

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, January 15, 2009, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloeppe, Marin Blevins, Bill Pauls, Dan Devine, Dennis Knudson, Gary Kespohl, Sue Davis

Commission Absent: None

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Tammy Miller

Kloeppe called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

Agenda: The agenda was approved on a motion by Blevins, seconded by Pauls.

Minutes: The minutes were approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Kespohl.

Monthly Report: Devine asked if the Park Ranger had a policy for dealing with the homeless in the parks during cold weather?

Griggs said she has not seen any, but if she did, she would try to help them with assistance from Social Services.

The November and December monthly reports were approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Kespohl.

MPRA Conference

Hood reminded the Commission that the MPRA Conference will be March 10-13 in Kansas City. The Commission received some registration information that detailed the options. Hood encouraged the Commission to let Miller know by Jan. 23 if interested in going, so the early registration deadline could be met.

Blevins asked if one-day attendance was an option?

Hood said yes, though if Commissioners were planning to go for two days or longer, it made more sense to register for the full conference.

Miller said she would email more information to the Commission.

Regional Park Planning

Hood shared the highlights of the Powerpoint presentation made at two recent public meetings regarding the new southeast regional park. Staff is in the middle of gathering comment in preparing a draft master plan for the property. Meetings have been held, a web survey is being conducted through the end of January and four areas have been set up with draft plans and comment boxes at City Hall, the Gentry Building, the ARC and the public library.

Hood said that ultimately the draft master plan of the park will end up being referred to the Commission for comment by City Council. The goal is to have the master plan approved by Council by the end of the summer.

In the presentation, Hood showed Options 1 and 2, and those amenities common to both, including fishing amenities at Phillips Lake, protected areas in the back portion of Gans Creek Recreation Area, trails, shelters, playgrounds, restrooms, outdoor sports, an indoor shelter and dog park. Both options show these features but in different locations.

Amenities unique to only one of the options is a water park, an ice rink, indoor sports, equestrian

facilities, campgrounds, and open space for festivals and events.

Kespohl asked about estimated costs for the options?

Hood responded that there are no costs right now because there are just too many options and alternatives at this point. He said it may be between \$10 and \$14 million over time, but it would likely be built in phases.

Devine asked about the land swap with the Department of Conservation and what the department would use the Conservation land for?

Hood said there are some structures on the site that may be suitable for rentals, similar to the house at Rock Quarry Park. There will be a buffer area along the boundary. There are no plans to really develop the land with pools, ballfields or high use areas; mostly just shelters and playgrounds.

Kloeppel asked if besides the equestrian group that attended the meeting, were there any other special interests that showed up in force?

Hood said there were not really, but a caving group has communicated with the department as well as local sports organizations.

Kloeppel asked how long it would take for the draft to be completed?

Hood said it would be about 2-3 months.

Skate Park Lighting

Hood told the Commission that the City Council referred this matter to them, after Councilman Sturtz brought up the issue of lighting the skate park. There is a capability of doing that but it is expensive. Hood said no money is available right now and staff has some concerns about lighting it after dark, since it is at the back of the park and there is no supervision. There is some concern about possible littering and vandalism. Hood said although it would be nice to offer the additional skating time as a recreation alternative, the project would likely have to be part of the next ballot issue to fund it. The Commission does not have to take action tonight, but Council would like a recommendation at some time.

Kespohl asked about the agreement with the Skate Park Association that was outlined in the Council memo?

Hood said the group was formed at the time of the park's construction and mainly consisted of skaters' parents who agreed at that time they would raise funds for lighting the park. The fundraising was not accomplished and the group disbanded.

Kespohl commented that it seemed there had never been a strong commitment to light the park from that group.

Kloeppel asked if the issue should be discussed in more detail at the February meeting?

Hood responded that the Council seems to be undecided on the issue and would like a recommendation of how to proceed.

Knudson asked if there were any problems there now after dark?

Griggs said there are some in the summertime, but the area is so dark, it is really difficult to skate. Some skaters do park their cars illegally to light the area with headlights, Griggs said.

