



## **PRC PARK BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

**RECORDED BY:** Melonie Trang, Administrative Support

**MEETING PURPOSE:** Monthly Park Board meeting

**MEETING DATE:** February 12, 2025

**LOCATION:** Parks and Recreation Office

### **ATTENDEES:**

**PRC Board Members:** Thom MacLean, Melissa Henderson, Maia Dickerson, Laura Drager, Genia Castro Waller

**PRPL Staff Members:** Mike Pigg, Director; Cole McQuillan, Parks Superintendent; Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent; Brad Wright, Parks Project Manager; Gayle Lam, Urban Forestry IRA Grant Technician; Jake Milliron, Community Outreach & Engagement Coordinator; Brandon Schmidt, Cemetery Supervisor; Melonie Trang, Administrative Support

**City Staff Members:** Kris Kukulski, City Administrator; Kevin Iffland, Assistant City Administrator; Elyse Monat, Active Transportation Planner

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**MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:** 11: 01 am

**PUBLIC ATTENDEES:** Jenna Soloman, Kori Anderson, Steve McConnell

**ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:** Added to the agenda under “New Business” for discussion and action the Billings Parks and Recreation “*Sale of Parkland*” and “*Advertisement Presentation*”.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Chairman MacLean asked for approval of the January 8, 2025, PRC board meeting minutes. **Board member Genia Castro Waller *made a motion to approve the minutes. Board member Maia Dickerson seconded. On a voice vote, motion passed.***

### **DIRECTORS REPORT:**

Mike Pigg announced

- **Employee Recognition:** Mike recognized Cemetery Supervisor Brandon Schmidt. He said he has brought professionalism and dedication to this department.
- **Hiring Update:** Project Manager position is still open; at this time, we have decided to not pursue that position until after the FY26 budget has been approved in July.

#### **PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT:**

Public attendee Steve McConnell asked about the Trash for Trees bin at Veterans Park. He said there is a sign up that says take your items to the landfill. Parks Superintendent McQuillan said there has been problems with people leaving stuff there that should be recycled. Mr. Pigg said that sign probably should not be there anymore and should be taken down.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

##### **A. Parks Update - Parks Superintendent Cole McQuillan:**

- The department has been working with the IT department and their software system to do inventory of our parks assets and will help with park mapping.
- Staff have been keeping up on snow removal
- Working through some challenges with the new Skyline trail
- Phillips 66 will be doing some work this summer that will be impacting the Kiwanis Trail. Office staff will be providing more details on timeframe and specific location of the trail that will be impacted.
- Working on budget and hiring seasonal staff

##### **B. Recreation Update - Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson:**

- Staff are in the middle of winter activities; kids' basketball and girls' volleyball
- Staff are working on the summer brochure; this will come out March 1<sup>st</sup>
- Working on getting our new mobile app ready to implement in mid-March
- Working on budget; looking at additional programs, seasonal wage increases and funding for interns

Director Pigg announced the department has got rid of the diesel rec buses and has received four new 15-passenger vans. He said these buses will be safer, more comfortable for the children, will increase our capacity, give us more locations we can travel to, and we will no longer need to hire CDL drivers.

##### **C. Projects Update - Project Manager Brad Wright:** (most projects have been put on hold until spring. Continuing to do administrative work on projects)

- Design completed on the Rose Park North Trail project. Bid opens March 4<sup>th</sup>
- Waiting on quotes for the Spitz bollard replacement project

- Ordered shade structure and restroom for the Coulson Park north and south improvements. Contract is being routed for signatures
- Chosen contractor for North Park court improvement
- Senior Challenge board for Lillis Park should arrive around March 13<sup>th</sup>. Have a contractor for the installation
- Finalized design for Arnold drain/Big Ditch trail
- Quote for the solar lighting at Castlerock parking lot
- Contract is in route for the Sacajawea playground replacement
- Waiting on stamped set of drawings for the Skyline shade structures
- Bids open on March 4<sup>th</sup> for the Dehler protective netting
- Rose Park north trail design is complete

#### **D. Tobacco Free Update - Jenna Solomon:**

Jenna Solomon presented 6 tobacco free signage designs. Designs were done based on location in park such as playground, pool area, ballparks, dog park, general area in parks. Each sign will include the city parks and recreation logo, Riverstone Health logo, information link to quit tobacco and images of children, people and pets and also that this park area is a tobacco free zone.

Chairman MacLean said he liked that the signs made it a suggestion rather than a mandate.

Board member Mia Dickerson said she liked how the signs were segmented.

A question was asked if all the signs would be purchased at once or over time. Ms. Solomon said they currently have enough money in the budget to do some of the signage but said it would depend on what kind of design is chosen and the location(s) the signs would be installed.

