

# MEETING MINUTES

RECORDED BY: Melonie Trang

MEETING PURPOSE: PRC Board Meeting

MEETING DATE  
AND LOCATION: February 12, 2014  
Community Center



ATTENDEES: PRC Board Members:

Dayton Rush, Catherine Grott, Rick DeVore, Marcia Clausing,  
Tom Rupis, Rich Lorenz, Darwin George

PRPL Staff Members:

Mike Whitaker, Director  
Jon Thompson, Park Superintendent  
Kory Thomson, Recreation Superintendent  
Mark Jarvis, Park Planner  
Lee Stadtmiller, Cemetery Superintendent  
Fred Bicha, Forester

City Administration Staff Members:

Tina Volek, City Administrator  
Brent Brooks, City Attorney

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## I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Rick DeVore called the meeting to order at 11:30

### A. INTRODUCTIONS

Chuck Barthuly, Better Billings Foundation

### B. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Chairman DeVore requested a motion on the January 8, 2014 minutes. *Board member Tom Rupsis made a motion to approve the January minutes. Board member Dayton Rush seconded. On a voice vote, all members were in favor and the motion passed.*

Chairman DeVore requested a motion on the February 6, 2014 minutes. *Board member Darwin George made a motion to approve the February minutes. Board member Marcia Clausing seconded. On a voice vote, all members were in favor and the motion passed.*

### C. ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

## II. DIRECTORS REPORT – Mike Whitaker

- Met with the district Little League representative regarding use of ballfields in the off season for dog parks. The representative was not keen on the idea.

In addition to the talking with Little League, a City Council member notified us to let us know he has been receiving emails from citizens upset that we are considering using the ballfields as dog parks.

Mr. Whitaker said he also got a concern email noting that people might continue to use baseball fields as dog parks even during baseball season.

Mr. Whitaker said we will continue discussing the issue at the March meeting.

- The Land Water and Conservation grant has been mailed.
- The Department is working with the Billings Tennis Association on two grants for the resurfacing and new construction of parks tennis courts.

### **III. PUBLIC/BOARD COMMENT**

None

### **IV. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

#### **A. Community Needs Assessment:**

The community needs assessment survey analysis was reviewed by the Corona Insights consultants Leo and Matt with the board.

- 4000 surveys were sent out to people ages 18 years and older who live within city limits between December 2013-January 2014.
- 212 surveys were undeliverable and 704 were completed and returned.
- An estimated 3.7% margin of error
- Purpose of the surveys is to understand residents opinions regarding activities/experiences, amenity/program/facility needs, maintenance priorities and forests and natural areas along with a measure of park visitation.
- 72% strongly agree parks and recreation provides an essential service to the community.
- 68% said yes it is appropriate to allow leashed dogs in city parks.
- Top 3 activities in parks: walking, family activities and special events.
- Top 3 experiences strongly desired at parks: feeling safe, enjoy the outdoors and spend time with family.
- Top 3 programs and facility's needs: additional regional parks, family activities, and more youth programs and activities.
- Top 3 amenities lacking in parks: restrooms, picnic shelters and picnic tables.
- Top 3 maintenance priorities: Riverfront road and parking lot repair, Pioneer wading pool replacement and Swords Rimrock road construction.
- 40% surveyed strongly agree there is a need for an indoor swimming pool.
- 42% surveyed are very interested in walking their dog at a park.
- 28% surveyed believe we need more dog parks.
- 64% surveyed believe the health and condition of public trees is important.
- 50% surveyed believe the health and condition of natural area parks in and around town are important.
- 48% surveyed would like to see more trees and shrubs throughout the

community.

- 46% surveyed would like to see more natural area parks in Billings.
- Top 3 parks visited the most: Pioneer, Riverfront and Rose.
- Top 3 facility/feature use: Special events in parks, community trail system and Dehler Park Baseball stadium.

#### **B. Naming Request:**

Jon Thompson explained that at the January board meeting a committee was formed to put together a naming policy for public parks, park facilities and recreation areas. The committee included Park Superintendent Jon Thompson and board members Rick DeVore, Tom Rupis, Allan King and Marc Wahl. The committee has met and created a draft policy. A copy of the policy was reviewed by the board. Comments provided:

- List possible maintenance items under exceptions such as signs.
- How will the naming being commemorated. Rick commented that we should look at that more. He said an application form will be created and maybe on that form it could include how the person would like the naming be displayed.

It was decided to make any corrections to the policy and then bring it back at the March board meeting for final approval.

The request to rename Crow Field has been tabled until a naming policy is finalized and put into place. *Board member Tom Rupis approved tabling the request. Board member Darwin George seconded. All were in favor.*

#### **C. City-wide Park District and Additional Projects:**

Mr. Whitaker reported:

- The RFP on the Centennial Park master plan went out today.
- We have funding for Cottonwood Park master plan. We will start that project in the next couple of months.
- We have signed a contract to resurface the tennis courts at Rose and Pioneer Park. The Billings Tennis Association has donated around \$35,000 to help with the project.
- The restroom for Swords Park has been built. Just waiting on the weather to complete the project
- Developing a mobile website.
- Will be building on an existing trail in parkland over Ponderosa School.
- We will be assisting on the Highway 3 Corridor study.
- All FY13 District ongoing projects are completed except for the restroom project and playground fall protection.
  - The three modular restrooms for Central, Sacajawea and Mountview Cemetery have arrived and are in place. The concrete work will be done at a later date once the weather is better. We are still waiting on the weather to finish the remaining 6 restrooms updates.
  - The playground fall protection is in progress. The project has

- stopped until the weather changes. Hope to get this project done in the next couple of months.
- Slides are complete! The contractor of the slides will be coming up to help with the startup to make sure there are no issues.
- FY14 District projects:
  - The batting cage equipment will be installed in April.
  - Rebuild tennis courts at CastleRock and Pioneer.
  - Upgrade playground equipment at South Park.
  - Sprayground at South Park.

