



## MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE July 8, 2020

AND LOCATION: Due to COVID19, meeting was held via Zoom

ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Thom MacLean, Tim Warburton, Tom Rupsis, Chuck Platt, Lew Morris, Mark Wahl, Clark Johnson, Larry Brewster

City Planning Staff:

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PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, Director  
Mike Pigg, Park Superintendent  
Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent  
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner  
Jennifer Brown, Senior Services Specialist  
Paul Reinhardt, Community Outreach Coordinator

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### I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

#### A. INTRODUCTIONS

Andy Zoeller, Finance Director

Jennifer Duray, Deputy Public Works Director

Rick DeVore, public attendee

#### B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Board Chair Rupsis asked for the discussion on Park District 1 Reserves (under New Business; letter B) be moved up on the agenda.

#### C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Chairman Rupsis asked for a motion on the May 13, 2020 minutes. Board member Thom MacLean moved to approve the minutes. Board member Tim Warburton seconded. On a roll call vote, the motion passed.*

## **II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Michael Whitaker**

- Michael Whitaker asked for Jennifer Duray, Deputy Director of Public Works, to give the timetable for the next five-year city-wide Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) plan.
  1. Departments will start working on their plans starting now.
  2. All department CIP plans should be turned in by mid-September.
  3. The draft CIP plan will go before City Council end of September.
  4. Public meetings on the draft plan will be held in October.
  5. Final plan is presented at the first City Council work session in November.
  6. Final vote for approval at the end of November or first part of December.
- Mr. Whitaker reported staff is moving forward on the Park Bond issue.
- Mr. Whitaker reported all Park and Recreation facilities are currently up and running during this pandemic. He said the only exceptions are the splash pads which must remain closed due to the current health code.

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

- Board member Tim Warburton asked if pool admission fees have been increased and if so, how have they impacted the pools. Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson said pool fees have not increased as of yet but a request for pool fee increases will go before City Council on July 13. Mr. Warburton asked how much the fee would increase by. Mr. Thomson said based on discussion, it would be a dollar across the board. Mr. Warburton asked when the increase would go into effect. Mr. Thomson said he was not sure if it would be this year or next.
- Board member Lew Morris asked if the Community and Senior Center was open yet. Mr. Thomson said yes, we have been slowly opening up to fitness programming and the use of our exercise room following the CDC guidelines and the approved plan by John Felton of the Yellowstone County Health Department. He said staff is doing thermal temperature scans, wearing masks and continuing to clean in between sessions. Mr. Thomson said staff is continuing to look at additional safe ways for our seniors to participate in programming that will be a wellness benefit both socially and mentally. Jennifer Brown, Senior Service Specialist, added that the department will be starting more programming in about a week. She said they are using caution as to when they roll out programs. The center is under a lot more stringent rules and protocols due to seniors being in the “high risk” classification. Ms. Brown said the Senior Center is the first in town that is offering inside fitness programs for seniors. The exercise room just opened a week ago and so far, about 6-7 seniors have signed up to use the equipment. She said staff has also been sending out birthday cards to the seniors monthly, to let them know we are thinking about them. She said normally we hold monthly birthday parties at the center to honor them but since the pandemic we have been unable to do that.
- Chairman Rupsis asked if all volunteer projects have been shut down due to the pandemic or if there been very many volunteer opportunities. Paul Reinhardt, Community Outreach Coordinator, said the volunteer programs are going but with

smaller groups. He said there has been less of an interest in volunteer projects due to the pandemic.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Centennial Park Development:**

Park Planner Mark Jarvis said the contractor has substantially completed his part of the contract. Mr. Jarvis said there are still some punch line items that still need to be complete. A final walk through should be done sometime next week.

Mr. Jarvis said the modular concrete restroom has been manufactured. Once the building permits have been received, the restroom will be shipped.

Park Superintendent Mike Pigg said they are working on the grass, fertilizer, and irrigation. He said late fall possibly before it is ready. He also said partial tree planting will take place in the fall.

