

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE June 14, 2017
AND LOCATION: Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Rick DeVore, Lew Morris, Jim Ronquillo, Tom Rupsis, Marc Wahl, Rich Lorenz

PRPL Staff Members:

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

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Dianne Lehm, Steve Arveschoug, and Patrick Klugman of the Big Sky Economic Development

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made to approve the April 12, 2017 minutes. Board member Jim Ronquillo approved. Board member Lew Morris seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

A motion was made to approve the May 10, 2017 minutes. Board member Tom Rupsis wanted to add to the May minutes the mention to form a committee to discuss cell towers in parks. Tom approved the minutes with the added information. Board member Lew Morris seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

Michael was happy to inform the board that the City Council will be discussing hiring a dedicated police officer for the parks system at the July 10 meeting. Funding for the

position will come out of the General Fund.

III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT

None

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Coulson Park Master Plan:

Coulson Park is located in the southwest part of Billings near the Yellowstone River. It is a 13 acre natural area owned and managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. In recent months, there has been a big interest from the community in developing the park. Steve Arveschoug from the Big Sky Economic Development (BSED) expressed to the park board that the BSED would like to partner with the City on developing a full evaluation and Master Plan for Coulson. This would include a joint effort with the City and partners, review of relevant studies, public meetings, conceptual development and final master plan and presentations.

The estimated cost for the study is around \$75,000. Potential funding sources would be the BSED/BSED trust fund grant, Yellowstone County Lodging Association, Tourism Business Improvement District, Billings Parks and Recreation Foundation, and the local community.

The BSED considers Coulson Park as one of our great assets of this City. Other cities have developed similar parks to Coulson by adding such features as sand volleyball, picnic shelters, river front trails, playground, fishing access, kayaking, retail, boat launch and an amphitheater.

The BSED will be sending a letter to the State of Montana requesting funding from a trust fund to help develop the master plan. They would like the Park Board to provide a letter of support to them to move forward.

Board Chair Rick DeVore asked for a motion from the board to provide a general letter of support to the Big Sky Economic Development to develop a new master plan for Coulson Park. Board member Rich Lorenze made a motion to provide that support letter. Board member Jim Ronquillo seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Update on Projects:

Michael gave a presentation on the projects that have been completed since the beginning of the Park District 1 funding and also the current list of projects.

- Installed 3 modular restrooms and remodeled 6.
- Replaced waterslides at Rose Pool.
- Replaced the playground at Pioneer Park.
- Replaced equipment at South park

- Re-built 7 tennis courts
- Upgrading fall protection at all playgrounds.
- Rock removal
- Completed irrigation installation at Veterans Park
- Hired volunteer coordinator, additional maintenance person and Arborist.
- Established a picnic table replacement program
- Weed management in parks
- Development of Yellowstone Kelly interpretive site
- Building a sprayground at south park-under construction.
- Moving forward on the Hawthorne playground equipment replacement.
- Build new bath house at Rose. Start construction this fall.
- Bids go out July 6th for the Rose Pool bath house. Proposed to start construction this September.

A. Park Development:

Board chair Rick DeVore said he and Tom Rupsis have been continuing their work on doing research for funding sources for parkland development. He said they plan to give a presentation sometime this summer to the following; Park Board, Chamber of Commerce, local task forces, the Parks, Recreation Foundation and City Council.

VII. DIVISION UPDATES:

A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson:

In addition to his written report, Kory said the Recreation Division is off to a great start with registrations. He said several of the camps are full. He is expecting this to be a busy year. His staff has started hiring seasonal staff for our summer programs.

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

Jon gave the following report on the Park and Forestry Division;

- For most of the month of May there were some major issues with the Suburban Ditch that irrigates Amend Park. Park staff have done a temporary fix so it is now functioning and we are able to water.
- All the splash pads are up and running. We did have some issues during start up but have since made the repairs.
- Started mowing middle of April. We mow irrigated turf grass parks each week and all natural or undeveloped parks 3 or 4 times per season.
- We have done spring spraying in our parks and also Little League and Stewart park ballfields.
- Received our new aerification machine and have started using it at Ponderosa, Castle Rock, High Sierra, Hawthorne, Walsh, Veterans and Pioneer Park.
- Working with the Police Department regarding transient and homeless issues.
- The playground at Veteran's has been fenced off and closed until the 100-

year-old cottonwood tree next to it has been removed.

- Forestry division has been planting and removing trees throughout our park system.
- The tree planting list has been updated on our website.
- City Forester Steve McConnell has been working on reviving our “Trash for Trees” recycling program. Funds from this program go directly into purchasing trees for our parks.
- In the process of purchasing a new aerial lift truck.
- We are currently not having any real issues with dogs in parks. We have been working closely with Animal Control to make sure people are following the ordinance.

C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:

In addition to his written report Mark said it should be about another 3 weeks before Yellowstone Kelly’s Interpretive site will be complete.

D. Volunteer Coordinator’s Report-Chris Waite:

No additions to his written report.

E. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:

No additions to his report.

VIII. AJOURNMENT - 1:22 pm