

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

**MEETING DATE
AND LOCATION:** August 8, 2018
PRPL Office



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:
Rick DeVore, Tom Rupsis, Tim Warburton, Chuck Platt, Lew Morris, Clark Johnson

PRPL Staff Members:
Mike Whitaker, Director
Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent
Mike Pigg, Park Superintendent
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner
Chris Waite, Volunteer Coordinator
Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Manager

Planning Staff Members:
Elyse Monat, Alternative Modes Coordinator

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Rick DeVore called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Fire Chief, Bill Rash
City Council member, Denise Joy
City Council member, Mike Yakawich

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board member Lew Morris approved the June 13, 2018 minutes. Board member Tom Rupsis seconded. On a voice vote, all approved.

Board member Tim Warburton approved the July 11, 2018 minutes. Board member Tom Rupsis seconded. On a voice vote, all approved.

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

- Hawthorne playground ribbon cutting turned out to be an exciting event. The Mayor spoke as well as City Council member Larry Brewster. Between 40-50 people turned out for the event.

III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT

Council member Mike Yakawich brought his concern regarding the support of upcoming projects when South Park Splashpad was done so poorly. He expressed that it was not the result of anything the staff did. He felt that we should be holding the designer or the contractor accountable for any poor workmanship done on a project. He also expressed his concern for any more money invested in a project that has so many problems and issues.

Rick discussed his meeting with staff, Sue Bressler and Marcia Clausing regarding starting up the Dog Park Committee. He said Chris Waite is looking into grants this next year, the group is looking at additional fundraising ideas and also signage for Centennial Park-Future Dog Park. Sue and Marcia are looking at advertising the future dog park on the web.

Michael asked for Elyse from the Planning Department to touch on why she is attending the Park Board meetings. Elyse said her plan is to help get trails, walkways and crossings to help people get places safety. She said she has been working with Mark on easements.

City Council member Denise Joy brought up publics concern with a ditch running through or along side parkland and the safety of children. She asked for discussion on it at an upcoming board meeting. Michael stated that due to issues like this, the Park Planning position was created so that they could review new subdivision development to help keep this from happening.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Stadium Committee:

The Stadium Committee was formed based on the current agreement with the Mustangs. The committee is to review requests and maintenance needs to the stadium. Current committee members are; Park Board Chair Rick DeVore, PRPL Director Michael Whitaker, Mustangs manager Gary Roller and the president of the Boosters Club.

Recent maintenance projects at Dehler include replacement of doors that have rusting and repairs to the floors in the restrooms/changing rooms.

Upcoming projects include the remodeling of 3 areas for concessions as discussed under "Major Park Projects Update" and replacement of the safety netting. Part of the funding for one of the areas has come from a donation of \$19,800 from the Boosters Club.

A comment was made to add additional safety netting along the first base side for foul balls. There was concern for injury from foul balls in that location of the stadium.

B. Natural Land Parks Management:

Mike Pigg and City Forester Steve McConnell have been working together on a

Natural Land Parks management program. Michael said this plan was part of the cities strategic plan.

Mike Pigg gave a brief presentation of the plan. Highlights from the presentation:

- Natural area parks are important for the following; native plant and animal life, enrich quality of life through educational, cultural and recreation uses, create community awareness of local assets, provide citizens with natural area within the city to recreate and protect the scenery.
- To be considered a natural area it must have one or more of these criteria; provide protection for a sustainable ecosystem, have rare or unique native conditions, serve as an outdoor classroom and has a historical or cultural value
- Currently, Billings has 25 natural areas. These areas consist of riparian area, grasslands and the rims. Some of our natural area parks are Swords, Coulson and Lake Josephine
- Maintenance of natural areas are different than community parks. Wildlife and a natural experience factor into the maintenance plan.
- Natural areas maintenance; trees are not pruned to community park standards. Hazzard branches and trees will be removed and downed wood will be left for wildlife. Grass and other plants will not be mowed but allowed to grow to natural height. Plants are food and habituate for wildlife. Invasive and noxious weeds are controlled. Safety will always be the most important factor when designing a natural area.

