

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang



MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE: September 10, 2008
Dehler Park Conference Room

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

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

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Tom Iverson was not in attendance so Vice Chair Rachel Cox called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.

A. INTRODUCTIONS

No introductions were made

B. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 13TH, 2008 MEETING MINUTES

August 13th meeting minutes were presented for approval. *Board member Margy Bonner made a motion to accept the minutes as presented to the Board. Board member Mary Fitzpatrick expressed that discussion and comments on the bathroom facilities located by the future boating dock at Riverfront Park were not included in the August 13th minutes and should be recorded. PRC Board members agreed. A note was made to include the revisions. Board member Rick DeVore followed the discussed by seconding the motion made by Board member Margy Bonner and include the revisions. On a voice vote, the motion to accept the minutes with revisions was unanimously accepted.*

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Additions to the agenda were items *Rush Park* and *Endowments* under *New Business*.

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

PRPL Director Mike Whitaker reported to the Board that the Better Billings Association (BBA) has made a formal request to use 6-8 acres of Castlerock Park

for their pool project. The park is 23 acres in size with 5-7 acres tied up in a retention pond. It was expressed a normal size public pool would take up 6-8 acres leaving no room for any additional developments like baseball and soccer fields for the park.

The BBA said they would like to do a presentation at an upcoming work session. Mr. Whitaker said the project has been brought to the attention of City Administrator Tina Volek. They have formally agreed to have the BBA make their presentation to the PRC Board first before going before a council work session.

A question was asked on the BBA using their own property for the pool. Mr. Whitaker said the BBA has considered it but they would rather build in a separate location so they may have the opportunity to do future expanding on their own property if the need arises.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were made from the public.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Riverfront Park Master Plan:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis reported the Riverfront Park Master Plan will go before the City Council work session on Monday, September 15th for review. He said following the session it will be put on the calendar to go before City Council for a final presentation and vote.

B. Dog Park:

Mr. Jarvis reported Riverfront Park is still on hold for a Dog Park site location because of the 100-year flood plain. An assessment study must be performed before they can go any further and funds are unavailable at this time to perform the study. He said the department will be moving forward on second site location at High Sierra Park. The Dog Park Committee discussed the final size and layout for the park at High Sierra. High Sierra's master plan will need to be updated and in place along with funding before construction will begin.

A question was asked if the Lake Elmo Dog Park was considered before making a decision to place an additional dog park in the heights. Mr. Jarvis said it was discussed and brought to the committee's attention that the Lake Elmo Dog Park is very small and not easily assessable.

C. American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame Plaque:

Mr. Jarvis informed the Board that a request has been made to have an American Legion Baseball Hall of Fame plaque placed inside Dehler Park stadium. Sam McDonald of Wendy's plans to pay for the plaque and its installation.

Mr. Jarvis said names recognized on the plaque would be from people who have excelled in the Legion program and/or have been significant contributors or involved.

The plaque's size would be around 4 feet by 8 feet and the possible location for the plaque would be along the concourse wall near the restrooms on the west side of the stadium.

A request was made to the Board for a vote on accepting this proposal. ***Board member Dave Williams made a motion to accept the donated plaque. Board member Margy Bonner seconded.*** Vice-Chair Rachel Cox followed the motion by opening the floor for further discussion.

Board and staff gave the following questions and comments:

- A question was asked as to the length of time the plaque would be allowed to hang up. Mr. Jarvis said he was not sure but thought it would be at least a decade.
- Board member Wanda Walker brought up a concern of having other organizations associated with baseball request to put up additional plaques within the stadium. Her suggestion was to use one wall for any and all plaques.
- Board member Rick DeVore asked if there would be a standard for size, color and materials of plaques. Mr. Jarvis felt it would be a good point for discussion. Mr. DeVore along with other Board members felt we should have a policy in place for standardizing plaques. Board members expressed they like the layout that the Legion presented for their plaque and would like to possibly use that as the standardization for all plaques.
- A suggestion was made to create a sub-committee to review and create a design policy.
- A recommendation was made to have all plaques carry the Parks and Recreation logo on them. Board and staff agreed.

Following further discussion Vice-Chair Rachel Cox made a request to have an amendment on the previous motion by Board member Dave Williams. ***Board member Margy Bonner made a motion to amend Board member Dave Williams's motion. Ms. Bonner made a requested for a design policy regarding size, color and materials be referred to a formed sub-committee and brought back to next months Board meeting for discussion on the policy and its specifics. On a voice vote, all Board members were in favor of Ms. Bonner's motion and request.***

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Peggy Purvis Request:

Mr. Whitaker discussed the letter sent by Peggy Purvis requesting for a plaque to be placed inside the stadium office building in remembrance of her uncle who donated a portion of land for Athletic Park. Her request included for the plaque to be located in the main hallway on a poster board.

Board members expressed Ms. Purvis's request was a good idea but there was concerned of other individuals wanting to place memorials up inside the office building.

Board member Margy Bonner brought up that the Steering Committee had discussed placing a memorial wall at the stadium with baseball memorabilia giving history on Billings baseball and the stadium.

Board member Wanda Walker asked who would be paying for the plaque. Mr. Whitaker said it was his understanding that the Purvis family will cover the costs.

Board member Rick DeVore expressed we should have a display showing the history from the beginning and include the whole story on Cobb Field, Athletic Park and Dehler Park. Mr. Jarvis said the department has been discussing having a small museum at the ballpark that could house all of the history. He said they have talked about making a separate entrance from the outside into the museum so on non-game days people could still come to view memorabilia.

After further discussion it was suggested to have Margy Bonner, Wanda Walker and Mark Jarvis speak with the Western Heritage Center on how to get the idea for a museum rolling to make it historically correct and ecstatically pleasing and bring this information back to the next Board meeting. Vice-Chair Rachel Cox made a motion to proceed on this idea and on a voice vote, all were in favor.

Mr. Whitaker told the committee following the motion that he would speak to Ms. Purvis and inform her on the department looking into possibly doing a display at the stadium and how her request would be part of that display.

B. Rush Park:

Park Information: The Park is located just below the big ditch off Shiloh Road and Poly. It's a little under 4 acres and about a quarter and half mile away from a larger park, Rimrock West Park.

Board member Rick DeVore brought up for discussion the idea of selling Rush Park land and use the funds to upgrade Rimrock West Park. He felt people in the Rush Park area would more in favor of developing a larger park that is only four blocks away from them and put in soccer or baseball fields than to develop a smaller park were you could only a few things could be done.

Vice-chair Rachel Cox brought to attention that when a developer develops, they have two options; they can either develop the park or get cash-in-lieu of.

Board member Dick Deis asked if there was a time limit in developing this park. Park Planner Mark Jarvis said there is no time limit but the developer has developed enough around the park that something needs to be done with it.

Recreation Superintendent brought up that neighbors might prefer having a smaller park in their area instead of a larger developed park with soccer and baseball fields attracting large crowds of people.

Mr. Jarvis brought up that the National Recreation and Parks Association standard for neighborhood and subdivision parks recommends 5-10 acres in a service radius of quarter to a half mile. He said the west end of Billings is about the only area in the city that is approximating the national standards.

Mr. DeVore asked if area residents are forced to do something with this park or can they protest it down. Mr. Jarvis said residents have signed waivers of protest. He said before any development is done the Parks department will go to area residents and explain to them what is going on with the park and how it is being developed.

Board member Margy Bonner asked if the city has a right to tell developers that we don't want their land. Mr. Jarvis said we are doing that now with some developers because land that has been received in the past has been unusable.

Following additional discussion it was concluded that Rush Park would probably not be sold.

C. Endowments:

Vice-chair Rachel Cox and Board member Margy Bonner discussed the benefits of having endowments as part of the department for development and maintenance of park land. The board agreed to have a couple board members and Parks and Recreation staff meet with various individuals such as Bill Dimich of Pepsi Co., and Rocky Brown of the Parks and Recreation Foundation to discuss endowments. A decision was made to set-up a conference before the next PRC Board meeting and report back on what they discussed.

Mr. DeVore and Mr. Jarvis also brought up looking into do mill levy for park districts to fund park development and maintenance. Further discussion on this will be brought up at a later date.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division:

Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin gave a brief oral report on the Recreation Division. The following comments were made:

- A final report on the summer programs will be ready for review at next months meeting.
- Presidential candidate Barack Obama was in Billings to hold a campaign at Riverfront Park. The event turned out to be a great success. His campaign sent the department a check for \$600 and \$100 of that will go towards Amend Park for the use of its parking area.
- The United States Postal service came to the department requesting a picture of Dehler Park Stadium with the rims in the background. They are coming out with a commemorative baseball stamp and they wanted a picture of the stadium to go on a pre-stamped envelope. Mr. Fedin said he was able to get a great photo by getting some help from the local fire department.
- Use permits are still going out. He said there is a strong need to have a work session with the City Council on the permitting process. A use permit policy needs to be implemented to prevent the current problems of user groups using the same parks at the same time and without insurance.
- Upgrades to the registration software have been installed but there are a few details that need to be worked out. Hopefully, it will be ready in about a month.
- He is continuing to work on the specifics for the buses being purchased through the Exxon Mobil grant.

B. Park Division:

Mr. Whitaker gave an update on the Parks Superintendents position. He said the department re-advertised the position and an additional 20 more applications came in. He hopes to hold interviews for six applicants on September 19th.

C. Park Planning Division:

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

- Briarwood Master Plan and Howard Heights/Dickie Park projects are still waiting to be presented for review at a Council work session agenda.

A question was asked if Dickie Park was a neighborhood park where neighbors have paid for it or was it part of a PMD. Mr. Jarvis said it is a neighborhood park and it would be an assessment to develop it.

D. Cemetery Division:

Written report was included in Board packet. No comments or questions were asked regarding the report.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.