

# MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE December 7, 2016  
AND LOCATION: Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Rick DeVore, Catherine Grott, Rich Lorenz, Lew Morris, Marc Wahl, Dayton Rush

PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, Director

Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent

Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent

Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent

Mark Jarvis, Park Planner

Mike Pigg, Park Supervisor

Triniti Halverson, Senior Services Specialist

Sean Brandenburg, Recreation Specialist

Paul Reinhardt, Recreation Specialist

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## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Rick DeVore called the meeting to order at 11:30 am

### A. INTRODUCTIONS

Michael Svetz, Pros Consulting Inc.

Billings Senior Citizens Board members; Marilyn Richardson, Cathy Inglett, and Karen Erdie

Jolene Rieck, Peaks to Plains Designs

### B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*A motion was made to approve the November 9, 2016 minutes. Board member Lew Morris approved. Board member Tom Rupsis seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

*A motion was made to approve the November 16, 2016 minutes with the correction to Gary Roller name. Board member Rich Lorenz approved. Board member Lew Morris seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

## II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

- Michael recognized and expressed gratitude to three of the PRC Park Board members who will be going off the board at the end of the month; Catherine Grott, Dayton Rush and Marcia Clausing.
- He mentioned that staff and the APDC (Amend Park Development Council) were still working on a draft agreement between the City and the APDC regarding Amend Park. He hopes to have something for the board to review next month.

### **III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT**

None

### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Department Comprehensive Plan Preliminary Results:**

Michael Svetz of Pros Consulting Inc. was at the meeting to give a presentation on the key findings from the city-wide survey. The purpose of the survey was to identify existing and potential core programs areas, identify areas of strength and improvements, and identify program gaps and key system wide issues needed for the departments Comprehensive Plan. The survey went out in October. A total of 505 residents completed the 7 page survey. There was a margin of error of =/- 4.1%.

Some of the findings from the survey are highlighted below:

- 86% surveyed used a city park in the past 12 months.

- **Demographics:**

Current estimate population and households for 2016 is 47,099 households and 112,023 population. Projected households and population in 15 years is 55,291 households and 132,097 population.

Estimated 2016 ages; 22.1% under 18, 23.5% 18-34, 23.9% 35-54 and 30.5% 55+. Estimated ages in 15 years; 21.5% under 18, 20.7% 18-34, 22.1% 35-54 and 35.7% 55+. We have an ageing population.

Majority of the ethnicity in our area are white alone 87.98% with American Indian second at 1.69%.

Median household income is around \$50,791 which is above compared to state and a little below compared to country. Per capita income is \$29,982. Once again Billings is a little higher than state but it is also higher than country.

- **Local Market Potential:**

Participation in activities that are above the national average demand is golf, softball, baseball and football. Lower on down by a small amount is tennis, basketball, and soccer.

Participation in fitness programs above the national average are Yoga, swimming, walking, aerobics, weight lifting, Pilates and jogging/running.

Participation in outdoor recreation that are above the national average demand is canoeing, hiking, mountain bicycling, backpacking, archery, bicycling (road), horseback riding, boating and fishing.

- **Qualitative Input: (residents expressed the following about the department)**

Knowledgeable about the abundance of undeveloped park lands.

Frustration surrounding the length of time it takes to bring these lands into developed and useful status.

Appreciated the recent investments into the legacy parks.

The level of maintenance effectiveness was varied. PMD's were considered a good thing to help with maintenance. Lack of attention to vacant lands seemed to skew people's perceptions of maintenance.

Limited number of developed parks leads to a lack of options for organized team practice and locations for games such as baseball, soccer, etc.

Positive about experiences with recreation programs.

Wanted the department to provide a safe, diverse, quality spaces for people to recreate.

Provide diverse parks and facilities that encourages people to be active and allowing multiple activities.

Focus on existing parks over acquisition of new lands.

