

PARK AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
MONDAY, JULY 11, 2016
MINUTES

Meeting called to order at 3:00pm

Members Present: Patrick Carroll, June Sprout, Lonnie Hill, Erin Granger, Shirley Davis, George Geise

Members Absent: Lynn Oatman,

Staff Present: Joseph Petrella, Patty Rearden, Lonnie Dalke, Todd Seymanski

Others Present: Mike Dalton, Westside Orchard Garden

With no additions or corrections to the minutes from the June meeting, Board motioned to approve as written. Motion was seconded and carried.

June stated she would like to see the Mission and Vision Statements that will be part of the Master Plan when available.

Director's Report

Update to the Master Plan: We will have the draft of the Master Plan in hand by Labor Day with edits made in September. The plan will be presented to the Planning Board and the City Commission in October. There are concerns with some of our leases and the condition of the property; lessees may have to remove items such as unsafe bleachers or our staff will need to remove. It was asked who is on the steering committee. The work has been done primarily by staff and the consultant; there is no steering committee for this project. This Thursday (July 14, 7 p.m.), Bockholt Landscape Architects will attend the Neighborhood Council 9 meeting to discuss the master plan for Kranz Park and solicit community input. The FY2017 budget recommendations were favorable; they included funds to set aside for future irrigation upgrades for Parks; funds for ERS (Equipment Revolving) and for clearing branches from power lines for Forestry; and maintenance funds for trails. In addition, we were given some additional general fund support to help with ISC increases (internal service charges). Movies in the Park will be on Saturday, July 23 with "Zootopia". We have the opportunity to provide concessions; revenue would go to the Park Trust.

Old Business

West Bank Park Update-- Calumet

There is no new news on the Calumet project as BNSF has delayed the project.

West Bank Park Update Park Improvements

MRTE will begin the trail replacement project tomorrow (July 12). The landscaping and irrigation project will begin sometime around August 1st; the final date won't be set until the pre-construction meeting. The TA (Transportation Alternative Program) for trail replacement will begin sometime in September.

Westside Orchard Garden

Mike Dalton updated the Board on activities and improvements at the Westside Orchard Garden. The Garden was part of the Paris Gibson Garden Walk this year. Their primary goals are to raise food to reduce hunger in the community, and educate children on nutrition and raising produce. They run an extensive summer education program teaching children about growing food and good nutrition. Some of the participants include Big Brothers and Sisters, Head Start, etc. They have also developed an area they call the Learning Center where they teach educational classes including teaching teachers. Beneficiaries from the food they raise include Head Start, Boys and Girls Club Kitchen, Meals on Wheels, Mercy Home, Great Falls Receiving Home, and Ursuline Preschool. They raised 10,000 pounds from the garden. Other partners include Albertson's, Cascade County Extension Office, Food Bank, Set Free, FISH, Flower Farm, and bee keeper and contractor John Nelson. Their next steps will be: 1) The Flower Farm donated a 90' greenhouse; they will be asking Director Petrella and the Park Board for permission to put up the greenhouse; 2) St. Vincent is opening the Grace Home for homeless vets; they will be applying for a permit with Park and Recreation to develop a garden for the vets in North Kiwanis.

New Business

Gibson Park Entrance

The City has received a TA grant for improvements to the intersection at 4th Ave. North and Gibson Park. A preliminary drawing has been completed of the proposed intersection. It will extend an island/curbing out so it narrows the opening and aligns with 4th Avenue North which will improve traffic flow and site lines. Currently, it is dangerous to cross Park Drive which is a State road. We need to come up with matching funds for the grant; Recreational Trails Foundation will come up with half of the match and the Park Trust will pay the remainder (estimated at \$5,000 - \$7,000).

Motion was made to approve funds from the Park Trust to provide match up to \$10,000 for the project. The motion was seconded; motion carried.

Miscellaneous Reports and Announcements

Staff

Forestry, Todd Seymanski

- Doing a lot of trimming; losses from Dutch Elm Disease have been low this year, so the crew has been able to get more trimming done.
- Been dodging the bullet lately with the storms, there has been very little damage.
- Budget will soon be finalized – will be issuing a couple of trimming contracts that are included and will receive \$45,000/year to go towards equipment replacement. (A tower truck costs \$240,000, but we have to start somewhere.) We need new equipment; our equipment has been well taken care of but many pieces are over 20 years old. We have a lot of down time and then it puts a stop to work being done.
- The Emerald Ash Borer has now been found in Omaha, Nebraska.
- We will no longer be cutting a Christmas Tree for the front of the Civic Center; we will decorate the tree directly to the northeast of the front of the Civic Center. LED lights have already been purchased and are ready to go. Todd has talked to the boards of the Business Improvement District and the Downtown Great Falls Association and they have both approved the plan. The public has been informed through the budget process.

Parks, Lonnie Dalke

- Mowing,
- Irrigating and fixing irrigation breaks everyday; the systems are getting old and breaks are occurring more and more often.
- Been servicing events – Music on the Mo, Lions Family FunFest. They've been good events, drawing lots of people. It's good the parks are getting used.
- Set some bait traps for ground squirrels; it's never ending, especially areas that abut other properties that we don't control.

Patty Rearden

- Lions Family FunFest went very well. Great attendance and lots of fun activities. Attendance was estimated at approximately 2,000, which is up from previous years with attendance in the 1,000-1,200 range.
- The Summer Park Program, being conducted in partnership with Get Fit Great Falls, is going well. Attendance has increased each week with very low attendance the first week, 120 children the second week and 200 children the third week. The program is being held in Gibson, Verde, Rhodes, Lions and Pinski Parks. The program includes a 15 minute science or art project and 30 minutes of games and other types of physical activity. We have also partnered with the School District Food Truck which provides free lunches for children in the parks including Gibson, Rhodes and Lions Parks.

Board Questions/Comments

- The Vendor program is doing well with one vendor working primarily in Gibson Park; he has replaced his generator alleviating the noise issue. Joe has been contacted by another vendor interested in doing cotton candy.
- The RFP is ready to go for kayak/canoe rentals. It will go out this fall/winter, probably in November or December.
- Lonnie stated that the Fireworks show was very good.
- June reported that lap swimming at the Mitchell Pool has been well attended with 15-20 people each session. The 6:15 p.m. Water Aerobics class that was added at the Natatorium is also doing well with 20-24 people attending.
- Joe reported that the Water Park has been doing well when weather has been hot. There is no answer yet on the CDBG project for doors and jams. Joe and the City Manager are both in support of moving the project forward. It must go back before the City Commission for approval which will have to be submitted by the Planning and Community Development Director.
- George stated that there is a petition circulating for a permanent facility for pickle ball courts. At this time, there is no funding available and a funding source would need to be presented with the request.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 3:59 p.m.