



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: November 8, 2023

LOCATION: Parks and Recreation Office - Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members: Thom MacLean, Jami Clark, Jon Thomson, Jim Rott, Mark Sulser

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Director; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent; Steve McConnell, City Forester; Dan McKinney, Recreation Specialist; Steve Riley, City Arborist

City Staff Members: Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

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

INTRODUCTIONS:

Public attendees: Damon Burns, Rusty Steele, Amanda Kelly, Jace Kelly, Wayne Wilcox, Peter O'Brien, Trent Gardner, Matt Stricker, Kristine Glenn, Claire Bagnell, J Ryan Wright, Rick Baker
Micheal Verseman, Land Design

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

No additions to the agenda

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Chairman MacLean requested action on the August and October 2023 minutes.

Board member Jim Rott made a motion to approve the August 18, 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 October 8, 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 reported interviews have been held for the two open Project Manager positions. The hiring committee has picked two individuals for those positions. Currently waiting for the individuals to send in their acceptance letters. He said the department is fully staffed as far as parks maintenance goes.

Director Pigg said the bond issue did not pass. Staff along with Administration are looking into a plan B.

Mr. Pigg introduced City Arborist Steve Riley and gave an overview of his job in the Forestry division. He noted that Mr. Riley is the most certified Arborist in the state of Montana.

Mr. Pigg introduced Administrative Support Melonie Trang and gave an overview of her job for the department.

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

None

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Recreation Update:

- Winter/Spring brochure went out November 1st in Simply Local Magazine; we also mailed out to our customers and staff will provide flyers to School District 2
- In the middle of Girls Basketball season
- Starting to gear up for City League Basketball signups
- Moving forward with the aquatic assessment; working with A&E

B. Projects Update:

- Staff doing fall cleanup, mulching leaves and wrapped up winterizing parks
- Did snow removal during the recent snowstorm
- Interviewed and hired for the Cemetery Maintenance position
- North Park restroom has been delayed; a piece of the restroom was damaged in the shipping. We should receive a new restroom end of year or first part of next
- Took delivery of the new playground and shelter for North
- Working with Michael Verseman on phase II of Poly Vista; Landon Legacy is fundraising for the playground
- RFP (Request for Proposal) is out on the Pioneer Park tennis courts, shooting for spring construction
- Wrapping up playground at Arrowhead
- Working on the Castlerock playground slide

C. Cottonwood Park Master Plan:

Micheal Verseman presented the revised final concept for the Cottonwood Park Master Plan. Key changes were to increase the dog park to 3.3-acres and include a small dog area, remove the sand volleyball courts, and flipped flopped courts to accommodate dog park. Estimated cost for the current design is still between \$25-30 million.

Board member Thompson commented that the plan looks like a good compromise and good final plan.

Director Pigg stated that the tennis courts as discussed at the last meeting were not worked into the final plan. He said after further discussion it was decided that Lampman Park would be a better fit for tennis and pickleball courts.

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion on the final master plan for Cottonwood Park. Board member Jamie Clark made a motion to approve the plan and recommend it to City Council. Board member Jon Thomson seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

D. Par 3 Budget:

Trent Gardner, President of Par3, presented the Billings Exchange (PAR3) golf course 2024 budget.

There were no big changes made to the budget.

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion on the PAR3-Billings Exchange Golf budget. Board member Jon Thomson made a recommendation to accept PAR3's budget and send it to City Council for their approval. Board member Mark Sulser seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

E. Veterans Memorial at Dehler Park:

Rick Baker and Ken Callahan presented their request to have a Veterans memorial at Dehler Park. The memorial will list the names of Montana soldiers killed in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars on the one side and then the American flag on the other. It will also have room for any additional names of people who fight in future wars. Along with the memorial will be a kiosk for people to look up Montana's who have served and died in action with their biography. Mr. Baker and Callahan would like the memorial to be placed inside the fence on the northwest corner (triangle area) of the park but would be ok with it on the outside. They currently do not have a total cost for the memorial. Mr. Callahan said they are waiting to see the size of the memorial before they can give a cost estimate.

Board member Thompson asked as to whom would be maintaining the memorial. Mr. Callahan said they would.

Board member Rott asked if there were any other plans for the requested location of proposed memorial. Mr. Pigg said they have yet to determine if the requested location at Dehler will work. He said the inner triangle was supposed to have a playground installed. He said they are working with the Mustangs to determine if they plan to proceed with installing the playground there or not.

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion on the Veteran Memorial at Dehler Park. (Mr. Pigg said there currently is no policy on memorials in parks. He said this would be sent to City Council as a stand-alone item to be approved.) Board member Jim Rott entertained a motion. Board member Jami Clark seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.

F. Skate Park Improvements:

Mr. Pigg said Skate Park has been getting worse over the years and a group came to the department to see what they could do to help make it safer. Several concerns brought up by skaters and their families were seeing drug usage, gang activity, prostitution, violence including stabbings, homeless camps, fires in the skate bowl and sexual activity.

Representing the local skaters' group, Peter O'Brien presented their idea to install a fence around the park with two entry points, add additional lighting and put-up cameras in Phase 1. Mr. O'Brien said the cameras are being donated by C Tech. Lighting should cost around \$200,000 but staff are looking into CPTED money for part of the funding for that. Fencing should cost around \$90,000. Mr. O'Brien said in Phase 2 would include redoing the bowl and signage.

Chairman MacLean wondered if the fencing and only 2 entry points would help the situation. Mr. O'Brien said the current grassy areas would be reduced and concrete would be prevalent. Mr. Pigg said he spoke with our Park Police officer because he too had the same concerns, and Officer Nate Schara said the fence would help him in patrolling the area and he liked the idea. Mr. Pigg also said this would stop the pass-through and also homeless people do not like to bring all of their belongings inside a fenced in area because it causes an uncomfortable feeling for them.

Board member Thompson brought up his concerns for the grassy areas being all removed. Mr. Pigg

said that not all the landscape areas were being removed, just the area for a second skate track.

Chairman MacLean entertained a motion to recommend City Council to approve implementing the presented changes to the Skate Parks Master Plan. Board member Jami Clark recommended to City Council that we follow through with the Master Plan. Board member Jim Rott seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor of the motion.

G. USFS Grant Acceptance:

City Forester Steve McConnell gave a presentation on USFS grant which was awarded to the City of Billings in the amount of \$1 million dollars from the Inflation Reduction Act. Funds from the grant will be spent over a 5-year period for urban forestry work in lower income areas. Projects tasks to be completed using the funding are inventory of current trees and potential planting sites, prune trees that will be retained, create planting sites under impervious surfaces and plant trees in boulevard strips and created openings.

H. Parks Board Discussion:

None

AJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 12:54 PM

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