Board member Jim Ronquillo made a motion for City Council to approve the Natural Lands Parks Management as presented to the board. Board member Lew Morris seconded. Board member Tom Rupsis asked that Education and Development be added to the management program. On a voice vote, all were in favor with the management program with the addition to add implementation with education and involvement.

C. Balance Bike course Project:

Chris gave a report on the balance bike project.

Highlights from the report:

- The project started as a citizen proposal back in 2017 from Kyle Hanson
- Worked on a design concept with Peaks to Plains Design
- Settled on Trails End Park for the location due to its existing amenities
- Asked for local support, raising \$5,000. Also, received funds from grants and the Parks, Recreation Foundation
- Did a site layout, then proceeded with the preparation of the site.
- Volunteers including staff are helping with the project
- Project should be completed soon

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Terry Park Cell Tower Update:

This project has been going on for several years. Started out with former Fire Chief Dextras. Current Fire Chief Bill Rash updated the board on where the

project is currently at.

- In working with Verizon, the city and Verizon have come up with an agreed upon proposal for the structure and location.
- The finalized/approved contract should be completed soon.
- The structure (fake chimney) will be located on the north side of the fire station. It should be around 17x22
- Requesting from Verizon for a 6 to 8 foot secure brick fence with gate around the structure
- Construction should begin in 2019
- Money from generated from the cell tower should be around \$95,000. A portion of those dollars will be given to the Parks and Recreation Department for upgrades to the park; remaining funds will go to the Fire Department. Michael said the money for the department will go towards building a shelter as per the comments from the surrounding neighbors.

B. Major Park Projects Update:

Michael gave the following update on park projects;

- Rose pool bathhouse and operations building is complete
- Hawthorne playground equipment replacement (first inclusive playground in the City of Billings) is complete and opened on schedule
- South Splashpad is complete but has had some minor programming and drainage issues
- Optimist parking lot should be complete at the end of August
- Optimist playground equipment should be arriving. Bids are out for installation. Bids should be back this week
- Centennial Park Phase 1-the selection committee has met and selected a firm out of the 6 proposals to provide construction documents. Should have a contract ready for City Council approve this month. Funding for this project is coming from the General Fund and Cash-in-lieu.
- Dehler Park upgrades to the areas that sell alcohol out of. Funding for this project is from the stadium Maintenance and Capital fund and the Mustangs Boosters. The Boosters Club has donated \$19,800 for this project.

VIII. DIVISION UPDATES:

A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson:

In addition to his written report, Kory reminded the board on the following:

- 4th annual Dog Days at the pool is August 19th 12-4pm

B. Park/Urban Forestry Division – Interim Park Superintendent Mike Pigg:

In addition to his written report, Mike highlighted the following:

- Park staff worked very hard to finish Broadway. All the plantings on the corners. Huge improvement than what was there before.

C. Park Planning Division – Park Planner Mark Jarvis:

In addition to his report, Mark was asked about Annafeld Park First Phase coming

in over engineers estimate. Mark said we are looking at rebidding that the end of this year/first part of next.

D. Volunteer Coordinator Report – Chris Waite:

No additions to his report

E. Park Patrol Report – Officer Nick Lam

Office Lam touched on the following;

- In the last 6 months 110 arrests contacts (an individual could have several warrants and each warrant is considered an arrest so some of those arrests are for one individual) (probably have done more like 20-30 arrests of people), 313 tickets have been written (most probably will not be paid),
- Had an additional officer to assist during the summer
- The trespass program is running smoothly
- The graffiti program is running a lot more smoothly; it's a slow process
Have a new app on phone to help record any graffiti
Looking into having year-round volunteers to just report on graffiti
- Wrote a grant and got money for the graffiti program
- Park seasonal staff has commented that the parks are a lot better since we have an officer

F. Cemetery Division – Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:

No additional to his report

G. Planning Report - Elyse Monat:

Nothing was added to his written report.

IX. AJOURNMENT – 1:00 pm

(Please note these minutes are summary minutes)