps are going well, as are swimming lessons and First Tee and Girls Golf lessons. The hot days have been good for pools. Lions Family FunFest is coming up this weekend (July 13). It is hosted by Park and Recreation and the Great Falls Lions Club and includes all kinds of games and activities, three jolly jumpers, music, prizes, great giveaways including bikes and sporting equipment. Pet & Doll Parade is coming up July 25. Encourage your kids, grandkids, neighbors to participate; it's a lot of fun. Mike MacDonald volunteered to be a judge.

Forestry

Giles reported that the Forestry crew is busy trimming trees. Todd is also trying to figure out how he is going to absorb budget cuts – looking at downsizing, things to quit doing.

Giles' last day is July 31 and will be leaving town August 9. The board wishes him well and congratulated on a job well done. There will be a retirement party on Friday, August 2nd at Cripple Creek in conjunction with Tom Hugg from Public Works.

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:15.