



City of Columbia, Missouri

Meeting Minutes

Parks and Recreation Commission

Thursday, July 18, 2019

7:00 PM

Regular

ARC Meeting Room

1701 W Ash

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Devine called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

Present: 7 - Marin Blevins, Sue Davis, Daniel Devine, Meredith Donaldson, Ted Farnen, Chad Henry and Brendon Steenbergen

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved on a motion by Farnen, seconded by Davis. Motion passed 6-0.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes were approved on a motion by Henry, seconded by Blevins. Motion passed 6-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MONTHLY REPORT

Donaldson arrived.

Park Services Manager Gabe Huffington shared these highlights: park maintenance logged 181 hours for event set-up and clean-up including Shredfest, Splat, concert, Family Fun Fest and Whitegate block party; Sports Turf crew spent 300 hours completing irrigation installation on the new cross country course; Rangers received training for the bola wrap; and Citadel Security issued 141 warnings for people in parks after hours. Recreation Services Manager Erika Coffman shared these highlights: total shelter reservations increased, Splat was rescheduled due to weather, Nickell and Lake of the Woods rounds have increased, and ARC visits have also increased. Coffman also presented additional aquatics numbers that were not available at the time the monthly report was posted.

Blevins made a motion, seconded by Davis, to approve the monthly report. Motion passed 7-0.

V. PUBLIC HEARINGS*Kiwanis Park improvements*

Huffington described the project which would focus on the Thurston Shelter side of the park including renovations, lighting and parking. Park Salres Tax funds in the amount of \$125,000 would pay for the project.

An interested parties meeting was held on July 11. Huffington said staff has also met with local Kiwanis clubs, since the Club had initially purchased and donated the park to the City in 1957. Renovations would include a new roof, new floor, lighting and improved ADA access. If there is leftover funding, the Odor Shelter could receive renovations. Staff has also discussed adding a playground at the park next to Odor, with mixed reviews, Huffington said. Some prefer to leave the park in its wooded, private state, saying that the nearby playground at Russell Elementary is sufficient.

Farnen said he thinks with Russell nearby, keeping it as is would be the better option. He likes having a park with a wooded atmosphere.

Griggs commented that the shelter is lowest rented one in the park system since there is no playground next to it. Renters prefer to have the playground adjacent for visibility of kids playing. He added that some neighbors feel it is too wooded, with too many hiding spots in the park. They don't feel comfortable.

Huffington added that the proposed plan comes from the neighborhood and getting an idea of what they want the most.

devine opened the public hearing.

Sonja Wilhelm Stannis spoke, saying she lived near Kiwanis Park. She said she thought more people would rent the shelter and use the park if there was a playground. She suggested a nature-type of playground that would best use the existing setting.

There were no other speakers, the public hearing was closed.

Davis made a motion, seconded by Donaldson, that the Commission recommend the proposed Kiwanis Park improvements to City Council. Motion passed 7-0.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

None.

VII. NEW BUSINESS*Dog park usage presentation*

Griggs introduced Dr. Sonja Wilhelm Stannis, interim associate director of the School of Natural Resources from University of Missouri. She introduced a master's degree student Lily Bennett to present her research on usage patterns of the City's dog parks.

Bennett studied the parks at Twin Lakes, Garth and Indian Hills to gain information on usage and to help plan for a possible future partnership between the Department and the Central Missouri Humane Society.

Bennett conducted a survey from May-August 2018 at the dog parks.

Majority of respondents were female and under the age of 30. Most live near the dog parks they visit and make multiple visits. Most important motivations are providing leash-free time, physical health of the dogs and improving dog's sociability and behavior. Most important dog park attributes include shaded areas, maintenance, trash cans, secured area, seating, waste disposal bags and parking.

Bennett asked respondents if they would be willing to pay for a dog park, related to the possibility of providing one in conjunction with the Humane Society. About 44 percent of respondents considered less than \$25 to be a fair price, with 27 percent unwilling to pay a fee. Most support was for a discounted fee for seniors and students and a yearly membership. Dog park improvements was the most supported circumstance in exchange for a fee, namely lighting, additional seating, improved landscaping and restrooms.

Donaldson asked If other parks were considered in the study?

Bennett said that yes, she had investigated other paid dog parks to get information.

Griggs indicated that there was some support on City Council for implementing a new paid dog park as partnership with Humane Society but leaving the others free, as they are.

Farnen complimented Bennett, saying the report was thorough and comprehensive.

