



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: October 18, 2023

LOCATION: Parks and Recreation Office - Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

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

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Director; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent

City Staff Members: Chris Kukulski, City Administrator; Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator
Tam Rodier, Community Development and Inanna Hencke, AmeriCorps VISTA

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

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

INTRODUCTIONS:

City Councilwoman Pam Purinton

Micheal Verseman, Land Design

Public attendees: Jill Branch, Jodie Adams, Michele DeGroat, Beverly McHugh, Brian McHugh, Willeen Erpenbach, Rick DeVore, Karen Freeman, Karen Freemon, Howard Hotz, Michelle Harkins, Becky Garding, Clayton Augusta and Isaac Augustine

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

No additions to the agenda

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman MacLean requested action on the July and September 2023 minutes. ***Board member Jim Rott made a motion to approve the July 5, 2023, minutes. Board member Jon Thompson seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor.***

Board member Jami Clark made a motion to approve the September 6, 2023, board minutes. Board member Jim Rott seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

DIRECTORS REPORT: Director Mike Pigg introduced Parks staff Randy Kyhl and Shawn Komarek as they presented to the board their inventive tool used to fix a well problem at Gorham Park. It was noted that this tool ended up saving the city a ton of money.

Mr. Pigg introduced temporary employee Recreation Aquatics Coordinator Dawn Maria Kaufman and gave an overview of her job and years of service to the department.

Mr. Pigg had Tam Rodier from Community Development introduce her special guest AmeriCorps Vista Volunteer Inanna Hencke who is currently assisting the department in enhancing user experience in lower income area parks.

Director Pigg said the department has decided to create two Project Manager positions and not hire a Park Planner. We have received fifteen applications so far and should have the positions filled by mid-November.

The final copy of the Capital Improvement Project (CIP) list was given to the board for review. He noted the wall at the Cemetery had been cut due to not having enough money. The CIP will go before the City Council on November 6th.

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Parks Matching Grant Program:

Two matching grant program applications were presented to the board and staff. Grant application #1 was from the Billings Industrial Revitalization District (BIRD) in the amount of \$26,000 to add a dog park at North Park.

Grant application #2 was presented from the Billings Pickleball Association in the amount of \$15,000 for additional amenities including shade structures, concrete picnic tables, painting of shadow lines and paddle stackers to the pickleball courts at Rose, Lillis, Central and Castlerock parks.

The current balance in the grant program is \$7,515.

Board member Thompson asked Jill Branch from the Billings Pickleball Association (BPA) which amenities they would cut if they did not receive all their requested grant amount. Ms. Branch said they would probably hold off on the paddle stackers, and possibly one of the shade structures.

Board member Thompson asked staff how the BPA's proposed picnic tables and shade structures fit into the design of all the parks. Mr. Pigg said he had a little concern about the proposed shade structure located at Lillis because it would be over grass. He said he also had concern with the concrete picnic tables.

Board member Clark asked Ms. Branch why the BPA wanted to have concrete picnic tables. Ms. Branch said because the tables would not be able to be moved. Mr. Thompson commented that the aluminum tables can be anchored down.

Public Comment from Jodie Adams in support of the BPA and tennis within the city parks.

Chairman MacLean asked for motion on the grant applications. Board member Melissa Henderson made a motion that all the remaining grant money in the amount of \$7,515 be given to the Billings Pickleball Association and nothing to the Billings Industrial Revitalization District (BIRD). Board member Jim Rott seconded the motion.

Further discussion on the motion. Board member Rott asked when the grant funding would be

renewed. Mr. Pigg said it does not renew and is one time thing.

On a voice vote, 2 were for and 6 against. Motion failed.

Board member Jami Clark made a motion for \$2,000 of the grant money to be given to the Pickleball Association and \$5,515 be given to BIRD for North Park. Board member Jon Thompson seconded.

Further discussion on the motion. Chairman MacLean felt the grant money should be split equally to both grant applicants.

On a raised hand vote, 1 in favor and 7 against. Board member Thompson changed his motion from seconded to against the proposed motion.

Board member Jon Thompson made a motion to split amounts equally between both applications/projects. Board member Jim Rott seconded. On a vote voice, all were in favor.

