

# MEETING MINUTES

**RECORDED BY:** Melonie Trang

**MEETING PURPOSE:** PRC Board Meeting

**MEETING DATE** March 13, 2019  
**AND LOCATION:** PRPL Office



**ATTENDEES:** PRC Board Members:  
Tim Warburton, Tom Rupsis, Jim Ronquillo, Rich Lorenz,  
Mark Wahl, Lew Morris, Thom MacLean, Clark Johnson

Planning Department:  
Elyse Monat

PRPL Staff Members:  
Michael Whitaker, Director  
Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent  
Mike Pigg, Park Superintendent  
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner  
Steve McConnell, City Forester  
Steve Riley, Arborist  
Josh Gordan, Park Staff  
Nick Lam, Park Officer

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## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Tom Rupsis called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM

### A. INTRODUCTIONS

Rick DeVore, Monica Hill, Jon Thompson, Linda Deavila, James Prchal, Amy Grandpre, Merita Murdock-public attendee

### B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*A motion was made to approve the February 13, 2019 minutes. Board member Tim Warburton approved. Board member Jim Ronquillo seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

## II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

The April board meeting was moved from its regular scheduled date of the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 17<sup>th</sup>.

Michael reported the Stadium Committee met a couple weeks ago and has discussed

replacing the video board at Dehler Park. The committee has requested City Council to move forward on the replacement. He said he has met with the City Administrator, Finance Director and owner of the Mustangs and we can proceed ahead with the project. Bids should go out in the next 2-3 weeks. Cost for the replacement should be no more than \$300,000. Funds will come out of the Dehler maintenance fund.

Michael said there was also brought up at the meeting, concerns regarding the field turf needing replacing in the next couple of years. Currently, there is not enough funds in the maintenance fund to cover those costs. The owners of the Mustangs have presented the option of paying ahead their lease payment to help cover some of the costs. *Their lease payments go into the maintenance fund.*

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

- Public attendee Rick DeVore gave comments during the Centennial Park discussion.

### **VI. AWARD PRESENTATION**

City Forestry Steve McConnell and special guest Amy Grandpre presented the Montana Urban Community Forestry Association Awards to the following individuals;

- Merita Murdock received the “Outstanding Urban Forestry Volunteer” of the year award.
- James Prchal – “Outstanding Urban Forestry Leader” of the year award

These awards are given to recognize an individual who works for an organization, or whose business is related to the urban forestry and made outstanding contributions to the urban forestry effort at the local, regional or state level.

### **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **A. Proposal to Paint Mural on Shiloh Tunnel:**

Public attendee Monica Hill presented a request to have the Shiloh underpass painted with a mural done by Tyson Middle and Arrowhead School students. The mural will be done in three phases. Phase 1 will be handprints by children from Arrowhead School and community members. Phase 2 will be an image of a postcard from Billings Montana. Phase 3 will be white and black checkered print. Costs for the proposed project would be jointly shared by the city and local fundraising efforts in the community for supplies and labor.

*Board chair Tom Rupsis asked for the board to take action on her request. A motion was made for City Council to approve Monica Hill’s proposal to have the Shiloh Tunnel painted. Board member Thom MacLean approved. Board member Jim Ronquillo seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and motion passed.*

#### **B. City Council’s 2019-2020 Priorities:**

Michael passed out copies of the Council approved 2019/20 City Council Priorities.

The improvement of city parks and trails system was on the list as a medium priority. Under that the 5 items of improvement were; complete Centennial Park improvements, complete Coulson Park Master Plan, increase trails investments and increase park investments. Council added to this list, CastleRock Park.

