

# MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: Special PRC Board Meeting  
(No regular monthly meeting scheduled)

MEETING DATE  
AND LOCATION: August 4, 2009  
Community Center



ATTENDEES:

PRC Board Members:  
Tom Iverson, Rick DeVore, Rachel Cox, Darwin George, Gary Gray, Todd Royal, Margy Bonner, 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

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## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

### A. INTRODUCTIONS

Park Supervisor Dean Sjolseth and needs assessment consultant Ananda Mitra.

### B. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 8, 2009 MINUTES

Chair Iverson requested a motion to approve the July 8, 2009 minutes. *Board member Catherine Grott made a motion to accept the minutes. Board member Gary Gray seconded. On a voice vote, motion was accepted unanimously.*

### C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

No additions

## II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

Director Mike Whitaker commented that the needs assessment process has gone great. He said it was presented at the council work session last night and he was happy with the response he received back from them.

## III. PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments

## IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### A. Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment:

Consultant Ananda Mitra presented the results of the citywide needs assessment study. (A copy of the presentation is on the PRPL website) Highlights from the presentation are as follows:

- ➔ 16.5% return response to the survey
- ➔ Respondents represented the general population and not special interest groups. *Board member Grott asked if any adjustments are made for the non-respondents when doing the analysis. Mr. Ananda said they usually do not.*
- ➔ Survey results are only from the adult population and not the youth population. Survey to the youth will be going out into the high schools and possibly colleges as soon as school starts in the fall.
- ➔ Top five facilities attended and participation in programs: Pioneer Park, Riverfront Park, special events in the parks, using the trails and going to Dehler Park Baseball stadium.
- ➔ 83% agreed that the Parks and Recreation is essential service to this community.
- ➔ Several factors that influence the communities participation in attending the parks or programs are; not enough time, lack of restrooms, lack of picnic tables, lack of information and lack of parking.
- ➔ The community expressed the best way they like to receive information on parks and programs are through mailers, newspaper, TV & radio, email, website, signs and word of mouth. *Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin pointed out that the first three marketing options cost a great deal of money that the department does not have. He said there hasn't been an increase in the department advertising budget and any money currently budgeted is used for the summer brochure. Board member Grott suggested placing information in the water bills. Mr. Fedin said the department has looked at putting in a reader board out front of the office.*
- ➔ Top ten needs:
  - Picnic tables
  - Nature trails
  - Connected walking/biking trails
  - Preservation of wild life
  - Natural areas
  - Preserve open space
  - Multi-use trails
  - Park playground equipment
  - Picnic shelters
  - Natural surface trails
- ➔ Percentage in agreement on several opinions asked regarding facilities, programs and financial are:
  - Well-maintained parks add to the quality of life in the community 97%
  - Billings needs additional regional parks such as Pioneer 71%
  - I feel that it is safe to visit the parks 72%

- The department provides an essential service to the community 83%
- There is a need for activities for the whole family 78%
- I am willing to pay reasonable user fees for recreation opportunities 59%
- It is important for the department to be able to control its own funds 81%
- I would support a dedicated mill levy which would provide improved park maintenance and increased recreational opportunities 54%

◆ Overall summary; Indoor recreation is very important for the growing community in Billings. Compared to other communities, Billings is nearly 100% endorses that the Department provides essential service to the community that enhances the quality of life in Billings.

#### **B. American Legion Hall of Fame:**

Sam McDonald of Wendy's made a request for the American Legion Hall of Fame plaque he is donating to be moved from its original board approved location to a new location within Dehler Park Stadium.

The Board had decided back in 2008 to have original location be on the southwest wall between the administration building and restrooms. Mr. McDonald expressed that he dislikes the approved location and would like it to be placed on the wall just right of the team store entrance by the main gate. Board and staff expressed their concerns on relocating the plaque in a main flow traffic area.

Board member Rick DeVore brought up concern regarding a need for additional room for plaques once the Legion plaque can no longer hold room for its nameplates.

Board and staff discussed the design of the plaque and addressed the issue of whether the Wendy's logos on the plaque would be considered as advertising. Board expressed concern that if the logos were considered advertising would this effect the bond issue. Mr. Whitaker said he would need to discuss this issue with Pat Weber from finance.

*Board member Darwin George made a recommendation to have Wendy's take their logo off the plaque and put "donated by" instead.*

*Board member Margy Bonner moved to table any action until next month so Park Director Mike Whitaker can approach city staff to determine the value of the advertising. Board member Rick DeVore seconded the motion. All were in favor, motion passed.*

#### **V. DIVISION UPDATES**

##### **A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin:**

Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin reported the recreation programs have gone well this year but swimming pool attendance has been down due to weather. He said they are close to \$50,000 in online sales since the start of online registration at the beginning of this year.

Mr. Fedin said the department is also busy with events in the parks and has over 50 engagements with the soundstage. He hopes to have final statistics once summer ends on how we compared to last year.

Mr. Fedin said three of the five kids' concerts being held at Dehler have averaged around 200 in attendance. He said people who attended thought it was one of the greatest things going.

**B. Park Division-Park Superintendent Jon Thompson:**

Park Superintendent Jon Thompson reported that there has been a tremendous amount of special events going on in our parks causing more needed staff time. He said the department will be losing several seasonal staff towards the end of August but they are hoping to replace at least three positions to finish out the season.

Mr. Thompson also said the department will be taking over soon the maintenance of three additional parks, Reflections of Copper Ridge, Ironwood and Twin Oaks.

**C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:**

Park Planner Mark Jarvis reported that the wetland study for Riverfront Park came back showing the wetlands are not an issue for the considered location of the dog park. He said he plans to speak with the Core of Engineers to see if they have any recommendations or permits before developing the dog park.

Mr. Jarvis said the department is moving ahead on the Master Plan for High Sierra Park to include a dog park. There are plans to hold a public meeting at the end of the month regarding that.

Mr. Jarvis also said he has received the proposal and feedback for the Pioneer Park Master Plan from the consultant. He said the department plans to evaluate the information.

**D. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:**

Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller reported that during this time of year genealogy people from all over the nation are coming specifically to Billings to visit and research family members buried in the cemetery.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT**