

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE
AND LOCATION: December 9, 2009
Community Center

ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Tom Iverson, Rick DeVore, Rachel Cox, Todd Royal, Gary Gray, Darwin George, Margy Bonner

PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director

Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent

Joe Fedin, Recreation Superintendent

Mark Jarvis, Park Planner

Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent



I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. INTRODUCTIONS

None

B. APPROVAL OF THE November 18, 2009 MINUTES

Chairman Iverson made a motion to approve the November minutes. All Board members approved and the minutes were accepted.

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

- Director Mike Whitaker said City Council reviewed the proposed fee adjustments at the December 7th work session. Council had only one comment; the department needs to increase the fees even more. The fees adjustments will be presented at the December 21st council meeting for final approval.
- Mr. Whitaker said he along with Park Planner Mark Jarvis were able to present the Needs Assessment Study to the Planning Commission.
- Mr. Whitaker said the Billings Mustangs have requested to develop an additional corporate area located behind the batters eye. Mr. Whitaker said this location has been set aside for a future playground but at this time, there are no funds to develop it. He said the department has agreed to allow the Mustangs to use the area until funds for the playground are in at which time the Mustangs will give the area back.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Heights Pool Project (Revised Development Agreements):

Mr. Whitaker presented the latest revised development agreements between the City and the Better Billings Foundation (BBF) regarding the heights pool project. He said agreements A-1 and A-2 were recommended by the foundation and agreements B-1 and B-2 were recommended by city staff.

Agreements A1 & 2 were the original agreements given to the city by the foundation. Agreements B1 & 2 were city staff and Park & Recreation Board recommendations. City Council will make the final decision on which agreement will be accepted at an upcoming council meeting.

B. Pioneer Park Master Plan Update:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis said the statistical survey would be complete as of today. A final report from the survey will be ready hopefully by January 1st. He said the first of two public meetings is set for January 28th at the Billings Community Center. The first meeting will be an explanation of where the consultant has been with the survey and some information from the survey on the status of Pioneer Park. The second public meeting will be announced following the first meeting.

Mr. Jarvis said the consultant is very pleased with the amount of responses he has received back. That total is over 400.

Mr. Jarvis said the results to the plan should be complete and ready to be presented to City Council by the first of April.

C. Dog Park Update:

Mr. Jarvis said things are moving along with the Dog Parks. He said they had their kick off meeting November 5th. They had good press coverage, along with a nice size group in attendance. So far, the committee has raised \$17,000 to date. He hopes to start developing at least one dog park this spring.

D. Mountain Pine Beetle:

Mr. Whitaker updated the board on how the Mountain Pine Beetle is affecting the department. He said they have identified at least 100 trees in our developed parks alone that must be removed. Park Superintendent Jon Thompson said they do not know how many trees are infested in our undeveloped parks yet. Mr. Whitaker said neighbors surrounding the tree-infested parks have expressed their concern that the department is removing trees for no apparent reason at all. He said for this reason the department will be going before City Council explaining the current situation and what preventative measures need to be taken.

Mr. Thompson said the department does plan to remove all infested trees and take preventative measures this spring before the beetle larvae hatch out as adults and begin infesting other trees.

Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller was asked if any of the trees at the cemetery have been infested. Mr. Stadtmiller said so far they have removed two trees and plan to remove three more.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Department Business Plan:

Mr. Whitaker said the City Administer had made a request for all departments to create and present a Department Business Plan to City Council. The plan was to look out four to five years and see what cuts can be made to the department if costs cannot keep up with revenue. He said the departments plan is complete and gave a brief PowerPoint presentation to the Board. The plan showed cuts would be made to the following areas: not fertilizing the cemetery, closed restrooms in city parks, and close wading pools. He said these three items were suggested because they would be the least likely to have a long-term effect on our parks. Board member Gary Gray asked if the restrooms were closed would it be possible to use portable toilets because they would cost less to operate. Mr. Whitaker said it would be from a vandalism standpoint.

The board also discussed creating a levy to help bring funding to the department.

B. Election of Officers:

Board member Rick DeVore recommended nominating Tom Iverson as Board Chairman for another term. Board member Rachel Cox seconded. On a voice vote, the recommendation passed unanimously.

Board member Margy Bonner recommended nominating Rachel Cox as Board Vice-Chair. Board member Gary Gray seconded. On a voice vote, the recommendation passed unanimously.

C. Youth Survey Results:

Discussion was postponed until the next meeting.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin:

Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin gave the following report:

- Fee increases were presented at the Monday night Council work session. Council pretty much showed their support for them.
- Recreations winter brochure is complete and will be in the Billings Gazette January 1st.
- The cities web server crashed and with it, it took down online registration. They hope to get it up and running soon.
- At the end of December, the department will begin working on the 2011 budget.
- On December 16th, the department will be doing the annual Santa Calling to at least 100 children within the Billings area.

B. Park Division-Park Superintendent Jon Thompson:

Mr. Thompson reported the following:

- Winterization wrapped up in November.
- Looking into sprucing up park bathrooms this next year.
- Have received funding to remove South Park Wading Pool. Demolition should begin as soon as the weather breaks. They hope to have the pool completely removed and the area cleaned up by spring. Any remaining funds from the demolition have been approved to be used to improve the South Park bathrooms.
- Two new areas have been added to the PMD's; Falcon Ridge and Ironwood.
- Bids will be awarded for the Trash Truck on Monday, December 15th.

C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis gave a printed report. Mr. Jarvis added that he is starting the 2nd phase of Swords Park Trails. He will be sending out an RFP in January.

D. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:

Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller printed report was included in the board packet. Mr. Stadtmiller added that he is working on replacing several of the department's city vehicles.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

1:20 pm