



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: April 12, 2023

LOCATION: Parks & Recreation Office Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members: Thom MacLean, Jami Clark, Jim Rott, Maia Dickerson, Chuck Platt, Jon Thompson, Melissa Henderson

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Parks Superintendent; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent; Cole McQuillan, Projects Manager; Jake Milliron, Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator

City Staff Members: Mayor Cole

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Thom MacLean called the meeting to order at 11:01 AM

INTRODUCTIONS:

Tom Rupsis, City Council Member

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman MacLean asked for a motion on the March 8, 2023, board minutes. ***Board member Jami Clark made a motion to approve. Board member Jon Thompson seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.***

DIRECTORS REPORT: Mike Pigg reported the Park Supervisor position is currently being advertised. He said the Park Planner position is being advertised again since there was only one applicant. Both positions will close on the 28th of this month.

Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson said he hopes to make an offer at the end of the week for the Recreation Specialist position. He said they had several eligible applicants for this position.

Project Manager Cole McQuillan gave an update on the following projects:

- Moving forward on Castlerock Park; received Earthscape equipment for the playground
- Touching base with all the contractors and consultants
- Figuring out where Mark Jarvis left off

Board member Thompson asked when the install was planned for the playground equipment at Castlerock Park. Mr. McQuillan said as soon as the weather will allow.

Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator Jake Milliron gave an update on volunteer projects:

- Planned meeting with the Community Garden gardeners this next week
- Arbor Day is on May 4th at Centennial Park; 40+ volunteers have signed up and approximately 400 4th grade students should be attending.
- The United Steel Workers-Women of Steel will be doing Buckthorn removal at Riverfront Park in late July

Board member Clark asked for the number of trees being planted at Centennial for Arbor Day. Mr. Milliron said around twenty will be planted on the Eastside of the park on Arbor Day and then about 25-30 trees will be planted in the dog park with a church group Saturday the 6th.

Recreation Division Update from Kory Thomson:

- Registration for summer programs opened on April 1st; about 70% ahead of last year
- Next year we will be hosting the Montana Trails, Recreation and Parks Association (MTRPA) annual conference. We are expecting approximately 100-200 people to attend.

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

City Council member Tom Rupsis encouraged the board to advise the council, keep communication between the board and council open, and get to know/meet with each of the council members.

Mayor Cole expressed pushing for recreation activities, diversify the activities, and get the message out on the events going on in our parks like Arbor Day.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Parks & Recreation Bond and Levy:

Mike Pigg gave an updated presentation on where we are currently at with the bond and mill levy for the department. The information in the presentation was compiled from the conversations between city administration, department staff, council and the Parks and Recreation Funding Committee along with the results from recent community polling.

Questions asked during the presentation:

- It was asked what the line item for “water reservoir” in the amount of four million dollars for development was referring to. Mr. Pigg said it is the westend reservoir that Public Works is building. It was asked why Public Works was not funding the development. Mr. Pigg said Public Works is not allowed to use their funding source to develop any park developments.
- It was commented that based on the polling results, the local community generally knows about parks and recreation.
- A question was asked on the Stagecoach Trail and funding. Mr. Pigg said the city is applying for grant funding to do that trail. He said we hope to get it.
- Various members of the park board expressed their discouragement on the multi-use generational center being removed off the parks list of projects. Mr. Pigg expressed that he does not believe the recreation center is completely off the list and believes people in the

community need to be educated more on recreational multi-use centers and the need to look into more private sectors as a funding source.

- Following the presentation, Board member Clark asked what the next steps were moving forward on the bond and levy issue. Mr. Pigg said staff will go and redefine the numbers in the presentation and get as accurate of a number as we can on costs for projects. He said along with that, staff will also review the mill levy numbers and make sure nothing is missing. He said once this is done, the information will be brought back to the parks funding committee and the parks board for review. The Parks and Recreation bond/levy should be ready to be put on the November ballot.
- Board member Platt asked if it would be possible to get the County Commissioners involved. Council member Rupsis said it has been talked about.

B. Skyline Trail Sculptures:

Mayor Cole presented to the board a plan to install (4) 7ft rusty metal stick figure sculptures along the Skyline Trail on Rims. Structures would be constructed by Ben Brakeman out of Bozeman Montana. Funding for the project would come from Mayor Cole and his wife.

Mayor Cole said the structure figures would be family friendly, whimsical designs that would be of a hiker, person walking a dog with perhaps a small child, bicyclist, and a Native American to acknowledge the native history in the area.

Board Chair MacLean asked for a motion on accepting the concept as presented and approve the donation to the City of Billings on behalf of Mayor Cole. ***Board member Jon Thompson made a motion to agree with the concept and recommend City Council approve the donation. Board member Jim Rott seconded. On a voice vote, motion passed.***

C. Billings Parks & Recreation Matching Grant Program:

Board member Jami Clark presented on behalf of the Partners for Parks Foundation, the matching grant program application to receive \$25,000 in grant funding to add a shade structure with picnic tables to the west end of Swords Park. She also said the application includes additional benches, possible historical signage, or public art. The total cost of the project is \$50,192 with the Partners for Parks Foundation contributing \$25,192.

Chairman McLean asked for action on the application. Board member Jim Rott approved the grant be accepted. Board member Chuck Platt seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor.

D. Parks Board Discussion:

Board member Dickerson wanted to know the process in changing the name of a city park. Mr. Pigg said there is a park naming policy but was unsure what it said. Staff would need to look into it and get back to the board.

Chairman MacLean said he was approached by the Yellowstone Valley Citizen Council regarding money from the Inflation Reduction Act for the local urban tree canopy. He expressed it was something the city should look into and felt it was something the park board could be a part of. Mr. Pigg said the City Forester has looked very closely into this and after doing some research it was concluded that this grant would be better for the city's boulevards trees which are managed by the city's Public Works Department. He said they have spoken with Public Works on the grant.

AJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 12:35

(Please note these are summary minutes; this meeting is recorded and available to the public for any

additional information discussed)