### **B. Rose Park Playground Design:**

Mr. Reinhardt said we are doing a voting contest for the Rose Park playground design. People can vote online at BillingsParks.org. until July 13. The final voted design will be posted on our website and Facebook page.

Mr. Warburton asked if there was anyone responding to the comments and questions on the Facebook page. Mr. Whitaker said staff generally does not respond to the comments but staff does respond to messages sent to us.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Park Board Goals:**

Mr. Rupsis asked for board members to discuss setting some goals for the next six months.

Board member Jim Ronquillo said we needed to look at some of the projects that were started but not finished yet and where the money is going to be. Also, start looking at what happens if the Safety Mill Levy is not passed and how it will affect us.

Board member Chuck Platt and Chairman Rupsis wanted to see the board more active in the CIP process.

Board member Tim Warburton commented that he would like the board to be more involved with the Partners of Parks.

### **B. Park District #1 Reserves:**

City Finance Director Andy Zoeller gave a presentation on Park District 1 (PD1) reserves. The purpose of the discussion is to determine what amount of PD1

reserve funds can be budgeted for future use. Current PD1 FY20 estimated ending fund balance is \$4,670,000. With the current projects outstanding, that amount will drop down depending on what projects are currently being worked on, starting or ending.

Chairman Rupsis asked how the \$700,000 in operational expenses in PD1 trending. Mr. Zoeller said those expenses include the combination of personal services and operations and maintenance are generally operating less than what is budgeted.

Mr. Warburton asked if the reserve funds could be used as matching dollars for a project. Chairman Rupsis referred to Andy's comments that we should be cautious about going about doing this because there are very valid reasons to keep a reserve balance there. He also said if Council is willing to let the department use it for other things other than just replacement projects than yes I think it probably could. Mr. Whitaker said yes we could do that but would need budget authority. Mr. Rupsis asked is 1.2 million dollars per year too much. Mr. Whitaker said on a capacity stand point, Mr. Rupsis needed to keep in mind that we have one staff person to do park development so that impacts are ability to do a lot of projects in a given year. He said it is not just the sheer magnitude of a project but also how many.

Mr. Rupsis said the department is also coming in under budget in the operational part of PD1 and asked if it was being over assessed. Mr. Whitaker said we need to be prepared for some type of fund balance if we have to for example replace a pump at Rose pool. Mr. Pigg said some of those numbers have also come down because we have been partnering with Public Works on some projects. He also reminded Tom that we have to get permission to spend some of that money so there is a lag sometimes in seeing that reserve being spent down. Board member Jim Ronquillo said that since we are working with Public Works, when will the curb and gutter at South Park be fixed. Mr. Whitaker said that is a discussion we need to have when we update the CIP. He said depending on the cost it would fall either under the CIP or general maintenance. He said it would also depend on Public Works since they handle curb and gutter.

Board member Thom MacLean asked if the department was being conservative when putting together the CIP together and if so, could we be a little less. Mr. Whitaker said we could do both.

Mr. Rupsis asked if Michael has requested a second Park Planner to help with the backlog of projects. Mr. Whitaker said the department did request in the FY21 Budget for an Asset Manager, who would also assist with park projects, but due to the City's budget issue it was denied.

Mr. Rupsis asked Michael for a review on the current list of outstanding projects.

- North Park irrigation is under construction and the project is being run by Public Works. It should be finishing up in the next couple months.
- Riverfront parking and parking lot has been completed.
- Lillis Pickle Ball courts should be completed in the next month
- Ponderosa Park playground remodel will be complete in the next two weeks.
- Central Park tennis courts has not moved forward. Still waiting on word on whether or not we will receive an additional \$200,000 from the state.
- Rose Park playground is currently in the process
- CastleRock, Lillis, and Terry Park playground, second half of the Riverfront road and parking lot, and the Community Center roof replacement projects have just now been approved.

**VII. AJOURNMENT – 1:30 pm**

*(Please note these minutes are summary minutes)*

