



PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang, Administrative Support II

MEETING PURPOSE: Monthly Meeting

MEETING DATE: October 9, 2024

LOCATION: Billings Parks & Recreation Office

ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members: Jon Thompson, Thom MacLean, Maia Dickerson, Jami Clark, Jim Rott, Laura Drager

PRPL Staff Members: Mike Pigg, Director; Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent; John Gayvert, Parks Project Manager; Brandon Schmidt, Cemetery Supervisor; Jake Milliron, Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator; Jennifer Brown, Recreation and Wellness Specialist; Gayle Lam, Urban Forestry IRA Grant Technician; Shawn Stringer, Senior Equipment Operator

City Staff Members: Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

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

PUBLIC ATTENDEE:

Rick DeVore, Steve McConnell

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: *Chairman MacLean asked for approval of the July 10 and September 11, 2024, meeting minutes. Board member Maia Dickerson made a motion to approve. Board member Laura Drager seconded the motion. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

DIRECTORS REPORT:

Updates:

- Disc golf: The disc golf group will be re-installing the 9-basket course at the top of Phipps Park. Baskets will not be placed in the fall zone area.
- Council Meetings: Staff will do a presentation on October 21. Recreation & Wellness Specialist Jenn Brown will be making her presentation on the Senior/Community Center. It was noted there is currently an initiative from City Council Member Mike Boyet to eliminate the community center/PRPL office building and build affordable housing once part of the office staff has moved into the new city hall. This would mean no more senior/community programming from this building and would eliminate offices for seven of our staff members.
- Employee Recognition of Parks Senior Equipment Operator Shawn Stringer. He has been with the city for over thirteen years as a parks maintenance person. More recently he has become a senior operator and has really shined in that position. He shows himself to be a caring and dedicated individual to his job.
- Introduced newly hired Gayle Lam. She will be the Urban Forestry IRA Grant Technician starting Monday October 14. Her background is an educator for School District 2 and is the mother former Parks Police Officer Nick Lam.
- Grant Program is active again. Grant applications are due by the end of December.
- Cemetery Supervisor Brandon Schmidt is working on the Memorandum of Understanding with Pedal United for the state land back behind Reberg Ranch to do trails.

PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:

Public attendee Rick DeVore made a request to have the Matching Grant application reduce the minimum grant award amount of \$10,000 to either a smaller amount or to zero. He feels the smaller amount would open the door for groups like Billings Little League or Friends of Billings Dog Parks to apply for grant for their smaller projects.

Chairman MacLean asked why the amount was set at \$10,000. Mr. Pigg said it was due to the number of projects the department could handle. It would be easier to handle a few larger projects than to handle a bunch of smaller ones.

The board discussed making an addendum to the application to allow groups to apply for a smaller amount on a project.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Recreation Update-Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent:

- Recreation Specialists presented an update to City Council on we have been doing since last April and what we are planning for this fall and rest of year.
- Winter/Spring brochure comes out November 1st
- Deadline for the RFP (Request for Proposal) on the Amend Recreation Campus is today. To date, we have received four.

B. Parks Update-Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent:

- At 50% with seasonal staff
- Restrooms should all be closed by the end of the month
- Held interviews for the Forestry position; should have a person in place at the

end of the month

- Cemetery Supervisor Schmidt is working on the ERP (Equipment Replacement Plan)
- Projects staff are working on; reading boards at Castle Rock Park, finishing up concrete for memorial at Dehler Park

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

It was announced Parks Project Manager Brad Wright is currently out of the office attending to his family down in North Carolina that was affected by flooding from Hurricane Helene. At the time of the meeting, it was reported Mr. Wright lost around fifteen of his family members, including his parents.

- Irrigation repair completed at Dehler Park
- Sails have been installed at Skypoint
- Castle Rock restroom contract has been held up on getting approved
- Going out to bid on lighting for Optimist Park
- Demolition started on the old sprayground at Rose Park
- Work will resume in the spring on the Poly Vista playground and parking lot
- Awarded substantial completion last week on the Pioneer Park tennis courts
- Holding a pre-construction meeting this Friday on the Grandview irrigation project
- Bids opened on the north and south improvements at Coulson Park
- Received six design options for Sacajawea Park playground. Plans are to meet with Central Heights school and the neighborhood task force to get input on the designs.

D. Saluting Branches-Brandon Schmidt:

Cemetery Supervisor Brandon Schmidt said the “Saluting Branches” event was held last Friday. Approximately 45 volunteers attended. Work done at the event included; removal of four problem trees, fifteen trees planted, pruning, and the replacement of Veteran Headstones that were damaged by car accidents. CM Tree Service sponsored event.

Mr. Schmidt reminded the board of the second annual 2k/5k “Patriot Run” being held on Sunday November 10 at Mountview Cemetery. Proceeds from the run will be to support Veteran burial services and maintenance.

E. Refresh the Rims-Jake Milliron:

Mr. Milliron said the Refresh the Rims event took place on October 5. It was supported by various groups from around town. Volunteers cleaned up along the rims.

F. Cemetery Wall-Brandon Schmidt:

Mr. Schmidt presented mockup options for barrier/wall solutions for the Veterans Burial section along Central Avenue. It was decided to look into some sort of barrier following multiple car accidents damaging and destroying numerous Veteran

headstones. Staff are looking for ways to fund this project. Costs range from \$12,000 to \$150k

G. Senior Center Programs-Jennifer Brown:

Ms. Brown gave a presentation on the meals served, programming and activities being held at the Community and Senior Center, both past, present and upcoming. She gave an overview of costs and benefits of senior programming and the partnership the department has with the Adult Resource Alliance and other senior groups. Ms. Brown and Parks Board expressed the benefits of having the center for the community especially the senior population.

H. Parks Board Discussion:

Board member Chuck Platt asked staff as to when the closed section of Swords Park would be opened. Mr. Pigg said soon.

AJOURNMENT – Chairman MacLean adjourned the meeting at 12:15 pm.

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