



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang, Administrative Support II

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: May 8, 2024

LOCATION: Parks and Recreation Office - Conference Room

ATTENDEES:

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

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Director; Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent; John Gayvert, Parks Project Manager; Brad Wright, Parks Project Manager; Jake Milliron, Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator; Steve McConnell, City Forester; Don Pulver, Senior Parks Equipment Operator

City Staff Members: Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

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

PUBLIC ATTENDEE:

Riverstone Health Sarah Music and Jenna Soloman; AmeriCorps NCCC Connor Hill, Colby Rodriguez, Xavier Felder, Jasa Sesay, Gabriel Lutter-Gardella, Clementine Gottschalle, Crew Childress; Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council Kristine Glenn; Cyndy Desin, Kevin Schul, Jill Branch, Kelly Saville, Jodie Adams

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Chairman MacLean requested approval of the April 8, 2024, minutes. Board member Jon Thompson made a motion to approve. Board member Jami Clark seconded. On a voice vote, motion passed.*

DIRECTORS REPORT: Director Mike Pigg introduced

Mr. Pigg recognized City Forester Steve McConnell and mentioned that he will be retiring at the end of May. Mr. McConnell has been with the city for over seven years.

Mr. Pigg recognized Senior Equipment Operator Don Pulver. Mr. Pulver has worked for the city for over 37 years as a seasonal and for both the Forestry and Parks divisions. Mr. Pigg said he will also be retiring at the end of May.

Updates:

- PRPL budget will go before City Council on May 21

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

Billings citizen Kristine Glenn from the Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council requested for an update on the Forestry Grant and the hiring of the project manager. Mr. McQuillan said he and Mike are working on that position. He said it is a new position so it has to go through the City's hiring committee.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Recreation Update-Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent:

- Summer registration is slightly ahead than last years
- Pool passes sales started on Monday
- Starting to get pools ready for the season next week
- Still need about 4-5 more summer camp counselors
- We are at 28 lifeguards; need around 40/if we do not hire enough lifeguards, we will have to reduce hours at our pools or no open facilities
- Doing lifeguard certification at MSU-B

Board member Thompson asked how much we pay our lifeguards. Mr. Thomson said \$15 an hour.

B. Parks Update-Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent:

- New Arborist starts on Monday the 13th
- Recently lost a Spruce tree in Pioneer Park
- Mountview Cemetery has a new pump station and irrigation; will open and test it out next week
- All restrooms are open except for North Park
- Currently having good results with seasonal staff; fully staffed with 30 being returnees
- We have received another grant for Buckthorn removal; Code Enforcement will be using this money to remove Buckthorn from residential properties
- Currently working with the city grant writer on pump stations grants

A question was asked regarding the zip line at Castlerock Park. Mr. Gayvert said the zip line was taken down and is being fixed. The line had a steep angle. Plans are to lower it.

C. Project Updates-John Gayvert and Brad Wright, Project Managers:

- Broke ground at the North Park dog park. Project is projected to be completed at the end of May
- Dehler Park; poles and backstop are painted. Waiting for protective padding, which should arrive this week. The new vinyl has been installed in CF and 329 Club.
- Optimist Park lighting design fee has been paid by SUBRA.
- Grating has started at the Poly Vista parking lot
- North Park restroom is installed; all plumbing is good; now doing the landscaping around it
- A large portion of the Highland playground has been installed
- Bid closed on the Castle Rock parking lot and restroom
- In the process of getting the flood plain permit for Coulson south and north improvements
- Grandview Park automated irrigation bid was awarded to Good Earth Works
- Contractor began work on the Highland Park playground replacement
- Shelter at North has been built and the concrete has been poured for the exercise equipment
- North Park playground is finished; waiting on the safety inspection
- Pioneer Park tennis court bid was awarded to Good Earth Works

D. Outreach Coordinator Report-Jake Milliron, Community Outreach Coordinator:

- Arbor Day is tomorrow; the Arbor Day tree is a Cottonwood and will be named after our City Forester Steve McConnell
- There will be a tree planting at the North Park Dog Park on Friday
- Garden plots are full for the first time since its creation
- The AmeriCorps NCCC has been helping the department build raised beds at Amend Community Garden and Buckthorne removal at Riverfront Park

E. A & E Aquatic Study:

Dusty Eaton from A & E Design presented the consolidated report on the Aquatic study for the department. The overall results from the study show the infrastructure of the departments aquatic systems are aging, outdated or obsolete and in need of replacing.

