



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: September 6, 2023

LOCATION: Parks and Recreation Office - Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members: Thom MacLean, Jami Clark, Jon Thomson, Laura Drager, Maia Dickerson, Melissa Henderson, Jim Rott, Mark Sulser, Chuck Platt

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Director; Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent; Brandon Schmidt, Cemetery Supervisor; Dan McKinney Recreation Specialist

City Staff Members: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator; Elyse Monat

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

Chairman Thom MacLean called the meeting to order at 11:00AM

INTRODUCTIONS:

Tom Iverson, citizen
Micheal Verseman, Land Design

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

Director Mike Pigg moved the Cottonwood Park Master Plan discussion to the top of New Business.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: No minutes to approve.

DIRECTORS REPORT: Director Mike Pigg announced Cole McQuillan as the new Parks Superintendent. Mr. Pigg said they will be interviewing for the Park Planner position this coming Thursday. He said they have two applicants the committee is interviewing. He said the Projects Manager position that Mr. McQuillan held will be advertised as open this coming Friday.

Mr. Pigg said the staff has begun the budget process, starting with the Capital Improvement Projects (CIP).

Mr. Pigg said the city staff has hired a consultant to help with our education campaign for the bond issue. Mr. MacLean asked who the consultant was. Mr. Pigg said that was a question for Victoria Hill.

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

Board member Maia Dickerson asked for an update on the parks' gleaning program. Mr. Pigg said it is active and you can go onto our website to learn more about it. He said there is a map showing all the trees in our parks that are part of the program.

Public attendee Tom Iverson stated that he attended a game at Dehler Park and noted the restrooms were embarrassing dirty. Mr. Pigg said the department does not handle the day-to-day maintenance, the owners of the Mustangs handling that. He did say to Tom that he would go over there today and speak with them.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Cottonwood Park Master Plan:

Land Design architect Michael Verseman presented a brief update on the master plan.

There was a question and some confusion regarding how many parking spaces will be available at the park. Mr. Verseman said there will be 250 based on expected usage. Chairman MacLean commented that 250 seemed like a lot of spaces. Mr. MacLean asked if it was possible to park along 54th Street West. Mr. Verseman said no there is not.

Board member Jamie Clark asked where the High Ditch trail goes to west after coming off the parking lot. Mr. Verseman said it ends at our property but what they are showing is that it ends at the Municipal Trail along 54th Street.

Board member Clark asked about the dog park that was shown on one of the designs in the presentation. Mr. Verseman said that was offered in the plan concepts but received mixed results. There has also been a conversation with the Forbes family (Forbes family donated the land) and their wish is to not include a dog park. Ms. Clark commented that if you have a dog park (at Cottonwood), you have a contained area for people to go; but if you do not have a dog park (at Cottonwood) and you have a whole bunch of houses nearby with small yards, it is going to be used for dogs. Several other board members agreed that there should be a dog park at Cottonwood. It was suggested for Land Design to bring up the concerns of not having a dog park to the Forbes family.

Board member Laura Drager asked for the size of the playground. Mr. Verseman said roughly 20,000 square feet.

B. Recreation Update-Dan McKinney:

- Wrapped up summer two weeks ago; good summer where we were near capacity in all our camps
- REC-2-U was a success; will continue next year
- 163 kids are in flag football program; 40 more kids from previous year
- 23 athletes in our Miracle League (adult and youth)
- Youth indoor tennis and martial arts programs start this weekend
- Upcoming new program called Love Serviing Autism which is a tennis program specializing in individuals with autism
- Partnered with the Billings Tennis Association (BTA) on training for tennis and pickleball

Board member Thompson asked where the indoor tennis will be played. Mr. McKinney said North Park Center.

C. Projects Update-Cole McQuillan:

- Wrapping up Central tennis courts
- Wrapping up Ponderosa irrigation
- Tearing into Gorham irrigation for replacement and turning into automation
- Getting ready to demo old restroom at North Park; have met with the contractor on the replacement with a prefabrication restroom
- Placed order for the North Park playground equipment
- Contractor replacing the old sails on Skypoint

Board member Drager asked if there was an increase in power costs going automated irrigation in our parks. Mr. McQuillan said we will be more efficient and with less power to operate.

D. Cemetery Presentation-Brandon Schmidt:

Cemetery Superintendent Brandon Schmidt gave a summary of Mountveiw Cemetery; history, currently what is going on, and future plans, ideas, and needs.

Board member Drager asked if the underground irrigation pipes along Central Avenue had asbestos. Mr. Schmidt said yes.

Board member Thompson asked Brandon which of the presented proposed projects is the highest priority for the Cemetery. Mr. Schmidt said the Central Park irrigation pipeline replacement due to its age, constant need for repairs and concern of possible sinkholes and safety.

E. CIP Presentation:

Director Pigg presented the proposed FY25 Capital Improvement Project (CIP) list for board review.

Board member Drager asked if there was any study that shows the usage of each park. Director Pigg said no, there is no way we could see how many people go into our parks.

Board member Drager asked if having the Skyline Trail, will there be more usage at Swords Park. Director Pigg said yes, he believes it will because it is a great parking spot.

Board Chair MacLean commended Mike Pigg for providing the presented CIP list to the board. He said this is what the board has wanted for many years, a large list of what staff is considering.

Board member Thompson asked when the final CIP would be submitted to Council. Director Pigg said he wasn't sure. City Administrator Chris Kukulski said they would like to have it adopted before Christmas break so it should go before Council sometime in November with a vote in December.

Board member Dickerson asked regarding the maintenance shops if there was anything in particular to the repairs. Director Pigg said the roofs need to be replaced.

Board member Sulser asked if the field repairs could be done or paid for by another entity other than the city. Director Pigg said yes there are other opportunities/possibilities out there. He said staff would work with him on getting those repairs done and look into other options for field usage such as Dehler Park and Legion Field.

Board member Drager asked if the listed maintenance buildings in the Heights and Westend are new buildings staff are looking at. Director Pigg said yes, with the possibility of partnering with the Fire

Department on the Westend and Public Works in the Heights.

F. Parks Board Discussion-Thom MacLean:

Board Chair MacLean discussed his participation in the city's Arts Committee discussions on the park's arts projects presented at the last board meeting. He noted that the committee was presented with the three projects, and all were approved by them.

The board discussed the procedures for art structures. Comments were made on the need to look at the city's art resolution and do more research on how to proceed with structures. It was also discussed the procedure versus the process and best practices with recommendations from the community.

AJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 1:07 PM

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