



MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE: August 13, 2008
PRPL Office, Billings Community Center

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

PRPL Staff Members:
Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director
Lee Stadmler, Cemetery Superintendent
Mark Jarvis, Parks Planner

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Guest speakers were Paul Hickman, Executive Director from Out Montana, Inc. and Daniel Mazel.

B. APPROVAL OF JULY 9, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

July 9th meeting minutes were presented for approval. *Board Member Mary Fitzpatrick made a motion to accept the minutes as presented to the Board. Board Member Margy Bonner seconded. On a voice vote, the motion was unanimously accepted.*

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions were made to the agenda.

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

A. Parks Superintendent Position:

PRPL Director Mike Whitaker expressed to the Board that the Park Superintendent position has been re-advertised after only 15 applications came in following the first deadline. Mr. Whitaker said there were several applicants who are qualified for the position but he would like to open the position up to create a larger pool to choose from before making any final decisions. The second deadline is set for August 22nd.

B. Heights Pool Project:

Mr. Whitaker informed the Board that the Better Billings Association/Harvest Church (BBA) has decided not to partner with the Parks and Recreation Department on the Heights Pool project. They have decided to take on the project alone. The BBA did make a request to City Council through the City Administer Tina Volek to use a portion of Castlerock Park to build their pool. Mr. Whitaker said that Park Planner Mark Jarvis researched using a portion of Castlerock Park for a pool and came to the conclusion that a pool would take up to much of the parkland leaving the Parks Department with only the pond area for public use. These findings were given to Ms.Volek for her review.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were made from the public.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Riverfront Park Master Plan (Attachment A in Board Packet):

A copy of the Riverfront Park Master Plan was given to the Board for their review. Jolene Rieck from Peaks to Plains was in attendance for any questions regarding the final plans. Questions asked are as follows:

- Will the natural trails located in the east side of the park remain unchanged and natural? Ms. Rieck said yes.
- Will Riverfront Park be annexed into the city? Mr. Whitaker said that following the approval of the Master Plan they will begin the process of getting it annexed into the city.
- A question was asked if the bathrooms could be updated and include running water. It was told that due to the fact that Riverfront Park is in a 100-year flood plain, it is not possible.
- A question was asked if porta potties would be available near the boat launch area. Mr. Whitaker expressed that this was a good question and Ms. Rieck said she would look into it.

Following the brief discussion Board Chairman Iverson requested the Board take action on recommending the final draft of the Riverfront Park Master Plan as presented to the Board by Peaks to Plains, be sent before City Council for approval. ***Board member Richard Deis made a motion to recommend the final master plan go before City Council. Board member Mary Fitzpatrick seconded. On a voice vote the motion passed unanimously.***

B. Dog Park:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis said the Parks Department has postponed moving forward on a dog park in Riverfront Park due to the 100-year flood plain. Mr. Jarvis said a study must be performed with the Core of Engineers to see what wet lands are in that location. Mr. Jarvis said the department has decided to move ahead with the High Sierra and update the Master Plan to include a dog park in it. He believes the High Sierra dog park may be created sooner than Riverfront but the department will try to work on both and try to get them done as soon as possible.

C. Advisory Board Ordinance:

Mr. Whitaker made a request from the Board to either approve or disapprove the Advisory Board Ordinance draft. ***Board member Mary Fitzpatrick made a motion to accept to recommend the draft of the Advisory Board Ordinance. Board member Margy Bonner seconded. On a voice vote motion was accepted.***

D. Indoor Baseball Facility at Stewart Park:

Mr. Whitaker informed the Board that the American Legion has come to the department with a proposal to build an indoor baseball facility at Stewart Park. The proposal is not included in the parks Master Plan so an update to the plan would be needed before construction could take place. Mr. Whitaker said the department has spoken with the Legion on assisting to pay for the plans updates. Mr. Whitaker also wanted to reassure the Board that this concept is in the discussion stage right now and more information including a presentation from the Legion will be given at an upcoming Board meeting before any facilities are built.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Our Montana, Inc. Outdoor/Indoor Park Proposal:

Executive Director Paul Hickman of Our Montana, Inc. gave a presentation to the Board for an outdoor/indoor park facility to be possibly located in the former Hart-Albin Building in downtown Billings. The proposed facility would be an informative and inter-active park in which individuals and groups could come and view an aquarium filled with native fish, watch local birds in an atrium, study various native plant life, and enjoy a walk on one of the many trails. It would also include a meeting room or concession area, exercise room and lockers, classroom to do research and library room that would have information on State, Federal and Public lands. Mr. Hickman said his presentation to the PRC Board was to get verbal and written support that the proposed concept is a good idea and would be a benefit to the community. Several questions and concerns were brought up from the Board about giving support to something in which there was not enough information regarding who will build the facility and maintain it. Mr. Hickman assured the Board that this concept is at the beginning stages and he is not requesting any financial support or participation in building or maintaining the facility. He did say he is in the process of working out all the details and would be happy to return to the Board with more information. Following further discussion several Board members did express it was a great idea. Board Chair Iverson made request from the Board to take action on whether the Board would be willing to write a letter showing support that the indoor/outdoor facility concept was a good idea. ***Mary Fitzpatrick made a motion for the PRC Board to write a letter in support that the concept presented to the Board by Our Montana, Inc. is a good idea. PRC Board member James Strecker seconded. All were in favor except for Board member Margy Bonner who voted against.*** Chairman Iverson said he would construct a letter of support and then present it to Mike Whitaker for approval before sending it to Mr. Hickman.

B. American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame Plaque:

Mr. Whitaker informed the Board that Sam McDonald has made a request to place a Hall of Fame wall up inside the new Dehler Park stadium. Plaques for the Hall of Fame would be fairly large and include those individuals who have been adopted into the Hall of Fame in the Legion. The precise location and exact size of plaques have not been determined but Mr. Whitaker said he will get that information and relay it back to the Board.

C. Dehlerpark.com:

Special Guest Daniel Mazel owner of various internet websites/.coms including Dehlerpark.com made a proposal to the Board to have the department partner with him in purchasing and maintaining the websites associated with the baseball stadium.

Board members informed Mr. Mazel that the Parks and Recreation Department along with the Billings Mustangs who play at Dehler Park each have their own informative websites. The Board also expressed they are happy with the PRPL and Billings Mustang website and feel that at this time they have no interest in partnering with Mr. Mazel.

D. Elect a PRC Board Member:

It was brought to the board to elect a member to represent the PRC Board to serve on the Stadium Facility Review Committee. The committee's purpose is to review the operations of the facility on a regular basis. Board member Rick DeVore said he would be willing to serve; all Board members agreed. Mr. DeVore was officially appointed PRC Board representative on the Stadium Facility Review Committee.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division:

No written or oral report was given. Recreation Superintendent was not in attendance.

B. Park Division:

No report

C. Park Planning Division:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis gave an update on the planning division.

- Mr. Jarvis said Pioneer Park Master Plan is on the list of plans to be updated. Board Chair Iverson said he would like to see the plan updated before next spring.
- Briarwood Master Plan and Howard Heights/Dickie Park projects are currently waiting to be presented for review at a Council work session.

D. Cemetery Division:

- No written or oral report given.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

*Mary Fitzpatrick made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rick DeVore seconded.
Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.*