Board member Clark asked if admission costs were included in the study. Mr. Eaton said yes, we do have an operational cost model, but it is still in process.

Board member Dickerson asked if there was any comparison of what pressure this might take off Rose Pool if certain amenities were going into this versus not. Mr. Thomson said no but the hope is that it provides something different than Rose Pool.

A question was asked by a public attendee as to what the cost difference

is for pump and dump and recirculating spray parks. Mr. Easton said construction cost for recirculating is approximately \$1.6 million and \$1.5 for the pump and dump. He said the big driver in costs is from an operational standpoint, which is mainly water costs. Mr. Pigg said the recirculating is more of a problem for the department because we would have to have a certified staff member to test the water twice a day to make sure the PH and chlorine levels are correct.

A question was asked if the department pays for city water. Mr. Pigg said currently we do not pay for city water in general fund parks.

F. Riverstone Health - Jenna Solomon and Sarah Music:

Jenna Solomon and Sarah Music presented their campaign concept to have smoke free/tobacco (vaping included) free parks. This concept is to provide cleaner air (secondhand smoke) for people to breathe, especially around children/playgrounds, less cleanup of cigarette butts and vaping materials left leaking into the soil. There has been success with this campaign for smoke free/tobacco free parks in areas around the state including Helena, Carbon County and Lewis & Clark County. It was noted that Carbon and Lewis & Clark counties do not have an ordinance for smoke/tobacco free parks, they just have campaign signage.

Ms. Solomon and Ms. Music are looking at doing a more social campaign for Billings city parks and this would include posting up signage encouraging people not to smoke, vape or use tobacco in city parks.

Ms. Clark asked if Riverstone Health would cover the costs for signage and contribute to installation. Ms. Solomon said yes but was not sure in regard to installation and would need to speak with staff.

Ms. Dickerson asked if there would be enough signage for every single park. Ms. Solomon said yes, at least one sign per park with the possibility of more signage for larger parks.

Ms. Henderson asked what the funding mechanism was for this campaign. Ms. Solomon said they are contracted with DPPHS (Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services) to provide tobacco prevention services for Yellowstone County. They will help with funding for the signage and messaging campaign.

Mr. Thompson felt the city/department logo should be on the signage.

Board member Chuck Platt asked how this would affect people in vehicles. Ms. Solomon said the general idea is for this to be for the grassy areas in the parks rather than the parking lots.

A comment was made for the language on the signage to be softer in wording.

Mr. Pigg said before this program would roll out, it would go before City Council and

the City's Legal Department and then the final would be brought back to the board. He clarified that this is just step one in the process.

G. BTA - Jodie Adams:

Jodie Adams, a USTA consultant residing in Billings has brought to the board the feasibility study results the Billings Tennis Association (BTA) had done for a new indoor tennis facility in Billings. She introduced Kevin Schuh and J.D. Wood from Sports Facilities Company out of Clearwater Florida that conducted the study. Results showed the need for more pickleball and tennis courts. An indoor facility would cost around \$29-36 million. The facility would include both pickleball and tennis courts, fitness facilities, medical, and food and beverage. Ms. Adams said they had a development come up and they are currently looking at a premier facility that is 200x500 square foot. This building could hold other amenities besides pickleball and tennis courts including basketball, classrooms, and sports performance. She said they are looking into some possible entities/investors for the facility.

H. Parks Board Discussion:

None

AJOURNMENT – Chairman MacLean asked for a motion to adjourn. Board member Clark motioned to adjourn. Board member Melissa Henderson seconded. On a voice all were in favor and the board adjourned at 12:45 pm.

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