

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE October 13, 2010
AND LOCATION: Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:
Tom Iverson, Rick DeVore, Rachel Cox, Todd Royal, Margy Bonner, Catherine Grott
PRPL Staff Members:
Mike Whitaker, PRPL Director
Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner
Joe Fedin, Recreation Superintendent
Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Manager

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

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

A. INTRODUCTIONS

Special guests were Donna Gaukler of the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department and Darlene Tussing.

B. APPROVAL OF THE JULY 14 & AUGUST 4, 2010 MINUTES

Chairman Iverson made a request to have the July 14, 2010 minutes approved. Board member Rick DeVore made a motion to approve the minutes. Board member Todd Royal seconded. On a voice vote all present approved and motion passed.

Chairman Iverson made a request to have the August 4, 2010 minutes approved. Board member Catherine Grott made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. DeVore seconded. On a voice vote all present approved and motion passed.

C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

Mr. Whitaker announced Recreation Supervisor Kory Thomson was named Professional of the Year at the 2010 MRPA conference.

Mr. Whitaker said the City Council has approved handing over a section of land at Sierra Park to the Better Billings Foundation for the Heights Pool Project.

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

None

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Park Levy:

A conference call was made to Donna Gaukler of the Missoula Parks and Recreation Department. Ms. Gaulker discussed what her department went through in getting a citywide Parks and Streets Maintenance District for her area.

- Developing a Parks and Streets Maintenance District created ongoing funding specified for parks and streets.
- The city of Missoula was facing budget cuts and the three options available were; 2% cuts across the board in all departments, wage freeze for all employees with no exceptions, or increase in taxes.
- Administration gave the ok to explore the funding necessary to maintain park and streets. Once the information was collected, it was presented to administration and legal.
- Missoula's administration did a complete polling asking its residents if they would choose to cut services or have a slight increase in property/district taxes. The questions pertained to all city services. Polling was done by phone through the Gallatin Group. Results from the polling showed residents support in a parks district, street district, and safety mill.
- Prior to the maintenance district being established, letters were sent out to every property owner advising them of the increase, how the tax would be determined, and the time limit to protest against it.
- Less than 10% of the property owners protested against a district.
- The Missoula Council voted 8-4 for the maintenance district.
- District boundaries were determined.
- Purpose for creating the district was to bring revenue in to help the city balance the budget.
- Assessments for the Street and Park Maintenance District are based on property values. Currently, they are assessing around \$200,000 a year
- Having a Park Maintenance Districts instead of one Park Maintenance District is shown to be more costly.
- Based on their yearly park needs, the assessments could increase or decrease. The Missoula City Council does have to approve any adjustments.
- A Park District gives you the ability to bond, do acquisitions, maintenance, and capital improvements.
- They are limited with assessment dollars to use on recreation program services. They can use it for recreation maintenance such as maintaining a pool but cannot use it for lifeguard wages.

Board member Rick DeVore expressed his concerns regarding on what the cost/tax per household would be. He felt that the cost/tax would be the biggest hurdle we would have to deal with in trying to promote the idea to the community.

Mr. Whitaker said he spoke with Finance Controller Pat Weber regarding our current 39 Park Maintenance Districts (PMDs) and the pros and cons verses a levy and Park District. He said that Mr. Weber brought up the concept that we should not eliminate all the PMD's because we have some that pay for street lighting and that kind of thing. He said we should instead keep some but not assess them at the high level they currently are.

Ms. Grott made a comment that we need to be as clear as possible to the public when explaining Mr. Weber's concept on the PMD's.

Mr. DeVore said we need to set up several public meetings for staff and board members to give a clear explanation on how/why we are doing either the levy or a Park District.

Mr. Whitaker explained that once a levy is voted in, it cannot be increased. He said that with an assessment, you can go back to council and have it increased.

Mr. Thompson explained that a levy is based on mills and an assessment is based on property values.

It was suggested to go before a City Council work session, present the pros and cons of both the levy and Park District/assessments, and give our recommendation as to why we feel it is the best fit for our department.

The board and staff will be meeting again to discuss further the levy and Park District.

B. Black Otter Trail:

Special guest Darlene Tussing made a request from the board to write a letter of support explaining why Black Otter Trail should be considered a scenic byway.

Ms. Tussing said she will be attaching the letter along with several other support letters to the application for the designation of the trail to the National Scenic Byways Program. Ms. Tussing said if it were added to the program, national funding would be available through grants for the enhancement of the trail.

A pre-written letter of support was available at the meeting for vote of approval and signature. ***Board member Margy Bonner made a motion to authorize Board Chair Tom Iverson to sign the support letter on behalf of the board. Board member Rachel Cox seconded. On a voice vote, the motion carried and Chairman Iverson signed the letter and gave it to Ms. Tussing.***

V. DIVISION UPDATES

A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin:

Recreation Superintendent Joe Fedin gave the following oral report:

- 90% of the recreation division summer report is complete. Currently, the reports show that this was not the worse or the greatest season.
- Reports are showing a drop in attendance for the more expensive recreation programs.
- Mr. Fedin is working on the compliance for web registration.
- Soundstage rentals are done for the year.
- Still have a few park use permits.

B. Park Division-Park Superintendent Jon Thompson:

No written or oral report

C. Park Planning Division-Park Planner Mark Jarvis:

Park Planner Mark Jarvis 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. Mr. Stadtmiller added to the report that Harvest Church is having a workday at the cemetery where they will be re-roofing the house garage, cleaning and painting the mausoleum, and raising 500 graves in the Billings historic section.

I. ADJOURNMENT

1:05 pm