

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang



MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE: January 9, 2008
PRPL Office, Billings Community Center

ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members:
Tom Iverson, Richard Deis, Rachel Cox, Margy Bonner,
Wanda Walker

PRPL Staff Members:
Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director
Joe Fedin, Recreation Superintendent
Gene Blackwell, Parks Superintendent
Lee Stadmiller, Cemetery Superintendent

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Newly elected Chair Tom Iverson called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Introductions include Special Guests: Russ Fagg, Billings Tennis Association President; Rick Devore, Administrator for Little League Baseball; Gay Easton, from the Yellowstone Conservation District; Diane Fitzgerald, coordinator for the Billings Tennis Association; and John Brewer, Youth Hockey Board Member

B. APPROVAL OF December 12th, 2007 MEETING MINUTES

The PRC Board reviewed the minutes. An action was made to accept/decline the December Minutes. *Margy Bonner made a motion to approve the December 12th, 2007 meeting minutes. Wanda Walker seconded. All were in favor and the motion carried.*

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Tom Iverson requested the following items be added or changed to the agenda:
Council on Aging; Amend Park Senior Center – under Directors Report added as letter B.

Proposed Tennis Facility – under Directors Report be moved under New Business as letter A.

Rain Garden – Added to New Business as letter B.

Annual City Council Board Report Presentation – Added to New Business as letter C.

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

A. Ballpark Update:

Mike made the following comments in regards to the ballpark:

- Construction of the ballpark continues to remain on schedule. They are about month ahead. If weather remains unchanged over the next several months, there is a possibility of taking over the facility prior to July 1st.
- Grand opening for the ballpark is scheduled for Sunday, June 29th, 2008. A committee has been formed to work on the details for the opening.
- The ballpark shortfall has increased from \$28,000 to \$86,000 due to unexpected cost in supplies and installation of the bricks from the brick campaign.
- The brick campaign is doing great; approximately \$2,000 is coming in daily.

B. Council on Aging; Amend Park Senior Center:

Council on Aging has requested land at Amend Park to build a Senior Center. County Commissioners, Parks & Recreation staff and the Council on Aging will meet to discuss further if this is a profitable decision for all those involved. Mike will keep the Board updated on the proposed request.

C. Board Minutes:

PRC Board Minutes will now be included in the Friday City Council packet to keep them informed on regular basis the current activities within the Parks and Recreation Department.

D. New PRC Board Member:

It was announced that Rick DeVore has been chosen to go before the City Council to be approved as the new PRC Board Member in replacement of former Board member Denis Pitman.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment presented.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business was presented.

V. NEW BUSINESS**A. Proposed Tennis Facility:**

Russ Fagg, President of the Tennis Association, presented to the Board a proposal to build a 2.6 million dollar 6 Indoor/6 Outdoor tennis court facility at Centennial Park. In the proposed agreement costs to build and maintain the facility would be covered by the Billings Tennis Association. Any additional profits accrued from the use of the facility would be given to the Parks and Recreation Department. A lease

would also be drawn up between the City and the tennis association for the use of the park land.

Rick DeVore representing Little League Baseball expressed his support of the proposed facility. (They are currently using the parks ball fields for their practices and games.) He feels it is a good partnership and use of the undeveloped land. Rick also informed the Board their future plans on developing additional ball fields at the park as included in the Centennial Park Master Plan.

After further discussion, it was determined to have Russ Fagg present an updated proposal to the Parks and Recreation Department with the Boards' suggestions before presenting it to them again for their final approval.

B. Rain Garden:

Gay Easton, from the Yellowstone Conservation District (YCD) presented to the Board for approval a proposal to build a Rain Garden at Swords Park. (A "Rain Garden" is a shallow depression that's planted with native wetland or wet prairie wildflowers and grasses. It is designed to naturally collect water that runs off from a roof; like the shelter nearby or discharged from a sump pump. Rain Gardens are gaining popularity for three reasons: 1. Rain Gardens make good use of stormwater runoff, conserving precious water supplies and helping protect water quality in downstream lakes and streams. 2. Rain Gardens are planted with beautiful, hardy, low-maintenance native perennial plants. 3. Rain Gardens provide food and shelter for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects, such as mosquito devouring dragonflies.) The YCD would provide all the resources to build and maintain the garden.

Margy Bonner moved to give authorization to the Yellowstone Conservation District to build a Rain Garden at Swords Park. Rachael Cox seconded. The motion was unanimously accepted.

C. Annual City Council Board Report:

Tom Iverson requested input from Board members on the future vision for the Parks and Recreation Department. This information will be given in the annual City Council Board Report.

D. Cemetery Fee Adjustment (Attachment A in Board Packet):

Lee included in the Board packet a copy of Mountview Cemetery's current and proposed 10% fee increase. (Fees have not been increased in about 3 1/2 years.)

Richard Deis made a motion to accept the proposed Cemetery fee increase to be presented to City Council for final approval. Rachael Cox seconded. Motion was accepted unanimously.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division:

No written Recreation Division report was included in the December 12th Board packet. Joe gave an oral report instead at the meeting. Comments are as follows:

- The accepted proposed Recreation & Cemetery fee increases from today's and December's meeting will go before the Councils work session on Tuesday, January 22nd and then before City Council following for final approval following that.
- The VSI website upgrade software for online registering is in place. Final tweaking of the program is underway and should be ready of operation soon.
- The annual Summerfair that takes place at North Park may be moved to the new baseball and multi-use stadium due to a conflict with another large event being held there on the same date.
- Work will begin soon on the annual budget.
- Discussion has begun on employment tactics for seasonal workers. Problems faced this past year include finding lifeguards willing to work all summer for a lower rate of pay compared to fast food restaurants.

B. Park Division:

The Park Planning Division report was included in the January 9th Board packet for review.

C. Park Planning Division:

No written or oral Park Planning Division report was given at the meeting.

D. Cemetery Division:

The Cemetery Division report was included in the January 9th Board packet for review.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:55 pm.