

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE: February 11, 2009
Dehler Park Conference Room



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:
Tom Iverson, Margy Bonner, Wanda Walker, Rick DeVore,
Catherine Grott
PRPL Staff Members:
Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director
Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent
Joe Fedin, Recreation Superintendent
Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Tom Iverson called the meeting to order at 11:35 am.

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Names recorded on the attendance roster were: Phil Cox, Scott McCulloch, Brad Zimmer, Elmer Meldahl, Scott Wickam, Rob Walla, Jason Hinsz, Garth Clarin, Jen Staton, and Chuck Barthuly.

B. APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 14, 2009 MINUTES

January 14th meeting minutes were presented for approval. Board member Catherine Grott made a motion to accept the minutes as presented to the Board. Board member Margy Bonner seconded. On a voice vote, the motion to accept the minutes was unanimously accepted.

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

- Mr. Whitaker announced it was Board member Wanda Walkers last Board meeting. She resigned from the board back in December. Mr. Whitaker said there is currently three openings on the board and as of today's date they have only two applications.
- Mr. Whitaker announced the Funding Committee will hold their first meeting Friday, March 6th at 2pm at Dehler Park Stadium conference room.
- Mr. Whitaker commented on the citywide survey regarding city services. He expressed that some of the wording in the survey could have been better stated

concerning Parks and Recreation. He said they will update the board once the results of the survey once they have come in.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Concerns were expressed by public attendees over the Park use agreements regarding primary and secondary users and fees associated with the agreements.

Concerns were expressed by several public attendees over the availability of parks for all primary and secondary users in association with the use agreements.

A public attendee expressed his opinion to not have Rush Park built. He felt people could use Rimrock West Park which is located near Rush.

During public comment, Brad Zimmer presented a letter to the Board requesting the sale of alcohol at Stewart Park. Board Chair Tom Iverson said because this was the first time the board saw this request; they would have to review the letter and discuss it at a later time. Joe Fedin said he would put the request on the next board agenda.

A public attendee questioned the staff on as to where the department was at on Rush Park. Mr. Whitaker replied that there will be no action taken at this time regarding it. He said that at today's meeting Park Planner Mark Jarvis will be giving a presentation on the history and where we are going with the park.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Billings Park and Recreation Preservation Foundation:

Board member Margy Bonner said the foundations last meeting was cancelled due to several members being gone. She said they are continuing their work on recruiting more people to be on the board and the reorganization of the board.

B. Rush Park:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis updated the board on Rush Park. He said the department has held two public meetings so far; one in November and one in December. He said from the November meeting several questions and issues were brought up by and to residents and at the December meeting they tried to answer those questions. Some of the questions and issues brought up were:

- *Status of Poly Drive:* Poly Drive will be extended but will not be part of the special improvement district for the park. The cost for the extension will not be assessed to the benefit district of the park. Public works is going through a different avenue to fund the project.
- *Selling Rush Park:* Following internal discussion and some public comment from area residents it was concluded that it was not in the cities best interest to sell the parkland.
- *Sell Rush Park to further develop Rimrock West Park:* After

analyzation, the department felt it would be in the best interest

of the city to capitalize on the development of Rush Park to provide more park space there.

Mr. Jarvis said that following the December meeting the department has come up with two options. First option would be to fully develop the master plan and that would include sidewalks, irrigation, trees, play structures, parking lot, picnic shelter, picnic tables, trash cans and piping the ditch and provide a pedestrian crossing at the big ditch. To do the first option the cost would be around \$804,000 or \$260 per household/property per year for 15 years in taxes. The second option would be minimal development and would include; provide turf, irrigation and trees, pipe the ditch and then provide the pedestrian crossing. This would cost around \$370,400 or \$120 per property owner per year for 15 years.

Mr. Jarvis said a straw poll will be going out to the benefit district asking them which option they would prefer. Once the poll is back the department will send a questionnaire to ask if the residents will support the preferred option. If a simple majority of the residents support the option then the department will move forward on the development.

A comment was made by a public attendee who suggest to the board to have a map showing sections within the benefit district who have waivers of protest included in the straw poll. Several staff and board agreed.

C. Centennial Park Baseball Field:

Board member Rick DeVore announced the District Little League has received a grant from Baseball Tomorrow Fund which is directly tied to Major League Baseball Association. The amount is for \$99,000 for the development of ball fields at Centennial Park in contingent upon raising additional funds. Chairman Iverson asked how much additional funds were needed. Mr. DeVore said \$70,000.

