



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: May 10, 2023

LOCATION: Parks & Recreation Office Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members: Thom MacLean, Jamie Clark, Jon Thompson, Chuck Platt, Marc Wahl, Melissa Henderson

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Parks Superintendent; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent; Jake Milliron, Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator, Brandon Schmidt, Cemetery/Parks Supervisor

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Thom MacLean called the meeting to order at 11:02 AM

INTRODUCTIONS:

Board member Mark Wahl introduced Mark Sulser, as his replacement on the board as the School District 2 representative. Mr. Wahl said he will be retiring from School District 2 June 30th.

Michael Verseman, Land Design

Joey Grewell, Congressman Rosedale representative

Mary Fitzpatrick, Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Add under "New Business" MOU between the City of Billings and Songbird Community Garden

Add under "Board Discussion" update on the Director Position and Recreation Center

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion on the proposed additions to the agenda. Board member Jami Clark so moved to add the above items to the agenda. Board member Thompson seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

No minutes were available to approve

DIRECTORS REPORT: Mike Pigg reported that Pioneer Park and Mountview Cemetery Mausoleum have been named/placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Both locations were nominated and approved by the Governor of Montana. Board member Jon Thompson asked if North or Pioneer were nominated. Mr. Pigg

said no, just those two.

Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson proposed moving the July Park Board meeting to Rose Park pool. After discussion, the board agreed.

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Cottonwood Park Master Plan Update:

Michael Verseman, Program Coordinator for Community Development, presented the master plan update for Cottonwood Park.

Board member Clark asked if a copy of the survey link would be sent out to a specific special interest group and they basically all voted the same, would the results of the survey be affected. Mr. Verseman said no. He said the survey company targets several responses that they want to see and then they send those out and that is tied to an address. He said even though the survey may be online, if your address does not match one of the interests, it would be weeded out. Mr. Verseman said there is no way a special interest group can take over the survey.

Mr. Verseman said the next step is for the master plan to go before the stakeholders, Cottonwood Park Development committee, and the Forbes family who donated the land before going out to the public for their feedback.

Board member Thompson asked if staff was involved in the development committee. Mr. Verseman said yes. Mr. Thompson asked if a park board member was involved with that too. Mr. Verseman said he was not sure.

B. Cemetery Fees:

Cemetery Supervisor Brandon Schmidt said the Mountview Cemetery fees have not been increased since 2020. He is proposing to City Council a 16% increase and add the following items: second rite of interment, polygaurd atlas burial vault, in lieu of vault and contract for deed administration fee. Mr. Schmidt explained the “in lieu of vault” is in regard to a person being buried in the ground without any casket. Basically, a person would be wrapped in cloth and buried. This procedure has not been used in this area and would be the first for Billings.

A question was asked if the in lieu of vault would be published right away if the proposal was approved by City Council. Mr. Schmidt said no, he would need to do more research on that kind of burial and train his staff before advertising.

Board member Melissa Henderson commented that it was a great idea to have the “in lieu of vault” option. She felt it was culturally relevant.

Citizen Mary Fitzpatrick commented “in lieu of vault” was great and thanked him for adding this.

After further discussion, Chairman MacLean entertained a motion to recommend City Council to approve the proposed increases to the cemetery fees and to include the proposed additions. Board member Chuck Platt recommended the proposal be sent to City Council. Board member Melissa Henderson seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

C. Veterans Day 5k:

Cemetery Supervisor Schmidt proposed doing a 5k run at Mountview Cemetery around Veteran's Day to raise proceeds for the cemetery and to help pay for Veteran burials. He said his goal was to highlight the cemetery and any proceeds from the run would go towards a grant to help pay for the burial of a veteran. The race would be held completely in the cemetery and would include a free one-mile kids run. 406 has expressed they would help coordinate and assist the run.

The Board expressed that this was a great idea and supported the idea.

D. PRPL FY24 Proposed Budget:

Mike Pigg and Kory presented the draft proposed budget to the park board.

Board member Thompson asked if there was an increase from last year in rentals. Mr. Thomson said it was somewhat similar too last year.

Board member Thompson asked how much money was received through the Land Water Conservation Fund for Central Park Tennis Courts. Mr. Pigg said \$150,000.

Board member Thompson brought up for discussion the bill being introduced in our legislation regarding eliminating Land Water Conservation funding. He expressed concerns on losing that money since the department has received over the years hundreds of thousands of dollars from that fund for city parks. Joey Grewll Representative of Rosendale, spoke up that the funds were not going to be eliminated but would be set at the same level as 2022, so no increase to that fund.

Board member Clark asked if the trail at Centennial Dog Park could happen in this construction season. Mr. Pigg said it could happen any point and time. He said there is money out there for it.

Board member Thompson asked if the work being done at Pioneer Park tennis courts includes post tension and replacing concrete. Mr. Pigg said yes

Board member Clark asked what the department had planned to get the Rec2U funded. Mr. Thomson said City Council indicated they would help with the funding. He said if that did not happen, staff would look into finding the funding. Mr. Pigg said council was looking into using Council Contingency funds to fund that program, but he was not sure that would happen since that fund is used for other departments. Ms. Clark said if they did not receive funding from the contingency fund, to speak to the Parks Foundation.

The FY24 proposed PRPL budget will be presented to City Council on Tuesday May 16th. City Council will vote on the City Budget in June.

E. MOU Between City of Billings and Songbird Community Garden:

Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator Jake Milliron presented the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Billings and the Parties for Songbird Community Garden for Park Board discussion and approval.

Board member Thompson asked if they have an advisory committee and asked if a member of the park board was on that committee. Mr. Milliron said yes, they have their non-profit organization/advisory committee that is comprised of gardeners from songbird. He said no there is no board member on their committee. Mr. Pigg said the committee meets with PRPL staff once a year.

Board member Henderson asked if the city rule that gardeners of Songbird Garden cannot sell their produce at a local market would continue to be enforced. It was commented by staff that yes, that rule will continue. Mr. Pigg said community gardeners using city land cannot sell their proceeds for personal profit but are encouraged to donate any overages in produce to local groups.

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion on the MOU between the City of Billings and Songbird Community Garden. Board member Jon Thompson recommended City Council approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Billings and Songbird Community Garden. Board member Chuck Platt seconded. On a voice vote, motion carried.

F. Parks Board Discussion:

Chairman MacLean said the hiring committee has interviewed six candidates and a second set of interviews for the final three will be held next week. He said Mike Pigg is one of the candidates being interviewed. Mr. MacLean also said he is representing the park board and Jamie Clark is representing the Parks Foundation on the hiring committee. Board member Thomson said an invitation was sent out to the board to meet the three final candidates next week.

Board member Thompson asked where we were at on the Recreation Center. Chairman MacLean said it was his understanding that it was put off until another time due there being too many unanswered questions on the issue. Mr. Thompson asked if there was any discussion yet on who would run and operate it. Mr. MacLean said that was one of the questions needing answered.

AJOURNMENT –Adjourned at 12:51

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