

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE: March 12, 2008
PRPL Office, Billings Community Center

ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:
Tom Iverson, Richard Deis, Margy Bonner, Wanda Walker,
Mary Fitzpatrick, Jim Strecker, Rick DeVore

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

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chair Tom Iverson called the meeting to order at 11:40 am.

A. INTRODUCTIONS

There were no introductions.

B. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 13th, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

The PRC Board reviewed the minutes. An action was made to accept or decline the February Minutes. *Mary Fitzpatrick made a motion to approve the February 13, 2008 meeting minutes. Margy Bonner seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously approved.*

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

- Wanda Walker made a request to add “Community Wide Survey” and “Park Leases” to the agenda heading “Unfinished Business.”

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 about two months ahead of schedule.
- The field should be completed by the middle or end of April.
- The turf will be down two months prior to the opening.

- The current stadium budget fund balance remains in the black.
- The Steering Committee has decided to move ahead on the purchase of the sound system.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Tom Iverson expressed his comments on the Mustangs Management Agreement. He felt it was flawed. He thought the agreement should have been cleaned up with the suggestions given by the PRC Board and then presented again to the PRC Board for final recommendation before sending it to City Council for their approval.

Mike Whitaker commented that the agreement will be reviewed by the cities legal department before it is officially signed.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Park Leases:

Wanda Walker made a request for a list of Park leases. Gene commented that he believes there are approximately five plus leases with park user groups and he will have a list for review at next month's PRC Board meeting.

A question was asked on the difference between park permits and park leases. Joe commented that a park permit is good for a one-day event (Example: Easter egg hunt) or for a season. (Example: baseball) A lease is long term and over several years. (Example: Mustang Management Agreement)

Wanda questioned staff as to why some groups hold events in our parks and do not have permits. Joe responded that he is aware of the situation; this is considered an administrative policy issue that needs to be addressed with them and us to determine how to handle it. He also said that there is currently no way of penalizing groups not using permits. Joe did express that we are looking into the situation.

Rick DeVore asked for an update on the Tennis Associations' request to lease land at Centennial Park for an indoor tennis facility. Mark commented that the Tennis Association is exploring other possibilities including purchasing land.

B. Community Wide Survey:

Mike responded to Wanda's request for a community wide survey by commenting that the Parks and Recreation Department has done a community wide survey as part of the master planning process and also a needs assessments survey. Results from the surveys will be given when the budget is presented to the PRC Board.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Naming of the Ballpark:

Mike Whitaker informed the Board that the naming of the ballpark has gone before the Steering Committee. They have approved the name "*Dehler Park*" after John Dehler who donated one million dollars to the project. Mike requested the PRC Board take action to recommend approval or disapproval of the name before it went

to City Council. The Board discussed the name expressing their opinions both positively and negatively.

Rick DeVore made a motion to accept the naming of the new ballpark to be “Dehler Park.” Margy seconded. On a voice vote, four PRC Board members; Wanda Walker, Mary Fitzpatrick, Tom Iverson and Richard Deis opposed the name “Dehler Park” and three PRC Board members; Margy Bonner, Jim Strecker and Rick DeVore were for. With four against and three for, motion did not pass.

B. Ballpark Grand Opening Committee:

Mike informed the Board that a committee was being formed to help assist in ideas and give input on the two day event. He made a requested for a PRC Board member to volunteer to be on the committee. Rick DeVore accepted the request.

Dana Jefferson, Senior PRPL Office Assistant, reported on the Grand Opening. She passed out a rough draft outline of the two day event. (A copy of the draft is included in the Board packet) Dana reviewed the outline with the Board.

Rick DeVore asked if the Mustangs store was going to be open during the grand opening. Dana said she wasn’t sure but she will discuss it with Gary Roller at their next meeting.

A question was asked as to when the Mustangs will have their celebration. Dana said they will have their own celebration on Tuesday, July 1st during their first home game.

Mike explained the reason for having a weeklong celebration was due to a timing perspective. The Mustangs first home game is scheduled during the week and this department felt it would benefit the community to allow individuals who work during the week a chance to come and view the stadium over a weekend when they would have more time to view it.

Tom asked if all the buildings would be open for the self-guided tours during the opening. Dana said yes. The Steering Committee will be assisting with those tours.

Dana also updated the Board on the Brick Campaign; stating that to date 750+ 4x8 bricks, 170+ 8x8 bricks, and 129 12x12 granite wall tiles have been sold. The information from those donations has been sent in to the engravers to be processed. The tiles and bricks should be ready and in place in time for the grand opening. Dana mentioned that she is continuing to receive donations for bricks in the mail and will continue accepting them until all the available bricks and tiles have been purchased.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division:

Joe gave an oral report at the meeting; following information was given:

- The recreation division has begun the layout for the summer brochure.
- Recreation positions are currently being advertised in the Billings Gazette, cities and PRPL website.
- Fee increases for pools, soundstage, shelters, kits and building rentals have been approved by City Council. We are still waiting for administrative signatures on the alcohol and park permit fee increases.
- In the future we are looking at reviewing our fees every other year.
- We currently have about 24 soundstage rentals booked for 2008.
- We are moving ahead on installing a concrete building that will be used for a restroom at Skatepark. It will open for use seasonally. Funding for the project will be from CDBG money.
- Currently, 27 use permits have been sent in and many of the events will begin at the end of March. We generally have about 80-110 permits that we process during the year.
- The recreation budget is done and submitted. We still have to turn in our departments goals.

B. Park Division:

Gene gave an oral report at the meeting; following information was given:

- We are getting Stewart Park ready for all its user groups who start their activities in the spring.
- Northwestern Energy is putting in all the wiring feeds for the night lights around Pirtz Field at Stewart.
- We are starting to turn on water at Stewart Park and Amend Park in the concession area. We will not open the bathrooms up yet due to the possibility of the pipes freezing.
- There is a plan to reconstruct the concession stand/storage/bathroom building at the softball complex at Stewart. The Softball Association and Little Guy Football have put together about \$240,000 dollars for the project.
- We are starting the process of installing the playground equipment at Central Park.

C. Park Planning Division:

The Park Planning report was included in the March 12th Board packet for review.

- Tom Iverson asked on how the Briarwood project was coming. Mark commented that they had a public meeting on March 6th in which about 30 people came. Based on the information from the public at the last meeting, three alternatives were presented to them on how the park should be developed. Those alternatives ranged from least to a more developed park. The public discussed the alternatives and seemed to lean more towards a natural less developed park. Mark commented that we are collecting their comments and cataloging them to find out what was really said at the meeting and then planning on putting a draft together to bring to the PRC Board for their recommendation.
- A question was asked on why Riverfront Park was torn up and when will it be cleaned up. Gene commented that Northwestern Energy had come in last fall to replace a pipeline that ran through the park. He said that he spoke with the project manager from Northwestern Energy and they are waiting on their contractor to get his stuff together and then hopefully will get in as soon as possible to clean it up.

D. Cemetery Division:

The Cemetery Division report was included in the March 12th Board packet for review.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm.