

MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Special Board Meeting

MEETING DATE November 30, 2011
AND LOCATION: Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:
Tom Iverson, Catherine Grott, Margy Bonner, Mark Wall,
Rachel Cox, Darwin George, Todd Royal
PRPL Staff Members:
Mike Whitaker, 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

- Public representatives: Jim Berg, Tom Zurbuchen, Marvin Teyler, John Kaderavek, Wayne Tyler and Annette.
- Community Seven Television, Lynne Turner Fitzgerald
- Billings Gazette, Ed Kemmick

B. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

No report

III. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Tom Zurbuchen: If this was a public vote, I would vote no. The reason I would vote no is because it allows the City Council to decide arbitrary what my taxes are going to be.
- John Kaderavek: Concerned that other things would be shoved down our throat if we should pass the citywide park district. Would like to have a public vote on this.
- Wayne Tyler: Wants the government/city to stop throwing more taxes on homeowners. Would like us to save money and look at subbing out the maintenance. Sell parkland for money.
- Annette: All the amounts of these taxes add up. Have concerns for elderly homeowners being able to pay more taxes.
- Jim Berg: Cannot support the way the Citywide Park District is currently structured. The way it is structured now, it shows the tax having no end date

and the possibility for the Parks general fund being decreased. He wants structure to the tax. Would like to have wording for the tax give the public assurance that this is what the money is going to. Sell parkland. Wants quality over quantity. Have an end date to the tax.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

A. Special Assessment District:

Chairman Iverson thanked those from the public who gave their comments. He addressed the comment about having an end date to the tax saying it is not possible with this kind of tax assessment. He said it is possible with a bond issue but there are problems with that.

Board member Margy Bonner explained protests based on property. She explained that if you own 20 parcels of property you have 20 protests/votes. She said that the way this district is being processed gives every homeowner who will be paying for this new tax, the right to protest/vote against. Ms. Bonner said that if this goes to a public vote, not everyone that is voting is writing out a check in November to pay the tax.

Mr. Whitaker clarified that the protests are based on the property value of your property/home/business. The more assessed property value you have, the more weight your vote/protest carries.

A question was asked by the public as to why the process we are using does not include 50% of the property owners voting yes in support. Chairman Iverson said it was a good point but this process to create a Special Assessment District has not been done that way.

A question was asked by the public as to who gets to protest for businesses like Home Depot, Crown Plaza, Lowe's and Wal-Mart. Mr. Whitaker said he has talked to several companies who plan to protest; they are able to protest without shareholders signatures. Mr. Thompson said that those big businesses generally have someone onsite that can speak for the organization.

Staff and board reviewed a preliminary presentation to be used at the next Council Meeting on December 19. This presentation has been created to address some of the questions and concerns from Council and the public that were generated at the November 14 Council meeting.

During public comment, it was suggested by the public for the department to sell parkland to generate revenue. During the presentation, Mr. Whitaker noted that we will be working with Al Koezler on selling parkland. Mr. Thompson added that of the undeveloped parkland, not all of it is of commercial value or can be built on because some developers gave land that is non-accessible or not big enough to build on so this gives no value to the land and people will not buy. Chairman Iverson said Council, staff and the Park board are serious about selling parkland.

Mr. Whitaker addressed the election alternatives for the Park Maintenance District if City Council should decide to take it to a public vote at the upcoming December 19 meeting. He handed out a memo from City Administrator Tina Volek showing our four options. These options were given to Ms. Volek from Bret Rutherford, the Yellowstone County Election Commissioner.

B. Additional:

Chairman Iverson wrote a letter explaining the Special Assessment District on behalf of the board's recommendation and support of the district. He requested the board take action on sending it to the Billings Gazette. ***Board member Todd Royal made a motion to send it. Discussion following the motion brought up concerns of sending it at this time. With no one seconding the motion, the motion died and the letter will not be sent to the Gazette at this time.***

I. ADJOURNMENT

1:00 pm