Mike said the City Administrator would like us to start working on a priority list of project for the next 3 year plan District 1 funding. Next year (FY15) will be the last year of this current 3 year plan.

**D. Funding and Development Agreement Between the City of Billings and the Better Billings Foundation (BBF):**

City Council will be reviewing the line of credit within this agreement at the March 10<sup>th</sup> Council meeting.

- We should stick with the agreement. It's already a good agreement.
- There is still concern the land/Oasis water park could be given back to the city if it should stop operating.
- Title to the property is recorded as saying that in an event the park/Oasis ceases to exists, it will revert back to the City of Billings. Concern is if we do take it back and there is no money for the restoration, then we take on a something that is not covered by the \$100,000/irrevocable letter of credit. It was commented that we recommend to Council that we divorce ourselves from the operation if in fact they want the funding back. We would no longer then be liable.
- There is concern that we will lose trust with the residents of High Sahara if we change this agreement.
- It is too soon to be changing this agreement.
- There are concerns that was ever decision is made regarding this agreement will set a precedence to other groups.
- Want to keep the City's liability clean.

Better Billings Foundation representative Chuck Barthuly expressed that the line of credit, which is in the form of CD's, costs the BBF to have. At the time of the agreement, the line of credit was the cheapest way for them to go. The BBF would like the city to release them from this part of the agreement so they may invest it in an additional slide to the Oasis.

*Board member Darwin George made a recommendation to keep the agreement the way it is between the City of Billings and the Better Billings Foundation to protect the City. Board member Catherine Grott seconded. Board member Rich Lorenz abstained. On a voice vote, all were in favor except for Rich Lorenz.*

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Park, Recreation and Cemetery Board Goal Setting:**

Discussion was postponed until the March board meeting.

**B. Fee Adjustment:**

Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson presented to the board recommendations for some minor fee adjustments to increase the pool and waterslide for the upcoming season.

- Daily admission fee raise 50 cents.
- Keep wrist ban costs the same amount except for add a dollar to use the speed slide.
- Season pass would increase by \$10. Family pass would increase from \$150 to \$160.

The increase in revenue will help offset the expense of wages for our seasonal aquatic employees.

Cemetery Superintendent Lee Stadtmiller presented his fee increase for the Cemetery. Those fees will be increased on average across the board by 5%.

*Board member Catherine Grott made a recommendation for City Council to approve the proposed fee adjustment for the pools. Board member Marcia Clauzing seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

*Board member Catherine Grott made a recommendation for City Council to approve to increase the fees for the Cemetery by 5%. Board member Tom Rupis seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

**C. Requirements Regarding the Burial of Military Personnel in Mountview Cemetery:**

Mr. Stadtmiller was asked by City Council to look at changing the ordinance on burials of qualifying veterans in the veterans section of the cemetery.

It is an ordinance of the City of Billings, providing that the Billings Montana city code be amended by revising section 8-333 of said code; providing the disposition of qualifying cremated veteran in either the columbarium or dedicated veteran memorial grave.

*Board member Catherine Grott proposed a motion for City Council to repeal ordinance 12-5551 regarding Section 8-301 through 8-335 of the City Code as proposed replacing the repealed sections with the new sections 8-301 through 8-335. Board member Tom Rupis seconded. On a voice vote, all were in favor and the motion passed.*

**ACTION/ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

- Add discussion on the priority list of projects for the next 3 year plan for District 1 funding to the agenda.
- Have a tour of some of the projects done this last year in various parks with the District 1 funding.
- A request was made at the October 2012 meeting to have Chuck Barthuly from the Better Billings Foundation give an update on the Oasis water park. Mr.

Whitaker has contacted Mr. Barthuly but he is currently busy.

- A request was made to recognize the Forbes family for their donation of parkland. Staff will be looking into options for that recognition.

## **VI. DIVISION REPORTS**

### **A. Recreation Division-Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson:**

Recreation Superintendent Kory Thomson report was mailed out prior to the meeting. A copy of the report is in the 2014 board binder.

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

Park Superintendent Jon Thompson passed out his report at the meeting. There was no other discussion regarding the report due to time restraint.

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

Park Planner Mark Jarvis report was mailed out prior to the meeting. A copy of the report is in the 2014 board binder.

### **D. Volunteer Coordinator's Report-Chris Waite:**

Volunteer Coordinator Chris Waite's report was emailed out prior to the meeting. A copy of the report is in the 2014 board binder.

### **E. Cemetery Division-Cemetery Manager Lee Stadtmiller:**

Cemetery Manager Lee Stadtmiller report was mailed out prior to the meeting. A copy of the report is in the 2014 board binder.

## **I. ADJOURNMENT**

1:45 pm