

# MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE April 12, 2017  
AND LOCATION: Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Rick DeVore, Lew Morris, Rich Lorenze, Jim Ronquillo, Chuck Platt, Darwin George, Tom Rupsis, Tim Warburton, Marc Wahl

PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, Director

Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent

Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent

Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent

Mark Jarvis, Park Planner

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## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

### A. INTRODUCTIONS

Bill Cole, Billings Chamber

Bob Morgan, Claudia Morgan, Julie Thomason and Wade Gilsdorf, City Residents

### B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Movies in the Park

Dog Park at Centennial

### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*A motion was made to approve the March 15, 2017 minutes. Board member Jim Ronquillo approved. Board member Lew Morris seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

## II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

Michael said Board Member Jim Ronquillo has been officially appointed to be on the Yellowstone River 2011 Oil Spill Committee.

Mr. Ronquillo said he spoke with Alisha from the oil spill committee and she said they are looking to have their first meeting either May 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup>. The committee will have about 10-11 people on it and it should take 1-2 years to get the projects off the ground. He said the funds will be released slowly and by the state Governor.

Michael said City Council has awarded the contract to Land Design for the Poly Vista Master Plan. A portion of the funding for this project will be donations from the Kiwanis Club and the Landon's Legacy Fund. The remaining funds will come from the city.

Michael said City Administrator Tina Volek, City Attorney Brent Brooks, and himself met again to discuss the Mustangs agreement. The updated agreement will go back to the owner of the Mustangs for his approval. Michael said the agreement is scheduled to go before City Council at the end of April for approval. A copy of the final agreement will be sent out to the board.

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

None

### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. 2017 Summer Brochure Program and Summer Season Highlighted Information:**

- Most popular recreation programs; swim lessons, fly fishing, kids flag football, Soccer Camp for 3-5-year old's, Adventure Camps, "Aquanuts" and tennis.
- New programs for the 2017 season; Lacrosse Camp, "Garden with Grandparents", adult dance and adult co-ed volleyball.
- Special Interest 2017 recreation programs; Rocket Camp, "Kids in the Kitchen", "Cooking for 1" and computer fundamentals
- Additional 2017 programs include; scuba, family white water rafting, canoeing, rock climbing for young and old and at the end of the summer the "Dog Days of Summer".
- Future events happening in the parks sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department are; "Shakespeare in the Parks", Movies in the Park and Arbor Day.
- Advertising for summer programs is being shown on KTVQ TV station and 6 billboards around town.
- A second community garden is opened this spring. It is located in the Josephine Crossing Subdivision and is named "Songbird Community Garden".
- Since the release of the 2017 Summer Brochure online April 1st, we have received \$72,000 in registration fees to date.
- The batting cages at Stewart Park are open. Spraygrounds will open May 27<sup>th</sup>, pools at South and Rose Parks are set to open June 7<sup>th</sup> and wading pools will open June 12<sup>th</sup> weather permitting.
- Approximately 50-60 individuals will be hired as lifeguards this season.
- Currently taking applications for Park Rangers and Bike Patrol volunteers.

#### **B. 2016 Annual Report-Review:**

A copy of the PRPL annual report was given out to the board. Chris Waite gave an overview of the report. Highlights from the report:

- In 2016, the department hired a consultant firm to help assist staff in updating the community's parks, recreation and open space comprehensive plan. This plan helps in determines and establishes specific short and long term strategies on how we can meet the needs of our citizens. It also

establishes priorities for parkland acquisition and development, facility management, coordination with other public and private entities and the provision of recreation services.

- 86% of Billings households have visited a park in the past 12 months. Park visitation in Billings is 7% higher than the national benchmark of 79%.
- 23% of city residents rated the overall condition at the park as excellent.
- According to a recent survey trails and neighborhood parks are considered the most important facilities to Billings residents.
- The Parks Division manages over 2,500 acres of parkland or 10% of land in the City of Billings. There are 2.2 million visitors to major parks annually. Just in 2016, we had 25 weddings at Riverfront Park alone. Park staff manages over 120 irrigation systems, mow 37,984,320 square feet of parkland, spray and fertilize 281 acres of turf grass, plow and remove snow at 93 locations and manage and maintain all park facilities (tennis courts, restrooms, splash pads, baseball stadium, skate park, dog park, sports fields, disc golf courses, volleyball courts), buildings, trails and 41 playgrounds.
- The Urban Forestry Division manages and cares for 9,425 trees in developed parks, as well as City tree ordinances and natural forests. In Pioneer Park alone, there are 846 trees. There are 145 different tree species in our city parks. In 2016, 180 trees were planted in our parks; 90 trees were removed. In 2016, the division received the National Arbor Day Award for the Arbor Day Event put on every year.
- The Recreation Division offers over 120 programs a year and operates a community center, batting cage and 2 major aquatics facilities. In 2016, there were 5,766 program participants generating \$167,545 in program revenue. \$2,543 youth scholarships were offered to low-income families. There were 120 unique recreation programs offered and 40,000 visits to Rose and South Park pools. The Community and Senior Center served 6,863 meals 2016. 50% of the divisions revenue came from recreation programs; while 34% came from aquatics. The Strike Zone Batting Cages generated \$32,465 in revenue in 2016.
- The Cemetery Division operates a full service 64-acre cemetery which is the oldest and longest continually operated cemetery in Billings. In 2016, there were a total of 120 burials and columbaria services. 58 grave spaces were sold and \$103,730 was generated in revenue.
- Community Outreach Division in 2016 had a total of 1,862 volunteers who worked a total of 7,152 hours on projects around the city. A few of those projects included community service projects, painting structures, graffiti removal, planting trees or working at the community gardens. Volunteers also helped at special events like Arbor Day and Refresh the Rims. There were 12 Eagle Scout projects ranging from tree planting to shelter restoration.
- Current projects in progress include; South Park splash pad, Yellowstone Kelly Interpretive Site, Optimist Park Master Plan, Poly Vista Park Master