Chairman MacLean asked staff and administration if there were any problems with installing these in our parks. Mr. Pigg said no he did not see any problem and noted that these signs are just a suggestion and not an enforceable law.

Board member Dickerson said she would like staff to be the ones to choose where the signs should be placed.

Public attendee McConnell made a suggestion to look at possibly including County and State. Ms. Solomon said they are just focusing on city parks right now but there is a possibility of expanding into state and county parks later.

**E. Annual Report – Community Outreach Coordinator Jake Milliron:**

Community Outreach Coordinator Jake Milliron distributed a one-page paper form of the annual report. It shows some of the highlights from the department this past year. A complete informational copy of the report is available online at the Parks and Recreation website.

Mr. Milliron announced that the department has an article in the current issue (February) of the National Recreation Parks Association (NRPA) Magazine. He said the article focused on our Youth Volunteer Corps program and how we are engaging in youth volunteers in parks and recreation.

**F. Budget Discussion – Director Mike Pigg:**

Director Pigg said that staff would like to start the process of working more on educating the board on the department's budget. He said staff along with City Administration would like to see the board help in being more vocal in the community in our budgeting process.

Mr. Pigg explained that this department has multiple budgets and one of our funding sources came out of the general fund. He said this last year, Finance Director Andy Zoeller made some changes, and the general fund now gives us a set dollar amount. He said this change benefits us by allowing us to keep all revenue we make in the department to spend out within the next budgeting cycles and gives us the ability to keep any unspent money in the account.

He said staff will be bringing a better picture of the budget to the board as staff moves forward in the process.

**G. ARC Design/Management – Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson:**

- A&E is working on the schematic design phase; about 33% complete. Next step will be the development design phase.
- Langlas and Associates was chosen to be the general contractor; working on getting a contract with them
- Received an initial proforma from the consultant; reviewing the information
- Working on a lease agreement with Yellowstone Ice on the land they will be using for their ice facility

**H. Sale of Parkland – Assistant City Administrator Kevin Iffland:**

- Initiative to look at selling city property started in 2022 by Councilmember Tom Rupsis.
- Staff were asked to put together a list of properties to sell

- The list of saleable land/tax codes includes both parkland and Public Works land
- City Council members recently went to each of their wards and looked for properties to dispose of and added those to the list.
- Assistant City Administrator Kevin Iffland has met and will be meeting again today with some local realtors
- Presenting at a City Council work session next month. Will be informing them on where we are at, what we have available and get their input on what their priorities.
- There are currently about 140-150 tax codes/locations on the list for possible sale

Director Pigg commented that staff is not in favor of selling parkland. He said once parkland has been sold, you cannot get it back. He does not believe selling parkland is a solution, and the public should be involved in this discussion.

Board members discussed creating a letter to City Council to voice their opinion on selling park properties. The board agreed to take action on writing the letter.

***Board member Melissa Henderson made a motion for the Parks Board to write a letter to City Council about their thoughts of selling parkland. Board member Laura Drager seconded the motion. On a voice vote, motion carried. (An email will be sent out to the board members not at today's meeting to get their permission to add their names to letter.)***

#### **I. Advertisement Presentation (PRPL Sponsorship Proposal) – Cemetery Supervisor Brandon Schmidt:**

Cemetery Supervisor Brandon Schmidt presented an idea on ways to receive sponsorship from the community to fund a PRPL endowment. Percent of the sponsorships would pay for expenses/salaries.

Sponsorship ideas include logos for events like Arbor Day or Refresh the Rims or on staff shirts/city vehicles; advertise in brochures; signage in parks, Amend Community Garden, pools, etc.; adoption such as trial, garden and flower planters. Mr. Schmidt said the sponsorship proposal will be presented to City Council as an idea at the March 17<sup>th</sup> work session.

Board member Dickerson suggested doing the “Adopt a Park” program. Mr. Pigg said we have that program on our website and currently we have 6-7 groups participating.

Board member Henderson commented she had some concerns about how signage would look inside the green space. Mr. Schmidt said that is why staff would be doing

the design work. Ms. Henderson also brought up her concern with how City Council would view having the sponsorship program as a way to sponsor our way out of the parks challenge. She did say she felt it was good to use it in print materials and the app.

Board member Genia Castro Waller expressed support in using the sponsorship program/advertising on/in vehicles and print materials.

Board member Dickerson asked if sponsoring on a vehicle would pay for the vehicle or for its maintenance, etc. Mr. Pigg said it would be more like purchasing advertisement on a bus and not to fund for maintenance or vehicle.

**J. Parks Board Discussion – Chairman MacLean:**

None

**Adjournment:** 1:00 pm

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