D. Dog Park:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis passed out a rough draft dog park brochure for the board to review. He said they will not put out the brochure until the site locations are confirmed.

He said the committee is working on this brochure as a way to get organized. He said they are also working on the campaign, securing sites in the heights, at Riverfront Park and a county owned park on the westend. He hopes to raise funds for all three sites at one time.

Chairman Iverson asked for a recommendation to have the Dog Park Committee move forward in the current direction the committee is going. Board member Wanda Walker made a motion to move forward. Board member Rick DeVore seconded. Motion was accepted unanimously.

E. Centennial Park Lease:

Director Mike Whitaker said the Centennial lease is currently being reviewed by the City Attorney. He said the department does have the support of the City Administer to proceed with terminating the lease as agreed upon in the agreement terms/requirements and with the approval from the City Attorney.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Sahara Park Master Plan (Option B):

Park Planner Mark Jarvis gave a brief overview of Sahara Park Master Plan option B. (Copy of the plan is included in the board packet.) The second plan was created due to a request from the City Council to have two options available; one with a pool and one without. Both plans do include the library. The parking will only be included if the pool facility is built. Plan option A would be a large urban park and plan option B would be a neighborhood park.

Mr. Jarvis said the department has held two public meetings to get input from residents regarding the development of the park. Residents commented that they wanted to see open areas for sports, picnic area, play structure, volleyball, water play area, trails, natural landscape, trees, parking, library and restrooms. Residents voiced their concerns on; maintenance costs, development, public safety, environmental impact on wildlife and natural landscape, adequate parking and ball control. Residents expressed what they did not want to see in the park; pool facility, library, curb side parking, and commercial concession.

Chairman Iverson requested an action be taken on Sahara Park Master Plan. Board member Margy Bonner made a motion to move forward on the park Master Plan with both option A & B be presented to City Council. Board member Rick DeVore seconded. The Board had further discussion on the motion. Ms. Bonner amended her motion that in addition to the recommended approval of option A with an alternate B that the City Of Billings legal department addresses proper means in the transition from A to B so that this matter does not have to come back again for review and approval. Mr. DeVore seconded. On a voice vote all were in favor.

B. Sharptail Park:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis said he will be going before the County Commissioners to discuss using county owned Sharptail Park for a dog park.

Mr. Jarvis said Sharptail Park is located south of King Avenue and west of Shiloh. It is approximately 78 acres and is fronted on two sides by city limits. Mr. Jarvis said this would be a great regional park. He said he hopes to acquire the whole property for the city.

C. Virginia Graeme Baker Pool and Spa Safety Act:

Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin explained that there was an unfunded mandate sent out regarding aquatic facilities. He said it was created due to an incident in which a young girl was killed by sitting on a pool drain cover and was eviscerated. He said this mandate has required the recreation division to update

and replace drainage at several of the wading and large pools. Mr. Fedin said he believes the department will be able to comply with replacements at all the aquatic facilities except for the wading pool at South Park. He said the pool has some major issues; the concrete is spalled and needs replacing also the pool has only one drain and it is required now to have two drains. He said all of this would be very costly. He expressed he would like money to go towards upgrading and replacing drainage at the other aquatic locations instead of the South Park wading pool. Mr. Fedin said he will be making a presentation to City Council for their input on the matter.

D. FY 10 Budget:

Discussion was postponed to next months meeting due to time restraint.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division:

- Currently the division is working on the specifications for the buses that they are doing through the Exxon agreement.
- The Community Center has passed the ADA requirements for the improvements that were done to the facility including a new ramp into the building.
- Online registration is up and running. People will be able to reserve shelters and register for programs 24/7.
- Park use permits are coming in and so far Showmobil has about 40 events booked.
- The division has received a proposal for changing the secondary use policy for ball fields. The proposal is being reviewed and there will be further discussion on it at the next board meeting.

B. Park Division:

Update report was included in the board packet.

C. Park Planning Division:

Update report was included in the board packet.

D. Cemetery Division:

Update report was included in the board packet.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Board member Rick DeVore made a motion to adjourn meeting at 1:15 pm. Board member Catherine Grott seconded. All were in favor. Meeting adjourned.