

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Special Board Meeting

MEETING DATE June 13, 2017
AND LOCATION: Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Rick DeVore, Lew Morris, Jim Ronquillo, Chuck Platt, Darwin George, Tom Rupsis, Tim Warburton, Darwin George

PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, Director
Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent
Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent
Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner
Chris Waite, Volunteer Coordinator

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Rick DeVore called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm

A. INTRODUCTIONS

City of Billings Administrator Tina Volek
Michael Svetz, PROS Consulting
Jolene Reick, Peaks to Plains

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

- *Update on Veterans tree accident:* Park Superintendent Jon Thompson said a tree limb from one of our 100-year-old large heritage Cottonwood trees located in Veterans Park broke during one of the “Movie in the Park” events, injuring a man. After assessing the tree and having a certified arborist look at the tree to back up our assessment, it has been decided to remove the tree. The playground near the tree will be fenced off until the tree has been removed to prevent any injuries during its removal. Bids will be going out for its removal.
- *Announcement:* Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent, announced his retirement at the end of August.

III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT

None

VI. OLD BUSINESS

A. Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan:

Mike Svetz of PROS Consulting gave a presentation on the Comprehensive Plan. He touched on the following points:

- **Park Typology (study and classification of parks):** List of parks are; pocket parks, community parks, regional parks, greenbelts/trails, open space/conservation parks, special use park/facility, neighborhood/school parks and major sports complexes.
- **Service Level Standards:** Current facility service levels standards for all park types except for community parks are being met. This is based upon population compared to the recommended service levels. that all park types meet standards. Facility standards for 2023 show a need for more pocket parks, community parks, greenways, special use parks and sports complex parks.

Service level standard for outdoor and indoor amenities that currently exists are for; reservable large picnic shelters, ball diamond (90-foot bases), regulation sports fields, dog parks/off leash area, skate parks, multi-generational rec center. The service levels for these amenities will still exist in the year 2032 unless there are changes.

- **Priority Rankings:** Top 3 priorities for investment for recreation facilities based on the priority investment rating are; walking/bike trails, small neighborhood parks and off-leash dog park.

Top 9 priority investment rating programs are; family recreation swimming, family outdoor adventure trips, indoor climbing wall/walking track for all ages, adult water fitness programs, ice rink, adult (age 55-70) fitness/exercise programs, learn to swim programs for children and riverlake water sports.

- **Capital Improvements:** Total cost of ownership comes from adding together Capital investment, operations and maintenance and lifecycle replacement. There are 3 costs “buckets” for capital improvements; critical, sustainable and visionary.

There are currently 32 critical projects needing attention. Some of those include; Pioneer Park sprayground replacement, playground replacement; resurfacing of parking lot; shelter upgrades at Rose Park, replace shelter at Veteran’s and playground replacement at Terry. Total approximant costs for critical projects; \$20,517,500

There are currently 15 sustainable projects. Those include the installation of loop trails at Veterans, Walsh and Millice Parks, and Rehberg Park picnicking amenities and benches. Total approximant costs for sustainable projects; \$1,370,000

There are currently 32 visionary projects. Some of those projects are multi-generational recreation center, update master plan for North Park, develop park master plan at Cottonwood and implement park master plan at Pioneer. Total approximant costs for visionary projects; \$71,142,000

Total cost for critical, visionary and sustainable projects \$93,029,500.

- ***Areas of Recommendations for the department:***

- Park typology definitions
- Storm drainage facilities
- Watercourse and irrigation easements
- Ownership and management of open space
- Design standards for planned NH developments
- Parkland and trail dedication
- Stormwater detention/retention in parks
- Determining cash contribution for parkland
- Required supporting documents for major preliminary plat applications

- ***Next steps for the department:***

- Prioritization of the CIP
- Funding strategies – planned for the end of June
- Draft Master Plan – planned for early August
- Master plan approvals – sometime in august/September

Michael Whitaker said the comprehensive plan will be presented to the Commission Planning Group this evening and City Council next week.

VII. Additional Discussion-City Park Planning Ideas:

City Administrator Tina Volek spoke on park funding and where the city and the department are at. Ms. Volek said she has spoken with City Council about long term needs in a number of areas. She met with Rick DeVore and Tom Rupsis to discuss park needs and how it plays into a 3-year strategy plan. Currently the council's top priority is the inner belt loop. Funding for this project will come out of the state gas tax. Another item on the Councils list is transit. Transit is in need of new buses. This includes both special needs transit and regular transit. Funding for this has come in the past from a mill levy. There is talk about doing another levy to help fund this item. Council also has on their list of needs public safety. Funds have been generated by the 911 Fund to build the new 911 call center. A mill levy is being looked at to build a fire station in the heights. Also, looking into buying or leasing a building to house as an

evidence building.

She said that as far as Park and Recreation needs goes, she informed Council that the park board is asking to add \$500,000 a year bonded, to the already yearly assessment of \$2 million, to help pay for the development of Centennial, Optimist, and Castle Rock.

The problems that have come to attention with this additional request of funding is, the city needs to meet the long-term needs over time first and also address the situation with how the legislation has changed the assessment process.

Ms. Volek reported that prior to the approval of Park District 1 assessment, the city ran a letter to property owners, requesting them to mail back the letter if they protested the assessment. Legislation now requires the city to run a letter that includes a protest form to every property owner in the district giving them the option to select either to support or protest that district assessment. Any letter returned marked protest will be counted as such but now if a form is returned not marked either for or against, it will be counted as against.

Ms. Volek, Rick and Tom have discussed possible options. Option one would be to increase PD1 from \$2 million to \$7.43 million. Option two would be to have Council approve revenue bonds to pay for projects. Option three would be to have Council request a vote by the public to use general obligation bonds (GO Bond) for park development.

There was a suggestion from Ms. Volek for the Park Board to wait on making in decisions on options until after this year's local election. She told the board that the public will be voting in a new Mayor and several new Council Members along with the City hiring a new City Administrator since she will be retiring at the end of September. She also told the board to look into building a strong relationship special interest groups like the Billings Chamber and the Park and Recreation Foundation for support and funding ideas.

Rick told the board they will continue discussion on this matter at the regular scheduled board meeting tomorrow due to time constraint.

VIII. AJOURNMENT - 1:57 pm