B. BIRD Master Plan for North Park:

BIRD representative Michelle Harkins presented their plans to add at North Park a dog park on the northwest corner of 22nd Street and 8th Avenue and a 6-hole disc golf course to the northeast side of the park.

Chairman MacLean asked if the dog park meshed with the current master plan for North. Mr. Pigg said yes.

Board member Rott asked if there was irrigation in addition to the water fountains in the plans for the dog park. Ms. Michelle Harkins said yes, there are already irrigation lines there.

Board member Thompson asked how close the dog park fencing was to the sidewalk. Ms. Harkins said six inches to a foot.

A question was asked if there would be additional lighting added to the park. Ms. Harkins said yes, they are working with the Police department on that.

Public attendee Rick DeVore commented that the dog park presented for North Park does not have a separate area for small dogs. He expressed concern and thought staff should consider having an area for small dogs. Mr. Pigg responded that this designed dog park, and its location/space within the park, is too small to have a small dog area.

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion on the BIRD master plan for North Park. 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.

C. Proposed Eagle Scout Project:

Eagle Scout Isaac Augustine presented his scout project to build an artificial Barn Swallow nesting site at Rose Park.

D. Cottonwood Park Master Plan:

Micheal Verseman presented the final concept for the Cottonwood Park Master Plan. Key changes include a 1.5-acre dog park on the southside, removal of parking on the Southwest corner, bringing the playground further from the ditch, improvement along Colton Avenue and decreased parking spaces. Estimated cost for the current design is between \$25-30 million.

Board member Chuck Platt asked if Michael went back to the Forbes family to get their input on the dog park. Mr. Verseman said yes, and they were ok with the dog park.

Board member Rott commented for no trees along the south side of the amphitheater for a better seating area.

Chairman MacLean asked if there was a buffer between the amphitheater and the pickleball courts. Mr. Verseman said no, the pickleball courts are more internal in the park for any sound issues.

Public Comment:

Citizen Jodie Adams brought up concerns with the aeration at the pond. Mr. Verseman said the pond is at such a high level that they are not really thinking about those specific items yet.

Ms. Adams encouraged staff and park board to entertain the idea of providing indoor tennis and pickleball courts in the community center. Mr. Verseman said the tennis and pickleball courts were not rated high enough in the survey to be added to the design of the community center. Chairman Maclean we do need to consider where we could put more courts due to its rising increase in participation in the sport. Mr. Verseman commented that the Forbes family in their dedication document said that they did not want a sports complex built in the park. City Administrator Chris Kukulski commented that we needed to pay close attention to what the family provided in their dedication documents.

Ms. Adams suggested moving the sand volleyball courts away from other court facilities due to the liability of blowing sand on tennis and pickleball courts, noting it would create a safety hazard.

Ms. Adams had a safety concern with the pump track being so close to the entry way and parking lot into the park.

Citizen Rick DeVore commented for a larger dog park, and it be located near the pond. Board member Clark agreed with DeVore that it should be larger.

Board member Clark commented that there should be more discussion on the master plan before it is approved. Chairman MacLean suggested delaying approving the plan until next month's meeting.

Board member Jon Thompson commented on his concern of over developing the park and adding more things to it.

E. Parks Bond Update:

Director Pigg said the ballots have been mailed out. Staff and Administration have been out doing community groups to educate people on the bond.

F. Recreation Update:

- Wrapped up flag football; 33 volunteer coaches
- Girls' basketball just started
- Extended our Miracle League season due to rainout, both adult and youth teams
- Gearing up to winter spring programs; brochure will be mailed out November 1

G. Projects Update:

- Staff winterizing irrigation systems
- Restrooms are still open through this weekend and then only open for a special event weather permitting
- Leaf mulching following restroom winterizing
- \$25,000 Buckthorn removal grant goes before City Council. This grant will be used for the removal of Buckthorn on private properties
- North Park bathroom is under construction; play equipment is ordered and haven't received it yet; adult exercise equipment is here but waiting to do the project all together

H. Parks Board Discussion:

None

AJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 1:05 PM

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