Devine asked if the adjacent roller hockey park was well-used?

Hood said not as much as anticipated, but it is increasing. The sports staff is working with groups to schedule practices and games.

Devine wondered if the rink would need to be lit as well?

Hood said it would make sense to, if other lights were being installed at the skate park, but the question is whether there is a real demand for it.

Kespohl commented he was ready to make a decision and moved that the Commission recommend to the City Council that due to budget constraints and ineffective fundraising by the Association, that the Skate Park not be lit at this time.

Pauls seconded the motion and made some comments. He said that it seems the park is vandalized a lot, though it is great for the kids who do take care of it. He said he would not be in favor of lighting it until there is more respect shown for the facility by its users.

The motion passed, 7-0.

Council Items

Hood shared these updates:

March-Heibel Building: The City has received a proposal submitted by First Chance for Children, a preschool program. A committee appointed by City Manager Bill Watkins reviewed the proposal and deemed it a compatible, appropriate use. The organization is now conducting a structural inspection. After obtaining more information from the group, Hood said a recommendation would be made to Council to authorize an agreement with reversionary clauses.

Douglass Park public hearing: will be held at the next Council meeting for the new spraygrounds and ballfield improvements.

Fitness stations at Albert-Oakland Park: Council approved funding to upgrade some of the stations at the park that are in disrepair. Four of the 18 stations there are in very poor condition, Hood said. There is money allocated in the current budget, and will be more allocated in future years so that the work will be done in phases. Eventually all the stations will be repaired and / or replaced. New stations are being reviewed right now that are more modern and durable.

Pauls asked if the stations are used very much?

Kloeppel commented that the new stations look like they may be more attractive for users.

Hood added that there is a push to emphasize an active lifestyle for youth. By phasing in the new equipment, it will easy to see if the new pieces are well-received.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

Stephens Lake waterfalls: piping is being installed.

Auburn Hills: half-court basketball court and walkway has been installed.

PMC: additional secure storage has been installed to hold equipment and tools.

Nifong Park: lake is about one-third full. Dept. of Conservation will stock with fish.

Nickell clubhouse: soffits were repaired from hail damage. New flooring was laid in the restroom.

Garth Nature Area: the new parking lot has been paved.

Atkins Park: foul ball poles have been extended to improve visibility.

ARC solar lights: have been installed and will take a while to fully charge to become operational.

Albert-Oakland Park: about 17 new trees have been planted in the islands in the parking lot.

Cosmo Park: retaining wall was added at the new restrooms to prevent erosion and landscape beds were built at the new Harris Shelter.

Commission Comments

Pauls commented on the graffiti which is on some rental buildings on the Bear Creek Trail near Hwy. 763. He asked if there was anything the city could do?

Hood said that when graffiti is on private property, it is difficult to require the owner to correct. The police are working on solutions.

Kesphl asked for more details on the improvements planned at Douglass with the sprayground and ballfields. He wanted to know if the land was city-owned?

Hood said that half of it belongs to the school district.

Griggs added that plans called for a re-grading of the field to improve the surface quality, diverting the drainage. Other improvements include a concrete pad for a pitching machine.

Kespohl mentioned that there is an urban initiative to promote Little League baseball, which may mean that there is federal funding available for projects like the one planned at Douglass.

Kloeppel asked about the recreation services manager position?

Hood said that there had been about 42 applicants, which were narrowed down to 15, and then 7 for initial interviews which would be tomorrow (January 16). Finalists will be invited back by the end of the month or early February.

Staff Comments

None.

Public Comments

Kurt Albert distributed packets of information to the Commissioners. He said he wanted to be placed on the agenda for the next Commission meeting. He suggested that the Commission review the information he provided before then.

Albert mentioned a document on komu.com that he had prepared, listing his concerns over the naming of Albert-Oakland Park. He commented that he was saddened by these events and mentioned he had spent about 6 months and \$6,000 in the whole park naming issue. He thanked the Commission for their time and service.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 pm.