## **VII. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Natural Area Management Plan:**

Mike Pigg gave a PowerPoint presentation of the Natural Area Management Plan that he and City Forester Steve McConnel have been working on. Some of the things highlighted in the presentation are below;

- Natural areas Parks in Billings include; Phipps, Swords, Cameron, Meadowlark and Riverfront along with 40 other area parks
- City Code Sec. 19-203 “All property under control of the city as park property and all dedicated parks are designated and declared to be nature preserves.”  
Sec. 19-204 “Overall park development shall retain natural areas for the study and enjoyment of plants and animals in a natural environment to the extent consistent with park and public needs. Where terrain and accessibility are factors, the preservation of natural areas shall be a prime factor in park development.”  
Sec. 19-205 “hunting, trapping, firewood gathering, motor vehicle use in unauthorized areas and other activities inconsistent with park usage policy are strictly prohibited.”
- There are different types of natural areas; conifer forest, grasslands, high plains, wetlands, riparian (river/stream), and naturalization forest
- Reasons why we have natural area; provides habitat for wildlife, protects geological formations, water corridors and wetlands, and protect scenic values, serves as outdoor classroom, provides citizens an opportunity to experience nature up close and because they are cool and fun to play in
- Criteria for natural area; unique eco system, hold historic/cultural value, location, topography, and access to water
- Natural areas are maintained differently than community parks; grass may or may not be mowed, trees may or may not be pruned and dead trees and down wood will usually be left for wildlife
- Examples of natural park management; prune trees to maintain safety and not community park standards, control invasive plants, promote natural grassland, remove non-native tree species, grass and other plants will not be mowed, but will be allowed to grow to their natural height

Mike said the next steps for this plan will be to finalize the conceptual/management plans, post to internet, distribute to partners, create signage, and finally develop partnerships to get maximum benefit out each natural area.

### **B. Centennial Park Development Update:**

- Finished the 65% review; consultants have their comments and are

working on those

- Working to complete the other aspect of the design concept
- Hope to get out to bid at the end of the month
- Met with little league regarding their concern on the existing restroom/storage facility. Staff explained the reasons why the department is unable to utilize that facility. There was discussion on costs to bring the facility up to code. The consultants will be working on that and as soon as they have that number, staff will be meeting with Little League again.
- Staff will also be asking the Little League if they would like us to loan one of our sheds for their use.

Public attendee Rick DeVore brought up for discussion with staff and board regarding the possibility of keeping the current Little League storage/restroom facility. The facility will be removed once the baseball season is over and phase 1 construction begins. The facility has been deemed as aging, not up to code and costly to replace. Also, it is included in the master plan a new centrally located ADA approved restroom will be added in phase 2 of the construction. Staff and board did discuss at the last board meeting to look into taking funding from the CIP plan/PD1 to install the restroom sooner. Rick expressed that it is a valuable part to keep this restroom along with the centrally located one. The board discussed the request further with mixed opinions. Staff expressed again the reasons why the restroom facility needs to be removed and the costs involved in keeping it. ***Board chair Rupsis asked the board to make a motion if they should support Little League and ask Council to approve using additional funding from PD1 or the contingency fund to keep the existing restroom facility and have it as a second restroom. No one from the board made a motion to proceed with the request. There no further discussion.***

#### **C. Capital Improvement Program:**

There were several public meetings held to discuss the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) projects. Tom Rupsis and Time Warburton each attended a meeting. Tim said he had one of the attendee's express concern regarding the delay on the construction of a maintenance shop in the heights for one year.

Michael went over the process of the CIP program. He said this coming Monday the CIP will go before a Council work session. Council will review all the projects and will make any changes prior to going for a final vote.

#### **D. Park Board's Annual Report to Council:**

Tom opened up discussion on the board's annual report.

- Tim wanted the board to highlighted wins, updates, talk about Park District 1. Submit questions to staff
- Thom said this report should show Council how underfunded we are

Tom said he would write something up and present to rest of the board for their input.

## **VIII. DIVISION UPDATES:**

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

No additions to his report

### **B. Parks Division – Park Superintendent Mike Pigg:**

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

- Trash for Trees have been refurbished and look great. Will be rolling them out when the weather changes.

### **C. Park Planning Division – Park Planner Mark Jarvis:**

No additions to his report

### **D. Volunteer Coordinator Report:**

No additions to the report

### **E. Park Patrol Report – Officer Nick Lam**

Officer Lam reported that he will again have help this next summer with an additional officer. He said he is currently working undercover. Police have found a stolen car in North Park. Continuing on work on the graffiti issue.

### **F. Planning Report - Elyse Monat:**

Nothing reported

## **IX. AJOURNMENT – 12:30 pm**

*(Please note these minutes are summary minutes)*