

# MEETING MINUTES

**RECORDED BY:** Melonie Trang

**MEETING PURPOSE:** PRC Board Meeting

**MEETING DATE  
AND LOCATION:** August 16, 2017  
Community Center



**ATTENDEES:** PRC Board Members:  
Rick DeVore, Lew Morris, Marc Wahl, Tom Rupsis, Chuck Platt, Tim Warburton

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

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## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

### A. INTRODUCTIONS

None

### B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

## II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

- Michael said the date for the September board meeting has been changed from 13<sup>th</sup> to the 6<sup>th</sup>. The meeting will take place here at the PRPL office.

## III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT

None

## VI. OLD BUSINESS

### A. Un/Underdeveloped Parks Funding:

Board chair Rick DeVore presented the “Funding Plan to Build Billings Parks-Undeveloped and Underdeveloped”. This presentation will go before City Council at a work session in November and before the Billings Chamber in October. Tom Rupsis said the board needed to make a recommendation on what plan they would like to move forward on at the September Park Board meeting. He said today’s presentation is for them to review and make any changes to the presented funding

options before making their final recommendation next month.

Rick said today he would like to focus on how to tie development with funding or funding with development and how that would be considered acceptable to City Council. The focused development and funding options are listed below;

Development options:

- Fully buildout highest priority parks to master plan design
- Focus on infrastructure completion and build out amenities over time

Funding options:

- Increase PD1 assessment to fund new park development by
  - a) Big bang one-time large increase
  - b) Consistent incremental increase
- Revenue bonds approved by Council and serviced by Park District 1 (PD1) assessment
  - a) Keep assessment at historic level
  - b) Increase assessments by service cost
- General Obligation bonds passed by city-wide election

The development and funding options could be any combination put together. In other words, you could do a buildout of priority parks with an increase in assessments by service costs.

Current list of high priority projects with estimated costs are;

- Poly Vista \$2M-\$4M
- Centennial \$2M-\$5M
- Optimist \$1M-\$2.5M
- Castle Rock \$500k--\$2M

Rick mentioned his thoughts would be for Council to approve an increase to PD1 from 2M to 3M costing an additional \$16 a year to a \$200,000 home. He said the money could be put into a fund for the department to use at any time to build the infrastructure at any of the undeveloped/underdeveloped parkland. He explained the infrastructure is would be sidewalks, grating, irrigation, parking lots and anything similar to that. Rick said we could look at finding partners to help fund things like dog parks, shelters, splash pads, etc.

Board member Lew Morris asked what kind of facilities was located at Centennial Park. Rick said there are 4 softball fields all serviced by water. Park Supervisor Mike Pigg said the existing baseball and softball fields are irrigated but the native area of the park has no irrigation at all. There is the infrastructure there in regards to the water meters and mainline but no infrastructure in the undeveloped areas. Park Superintendent Jon said the water used there is City water.

Board member Marc Wahl asked for clarity saying what is being proposed is asking the City to commit to funding the infrastructure of undeveloped parkland and the rest of the funds for the other items come from partnerships. Rick said yes. Marc said this should be clearly defined.

Park Planner Mark Jarvis expressed concern with the proposal saying it would be hard to rely on funding for projects from car washes and bake sales where people keep giving over and over again to having otherwise people give one time on their taxes to pay for a project all at once. Rick said his concern is Council's reaction to us coming to them for a one-time fund request of very large amount such as \$9M to do a project such as Centennial Park. He also said he has concern if Council puts it to the voters and the public turns it down. Mark commented that would have to be a risk to take.

Recreation Superintendent Kory Thompson said something like this option/idea presented is a great example for parks like Poly Vista but would not be good example for parks like Cottonwood that need 40 acres of development. He said you could end up with a nice grassy area but without amenities. He said the community needs more larger community parks.

Michael Whitaker suggested the board ask for \$1M yearly be set aside for park development.

Park Superintendent Jon Thompson brought up that when the Council is presented the department comprehensive plan next month, they will be shown how we need to increase our maintenance up to \$1M. The only funding source to do that is through PD1. Tom Rupsis commented the operations and maintenance part of PD1 is going to keep increasing crowding out the funding to do projects if PD1 funds are not raised.

It was reminded that if you increase developed parkland, you need to increase staff and maintenance.

It was commented that we need to be specific on what we need done in our parks and the costs involved.

It was commented that Council needs to see we need PD1 to fund these projects.

Rick went over some of the possible funding options.

1. Do a one-time PD1 increase of \$7M-\$8M to completely build the top priorities
2. Do revenue bonds and build the top priority projects
3. Do a city-wide vote to sell GO bonds for about \$10M and build the top 3 projects
4. Increase PD1 assessment from \$2M to \$3M annually, stock pile money and look at private organizations to add amenities

Board member Tim Warburton suggested combining options 1 and 4 where we ask for the \$7M-\$8M and increase PD1. He said the public has voiced what they want for city parks and we have an obligation to develop some of those parks. He feels it is reasonable to request.

Marc Wahl expressed that he liked phasing in projects. This would show the public we are doing something and would give us a budget.

Rick and Tom thought of an option to suggest to council \$5M in startup money the first year to begin.

A comment was made to support asking for more money but have it be a steady amount over time, combining options 1 & 4 as suggested by Tim.

Rick planned to take the comments today do a few more revisions to the presentation and bring it back to the board next month recommendation to Council. A copy of the final presentation will be sent out to the board prior to next month's meeting.

## **VII. AJOURNMENT - 1:05 pm**