

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE
AND LOCATION: August 14, 2019
PRPL office



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Tom Rupsis, Chuck Platt, Lew Morris, Jim Ronquillo, Thom MacLean, Clark Johnson

PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, Director
Mike Pigg, Park Superintendent
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner
Chris Waite, Cemetery/Parks Supervisor
Paul Reinhardt, Community Outreach Specialist
Sean Brandenburg, Recreation Specialist

Planning Staff Members:

Elyse Monat, Alternative Modes Coordinator

City Administrator:

Chris Kukulski

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Public attendees: there was a large crowd of attendees at the meeting. Attendees were given the opportunity to sign in. Not all signed in and not all the names were legible to write in minutes.

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board member Jim Ronquillo approved the June 12 2019 minutes. Board member Thom MacLean seconded. On a voice vote, all approved.

Board member Jim Ronquillo approved the July 10 2019 minutes. Board member Thom MacLean seconded. On a voice vote, all approved.

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker

Michael asked Park Superintendent Mike Pigg to give an update on the damage from last

Sunday's storm. Mike said we had minimal damage to our trees due to our Forestry Divisions tree trimming program. He said we had about 3 trees with damage.

Michael said the installation of the new playground equipment at Primrose Park has been completed. A ribbon cutting ceremony is planned for a future date. Also, with this project was included an accessible route into the playground area.

Michael said we have installed shade structures at Hawthorne Park. Money for this project came from the Land Water Conservation (LWC) fund grant.

III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT

Council member Denise Joy brought up the concern addressed to City Council regarding the recovery/long term costs for the building and maintaining of a new recreation center on the south side of Billings.

Board member Chuck Platt thanked the Mike Pigg and the Park staff for doing the road work down at Lake Josephine and up at the Rims.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Eagle Scout Projects:

Community Outreach Specialist Paul Reinhardt introduced the Eagle Scouts present at the meeting and gave an overview on how the department works with Eagle Scouts on their projects.

Eagle Scout Gordon Muller gave an overview on the project he is currently working on which is building and installing Blue Bird boxes at High Sierra Park. He said he will provide the labor and supplies for the boxes.

A question asked as to why Blue Birds. Mr. Muller said to protect them from other animals when they are nesting.

A question was asked as to why he was interested in this specific project. He said the idea came through his mom's friend and he thought it was a great idea.

Eagle Scout Ezra Kirby gave an overview on his project which is enhancing Songbird garden. He will be creating a wood chip pathway and a preparation cabinet for the gardeners. He will provide the labor and part of the supplies for his project. The Parks Department will provide the weed barrier and woodchips. He plans to do this project this fall.

A question was asked on how he became interested in his project. He said his scout master has been working with the parks board for several years and he got him in contact with Paul who gave him the project idea.

B. Coulson Park Master Plan:

Eric Meadows and Griffin Foster from DHM Design presented the design options

for the Coulson Park Master Plan.

- Design options A-D gave consistent program elements but with various position in the park.
- The goals of DHM in their designs are to:
 - show historic town site within park
 - leverage information from all groups that called Clark's Fork Bottom home
 - feature interpretive signage, timeline storyboards and to facilitate education
 - provide space that is flexible and resilient to change
 - offer park amenities for year-round use
 - preserve natural qualities of the site
 - create connection between downtown and the Yellowstone River
 - explore potential connections across the river to Four Dances Area
 - create a park that is accessible to all
 - demonstrate a natural identity through native plants and a healthy floodplain
 - enhance natural greenway along Yellowstone River; link with other river front parks
 - create a built environment within the natural environment
- Coulson's three program concepts are passive, hybrid and active.
- Passive concept includes interior trail network, primary park node, landform creation, vegetative screen and bar, riparian exploration and flexible open space
- Hybrid Program concept includes interior trail, park programming space, river trail network, riparian exploration, drop area, flexible open space, vegetated bar and screening, river node, landform creation and primary park node
- Active Program concept includes park node support space, park interior trail network, primary park node, vegetative screening, drop off area, park adventure space, park programming space, landform creation, park active space, river node, vegetated bar, riparian exploration, river trail network, flexible open space and river node
- Design Options:
 - ***Design Option A:*** program items include; Josephine Towers play area, bike park (pump track, dirt jump, skills course), large scale picnic pavilion, dog park, frisbee golf course, sand volleyball, day use river sites and loop trail system
 - ***Design option B:*** program items include; 2nd street center (large scale picnic pavilion outdoor classroom, plaza), Skillen's berm, bike park, inspiration point, adventure play area, dog park, day use river sites, loop trail system
 - ***Design option C:*** program items include; Clark's Fork

bottom (pond and wetlands), bike park, large scale picnic pavilion, sculpture park, bouldering area, dog park, river vistas, day use river sites and loop trail system