Underserved segments of the community:

- neighborhoods such as South Side
- types of facilities and programs like skate parks and indoor facilities
- newly developed neighborhoods were being short-changed and want to see parks developed up-front with new subdivisions
- access to the Yellowstone River

Want to see an increase in communication and marketing including an increase in distribution. Results showed that 52% said they learned about recreation programs and activities through the newspaper.

Increase in partnerships with local organizations, groups, faith-based community and the private sector.

Important issues are to them are funding, quantity and quality of parks and facilities, better communication, safety, user fees, taxes, private donations

and development related funds.

- **Additional Survey Results:**

- 62% surveyed said the overall condition of City parks to be good.
- 60% surveyed said they have used some of the trails the Parks Division maintains. 61% felt the condition of those trails to be good.
- The main reason keeping residents from visiting City parks and trails more often is the distance from their homes.

89% of households have not participated in any Recreation programs. But of those who did participate 82% have participated in the programs because they were fun. 58% households have not participated in recreation programs because they were too busy or not interested while closely behind that was due to the public not being aware of what programs were being offered.

- Top 2 facilities that were most important to people were walking and biking trails, neighborhood parks and large community parks.
- Top 3 programs that were most important to people were family recreation swimming, learn to swim programs for children and family outdoor adventure trips.
- Top 3 items that individuals would support of various action the City could take were to improve the Parks, Trails and Recreation system were to; repair aging neighborhood parks, improve existing playgrounds and trail systems.
- Top 3 times residents would support funding are; repairs to the aging neighborhood parks, develop a new indoor recreation/wellness center and develop new paved walking, biking trails.
- Majority of those surveyed were not sure on how to support various sources of funding such as PD1 assessment.
- Overall residents surveyed were somewhat satisfied with the value households receive from the department.
- 31% were very supportive of PD1 funding.
- 28% were very supportive of using a percentage of a sales tax to fund park improvements.

Mr. Svetz said he will be back in January to give this presentation to City Council. That should be on January 17<sup>th</sup>. He said he will also give a public presentation on the 18<sup>th</sup> possible at the Library. The final presentation will be to the Planning Board some time in February. The board expressed overall the presentation was a lot of good information and will helpful with their presentation for funding of undeveloped parks projects.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Update on Projects That Are Underway:**

Michael gave an update on 3 current projects underway.

- Yellowstone Kelly Interpretative site is underway.
- South Park Sprayground; currently securing all the signatures and

insurances to move ahead with that project.

- Rose Pool bathhouse/operations building will go out to bid tomorrow.

**B. Undeveloped Parks Projects:**

Rick said that Michael, Tina and himself met in November to discuss the next step the Park Board and staff need to take on this project. He said following their discussion it was decided to wait on moving forward due to things going on at the legislative level. He said they want to also discuss further some better numbers for what it would cost regarding the bonds. Michael said they will be meeting again in the next couple of weeks to discuss how to move forward.

**VII. DIVISION UPDATES:**

**A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson:**

In addition to his report, Kory said the winter brochure is out. 20,000 were printed. 13,000 went into the Simpley Family Magazine, 7,000 will be mailed out and then the rest will be given out at the office. Registration for the programs started December 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff is ready for 2017.

**B. Park/Urban Forestry Division-Park Superintendent Jon Thompson:**

In addition to his report, Jon said they are working on getting the ground frozen at Veteran's park for the ice skating rink. It should be up and running for the holiday season weather permitting. He highlighted from his report that the Forestry Division spent most of November trimming trees along Montana Avenue. He said there are plans over the next couple of years on renovating the planters and shrubbery along that street also.

Jon said he was happy to report that the department has hired a new City Forester. The individual is from Spokane Washington and will start the first part of January.

**C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:**

In addition to his written report, Mark said he met with the South Billings Urban Renewal Association and they have given a recommendation on the preferred concept for Optimist Park. The consultant working on the project should have a draft of the preferred concept ready in the next week. He hopes to present that concept to Council's at the end of January.

**D. Volunteer Coordinator's Report-Chris Waite:**

No additions to his report.

**E. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:**

No additions to his report.

**VIII. AJOURNMENT - 1:15 pm**