

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

**MEETING DATE
AND LOCATION:** January 13, 2010
Community Center

ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:
Tom Iverson, Rick DeVore, Rachel Cox, Dave Williams,
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 Manager



I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Denis Pitman, City Council member

B. APPROVAL OF THE December 9, 2009 MINUTES

Chairman Iverson made a request to have the December minutes approved. Board member Margy Bonner made a motion to approve. Board member Rachel Cox seconded. On a voice vote motion was passed.

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

- Mr. Whitaker announced that Margy Bonner and Gary Gray have been reappointed to serve another term on the board.
- Mr. Whitaker recognized Mr. Iverson and Ms. Cox for speaking at the City Council public hearing regarding the heights pool project.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

Councilman Denis Pitman commented on the sale of parkland. He expressed that at the time of the sale or donation the zoning should be changed at the same time. He said the department needs to talk with the neighbors and really do the footwork before selling any land. He wanted the department to check into trading land for better land. He also expressed the department should be putting the money into escrow.

Board member Rick DeVore asked Denis how people in the heights were feeling about the pool project. Mr. Pitman said it was positive.

Mr. Iverson asked Denis about leaving the land undeveloped. Mr. Pitman said there have been complaints from the community that these areas are not being taken care of like cutting the weeds. Park Superintendent Jon Thompson said he does not believe the public understands is a difference between natural and undeveloped land and how they are maintained differently.

Mr. Pitman praised Jon Thompson on well he is doing as Park Superintendent.

IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Heights Pool Project (Revised Development Agreements):

Mr. Whitaker said the agreement between the Better Billings Foundation (BBF) and the City of Billings as been completed with all the requested changes from City Council and sent to the foundation. Mr. Whitaker said there were no substantial changes to the agreement.

B. Pioneer Park Master Plan Update:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis said the Pioneer Park Master Plan update is moving forward and doing well. The results/findings from survey have been enlightening and are a great help with the updating process. He said they will be presenting the results/findings at a public meeting on January 28th here at the Billings Community and Senior Center. He said the results/findings will not be available to the public until then.

Mr. Jarvis said some of the results from the survey were; clean restrooms, want their dogs on leash in parks, they expressed great value on trees in parks and parking was important.

C. Dog Parks:

Mr. Jarvis said things are still moving forward with the Dog Parks. He said they have raised \$18,000 to date. He said they are planning to move forward on Phase 2 of fundraising, which is to start talking to service clubs. They hope to get their support in both funding and partnering with us. Mr. Jarvis said the committee is leaning towards developing High Sierra Park first.

Board member Rick DeVore asked how much it would take to get High Sierra going. Mr. Jarvis said about \$140,000 for supplies only. Mr. DeVore commented that the committee should have a fundraising event at PetSmart and include the media and radio.

Mr. Jarvis also updated the Board that the County is looking into changing their rules/policies regarding dogs. He said they talking about licensing dogs differently, have dogs on leash or on a voice command off private property and beefing up the fines on dogs creating mischief.

D. Fee Adjustment:

Recreation fee adjustments were passed by City Council. The necessary changes to all paperwork, software including WebTrac have been made. There has been no negative response to the fee increases.

V. NEW BUSINESS

A. Disposal of Parkland:

Mr. Jarvis presented a draft flow chart showing the criteria for selling, donating and trading parkland. The chart showed an evaluation matrix that will show whether the department should or should not sell parkland. It has several questions that are asked to make that determination.

Mr. Thompson discussed how the Parks Department has 444 parcels of parkland that need to be individually looked at.

Mr. Jarvis commented that the department is at the beginning stages of the process and wants to take it very carefully using council and legal to assist.

Mr. Whitaker commented that there is cost to selling parkland; we have to go through the appraisal process, man-hours and a cost in dollars.

B. Youth Survey Results:

Mr. Whitaker gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on the findings from the Billings youth that were surveyed last year. He said approximately 500 surveys went out to youth ages Junior High-High School. Some of the findings were; Castlerock Park was chosen as the most used by them, they are most interested in sports and athletics with 59% supporting family programs, they are big users of the trail system, they see a lack in enough bathrooms in parks, they want cleaner bathrooms, more regional parks, they said they are not involved in our programs because of a lack of information from us and they felt one of their top needs was fireworks displays in the parks.

C. Billings Parks and Recreation's New Social Networking Site (Facebook):

Mr. Whitaker announced that Parks and Recreation has created a Facebook page. He said it should be up and running soon. He said the purpose for this was that it is a better way of engaging the community.

D. Additional Funding Requests:

Mr. DeVore asked if there was a list with the top priorities of needs in our parks. Park Superintendent Jon Thompson said yes, there was and it was created back in 2007. He said there have not been any funds available to do the items on the list. Mr. Whitaker commented that at this time we do not have a strategy on how to fund capital improvements.

VI. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin:

Recreation Superintendant Joe Fedin gave the following report:

- There are about 70 teams signed up for City League Basketball
- Recreations winter brochure went out in the Billings Gazette January 1st.

- Sent out the revised/new applications for our soundstage rentals.
- Updated the form for park permits.

B. Park Division-Park Superintendent Jon Thompson:

Mr. Thompson reported the following:

- Finished the final purchase, a trash truck with the money from the Exxon agreement. The truck should arrive sometime in either May or June.
- Staff is busy working on snow removal, repairs on picnic tables, irrigation pumps and small equipment.
- The Navel Reserve Center located in North Park will soon be completely demolished. It should happen sometime this fall. The building has been found to contain asbestos. Costs to tear it down will not be coming out of our departments' funds.

C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis gave printed report was included in the board packet.

D. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller:

Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller printed report was included in the board packet.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

1:15 pm