- **Design option D:** program items include; Josephine landing (historic play area), river street center (historic Coulson town site), Josephine wake sculpture park, large scale picnic pavilion, outdoor classroom, bicycle skills courses, dog park, river vistas, day use river sites, loop trail

- A community outreach survey was done from visitors to the Downtown Billings Strawberry Festival, the Coulson Park public open house and submissions from the online survey. Results from the survey show the following; 33% use the park for biking, 24% for walking, 17% to enjoy river view and the remaining 26% were broken down into using it for dog walking, fishing, boating and other.

38% never use the park, 22% use the park twice a year, 14% a few times per year/few times a week, 8% once a week and 2% either once a month or daily

34% are kept away from the park due to lack of access, 27% due to feeling unsafe, 12% because it is undeveloped and the remaining 27% were broken down into never heard of the park, has no amenities, lack of lighting and noise from the highway

People commented they would like the park to be a place to hold events, activities and a welcoming area to the community. Others commented they would like to see access to the river, trails for both walking and riding bikes and a place for outdoor activities.

- A single draft master plan design should be ready in September. The final master plan should be ready in October.

The following are comments and questions presented by both the park board and public attendees regarding the Coulson Park master plan presentation.

- A board member asked how many acres the park was and is it all usable land. The consultants said it is around 50 acres and no, not all of the land is usable.
- Public citizen expressed their concern with the park having only one way in and out of park and the current roadway needs to be paved. Consultants commented that they have been considering this when creating the design concept. They said they have someone from the Transportation Department on the steering committee for their input.
- A question was asked if the park was still being used as a dumping ground for snow and sediment. Staff said no
- A question was asked if there would be any provision for retail or refreshments in the “old town” design option D. The consultants said there could be retail or food trucks.

- A question was in regards to spring run off and the river. All along the river bank open areas would be less developed and more open for any flooding.
- Question on sound blockage from the highway. Consultants said they are looking at earthwork/berming to help offset the noise concerns.
- Michael Whitaker commented that the department currently has funds to start the development of this park. He said we have received \$110,000 from the Exxon oil spill to install new restrooms and also Big Sky Economic Development Authority received a \$250,000 challenge grant that if they can raise that amount then that would give us a grand total of around \$610,000.
- Comment; the total cost estimate of the project will not be determined until a final draft master plan determined.
- Public citizen asked about parking areas and spaces. The consultants said they are looking at several options for parking areas and as to spaces, that will be determined once a location(s) and programing needs have been chosen.
- Board member expressed concern about older individuals having problems accessing the park and its programing areas.
- A question was asked is there an opportunity to carve out an area in the Yellowstone for swimming. The consultants said none of the designs show any areas for that.
- A question was asked if the consultants have received comments regarding boat access at this site. The response was no
- It was expressed that developing the master plan for Coulson Park was a good idea with the future development of the highway corridor and this would help strengthen our regional presence

Michael said that once the consultants have a proposed draft ready, it will be brought back to this board in September and then we hope to get it on a City Council work session sometime in October and then after a work session it will go to a business session for approval.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

A. Centennial Park Development Update:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis gave an update on Centennials development.

- Just about finished with mask grading
- Contractor is in there working on irrigation
- Putting in the trail's interior to the park
- Working on the parking lot and boulder pit
- Seeding should start sometime in September
- Water for the park will start as city water and then next spring it should switch over to ditch water. Public Works department will help fund the installation of a pump station. They would like the department to use ditch water for this park. It is more cost effective.
- Trees will be planted next spring; funding for the trees will be from our “Trash for Tree” program and also donations from Association of Realtors, private citizen and *Impact Day* at Lucky’s

VIII. AJOURNMENT – 12:45 pm

(Please note these minutes are summary minutes)