Griggs said there were 180 unique respondents but wondered about total dog park visitors.

Bennett said it would be hard to say without doing actual counts.

Farnen asked how a paid park would work?

Huffington said that Jefferson City has one and uses a code entry, but that is shared among users. They are considering a key fob. He said there is not a great solution to making a system work fairly for everyone.

Farnen said he had concerns as the data from the report shows only 15 percent support a fee for existing parks. He would hope that a paid park would not result in negative publicity especially in regard to support for the Park Sales Tax. He asked if there would be a dog park project in the ballot project list for 2021?

Huffington said, yes, staff would likely list improvement projects for Garth

and Twin Lakes related to more shade.

Griggs agreed, saying that issue of paid vs. non-paid would be vetted through a public input process. Staff would like to be able to identify some dogs entering the parks, especially when there is an incident related to a fight or dog bite.

Henry pointed out that with some dog parks paid and one non-paid, users would have the option of using what works best for them, similar to choosing a gym with different amenities. Some may want to pay and have a different experience.

Steenbergen said he agreed philosophically with Farnen, asking what spurred the discussion about fees?

Griggs said there had been a serious incident between two dogs which caused a major problem. There also are other issues on occasion that dog park users speak about. Some have said they would be willing to pay extra to have more amenities and controls in place.

Steenbergen asked if it was a vocal minority? He said he would agree with one paid specialty dog park but wanted to make sure the parks would still be accessible to all.

Wilhelm Stannis said that there had been support in the research for discounted fees, so that is something that could be addressed.

VIII. REPORTS

Council Items

Griggs shared these updates:

Agreement made with Downtown CID on annual \$8,000 payment to help offset costs associated with landscaping beds and trees. This is a portion for the annual cost of \$24,000.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission Report

Staff provided the Commission an update on the two Hinkson Creek Trail construction projects. There was also discussion with the Office of Neighborhood Services regarding snow removal on sidewalks.

Capital Project Report

Huffington shared these updates:

Clary-Shy Park: about 7,000 visitors have visited the new Farmers Market the last two weekends, including the park dedication.

Emergency phones: new phones installed at Flat Branch and Stephens Lake parks.

Lions-Stephens: new playground installed.

Cosmo-Bethel: resurfacing done.

Gans Creek Recreation Area: cross country course work continues.

Norma Sutherland Smith Park: trail in place, MDC will stock the lake.

Garth Dog Park: ADA access improved.

Sports Fieldhouse: work ongoing, including walls and retention pond.

Stephens Lake Park: work on sprayground UV system.

Bocce courts: dedication held July 8.

Hinkson Creek Trail: Shepard to Rollins had Public Works bid approved, Parks and Recreation bid will be out by July 30. Stephens to Clark Lane was approved by City Council and agreement with Crockett was finalized.

Recreation Services Report

Coffman shared these updates:

Fire in the Sky: rained during the day, but event was very well attended. Staff may have to choose a different site for fireworks in 2020.

Splat: rain and lightning caused delay in event until Aug. 10.

Amphitheater Concert Series: Aftershock Army Band had about 200 in attendance, Community Band had attendance of about 400.

Family Fun Fests: June event delayed a week due to weather but new date still drew crowd of 2,000.

Whitegate Block Party: held on June 15. Next block party is July 27 at Indian Hills Park.

Golf: hosting many tournaments, including Missouri Golf Association junior

tournament.

Armory Summer Camp: at capacity for the summer, doing various indoor and outdoor activities.

Camp CoMo Kidz: has been a good summer, participants recently fished.

Preschool: activities held regularly at Hillcrest.

Paquin: art programs are well attended.

Columbia Sports Fieldhouse: new logos unveiled.

Staff retirements: recent retirements include Joan Smith (23 years), Bobby Chick (28 years), Debbie Reschly (25 years).

Upcoming events: Family Splash Bash, Wacky Water Olympics, Stephens Lake Park Karaoke in the Park, DJ in the Park, Coolin' Down with the Blues, Movies in the Park, Splat and Kaleidospoke.

IX. STAFF COMMENTS

Griggs shared the latest statement from the Parks and Recreation Fund, with a balance of more than \$50,000.

X. COMMISSION COMMENTS

Farnen thanked staff for the work at Fire in the Sky, saying they did a great job. He thought it all went very well.

XI. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

XII. NEXT MEETING DATE

Aug. 15 at 7 p.m.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

Blevins made a motion, seconded by Donaldson to adjourn. Motion passed 7-0; meeting adjourned at 8:50.

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