Plan, Hawthorne Park playground improvements, and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan.

- The Administrative Services of the department are responsible for the budget oversight, bills, payroll, long-term planning, department communications and general administration.

**C. Movies in the Parks:**

Board and staff discussed concerns brought by the Kiwanis Club regarding the Firefly Outdoor Movie Company over “Movies in the Park” and whether it was becoming an event for profit to the Firefly company. It is against PRPL’s permit policy to allow for profits to hold events in our parks.

Michael Whitaker said “Movies in the Park” was something that was created between Firefly and the former Recreation Superintendent Joe/PRPL. Current Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson said that based on the information he received, in 2011 a partnership was formed between this department and the Firefly company to offer a free event to the community through movies in the park. He said we have been working with Firefly since the beginning on dates, locations etc. He said other than those things, he is not aware of anything going on outside of that. Staff will need to look into Kiwanis concerns before any further discussion or action is taken.

**D. Dog Park at Centennial Park:**

Postponed discussion until next month.

**VII. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. Proposed Terry Park Cell Tower:**

Bill Cole from the Billings Chamber presented some updated information regarding questions from last month’s board meeting.

He presented several new options for the towers location and look at Terry Park.

He answered a question as yes regarding on whether the monthly fees received from cell tower lease agreement with the City could be paid upfront to the department. He also said that he does not know how much would be paid out or when it would happen.

He answered no on a question regarding whether the tower could be placed at a different location such as the Catholic School just a few blocks away from Terry Park.

The board asked if there were plans to discuss with the Fire Chief placing the tower on top of the Fire Station at Terry Park. Michael said there would not be a answer for this until next month.

The board agreed to postpone making any decision until the May board meeting giving a chance for the board to review the new location and look options and for staff to speak with the Fire Chief.

**B. Update on Projects that are Underway:**

- We finally received the signed agreement from the State for the LWCF grant to replace the playground at Hawthorne Park. The awarded amount is for \$125,000. The playground should be completed sometime this fall.
- Veterans automated irrigation project should be complete soon.
- South Park spray ground is moving forward. We hope have an estimated completion date to be this summer.
- We are currently tweaking the design aspect of the Rose Pool bathhouse/operations building. We are planning to go out for bid in July with the demolition and construction this fall.
- Yellowstone Kelly Interpretative site construction project has started up again. The project should be complete this June.
- The Comprehensive Plan-key findings have gone before the Council, Planning Board, Chamber Board and the public. Staff will be meeting again with PROS in March. Hope to have this project completed this summer.
- The new Kiosk at Swords will be installed will be installed in the next few weeks.
- The fencing project at Dehler is moving forward. Plans are to move the northside fence to accommodate for a zip line.
- Currently working on hiring a consultant to work on the Master Plan for Poly Vista Park. The top pick was Land Design. Landon's Legacy Foundation will be funding this project.
- Recreation staff is working on the summer brochure. It should be finished today. It will come out April 1<sup>st</sup>. Staff is also updating our software system to be ready for the summer online registration season.
- The batting cages will be opening the first of April.

**VII. ADDITION DISCUSSION:**

- The board will not be doing a bus tour in May. It was postponed until this fall.
- Michael Whitaker, Rick DeVore and City Administrator Tina Volek will meet at the end of the month to discuss further funding for development of Centennial Park and undeveloped parkland.
- There will be a stakeholders meeting on Poly Vista Park on April 20 from 12pm-1pm at the PRPL office.

**VIII. DIVISION UPDATES:**

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

No additions to his written report.

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

In addition to his report, Jon said Hawthorne main playground equipment has been removed and will be replaced sometime this summer.

**C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:**  
No additions to his report.

**D. Volunteer Coordinator's Report-Chris Waite:**  
No additions to his report.

**E. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:**  
No additions to his report.

**IX. AJOURNMENT - 1:33 pm**