

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, November 18, 2010, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Marin Blevins, Sue Davis, Dan Devine, Bill Pauls, Meredith Donaldson, Linda Hutton

Commission Absent: Terry Kloeppe

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Erika Coffman, Tammy Miller

Blevins called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm.

Agenda: Hood said that two items came up after the meeting packets were sent to commissioners. He asked that the agenda be amended to include a rezoning request by College and Walnut LLC and a discussion of the Heibel March Building as referred by City Council. The agenda was approved as amended on a motion by Devine, seconded by Donaldson.

Minutes: The October minutes were approved on a motion by Donaldson, seconded by Davis.

Monthly Report: Donaldson asked about the decrease in participation in Community Recreation numbers?

Coffman said she would look into it and let Donaldson know. She said the good weather may have had some effect; Community Recreation activities at this time of year are usually indoors. Blevins asked about the size of the new lot adjacent to Douglass Park?

Hood said it was a quarter-acre.

The October monthly report was approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Devine.

Commission Budget

Hood informed the Commission that recent cuts to travel and training budgets citywide by the Council meant that the Commission FY'11 travel and tuition budget was cut in half. This should still allow some members to attend the state conference but would likely make it impossible for national conference travel.

Natural Resources Inventory

Blevins opened the discussion by reminding the Commission that the inventory had been referred to them for comment and feedback by February. He opened the discussion.

Hutton asked staff what exactly the charge of the Commission is?

Hood answered that several commissions would be considering the document. Council would like to hear from these various commissions changes or input regarding the use. The natural resources inventory is a land use planning document with a tremendous amount of data.

Donaldson commented that she was struck by something on page 104 suggesting two activities, one as implementation of environmental uses and the other considering a land preservation group. She said that with her background as a master naturalist, she was impressed with the document, saying it was very informative and a valuable resource.

Blevins said he was concerned that Parks and Recreation is not mentioned in strategies or as a solution.

Donaldson said that the department was not mentioned in Appendix C in the visioning reference either.

Blevins said he felt there needed to be a stronger connection to parks and recreation.

Hutton agreed, saying that the department was not mentioned in the list of stakeholders either. Hood said the list was comprised of organizations that had contributed money to the effort. Parks and Recreation had been involved with some of the process, namely ground truthing, which means they were checking aerial photography against what was on the ground. Hutton said that content aside, she was struck by the number of typos and errors in the document.

Blevins agreed with Hutton, adding that mistakes hurt the credibility of any document.

Donaldson asked how the commission should proceed?

Commissioners agreed to table and discuss the inventory again at the January meeting.

Rezoning – College and Walnut LLC

This particular rezoning request is by College and Walnut LLC, and is at the corner of College and Ash. It's a 2.5 acre lot and is residential and parking lot. The request is to rezone it C-2. It is located within a half-mile of Lions Stephens Park and Village Square, said Griggs.

Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Hutton, that the Commission recommend to Council that they see no adverse impacts to either Village Square or Lions Stephens Park due to the rezoning. Motion passed 6-0.

Heibel March Building Discussion

Hood opened his staff report by reminding the Commission of the building's location at the corner of Field Park. Some of the commissioners had considered usage of the building in the past, as it was obtained in 1999. At that time, Council considered removing the building or leaving it for the North Central neighborhood to raise funds and rehabilitate. Hood said the Commission was split on the vote as was the Council, but it was decided to give the neighborhood the opportunity to obtain funding to renovate the structure.

The association held the building for 8 years and was unable to raise enough funding, abandoning the project in the fall of 2008. Council put out a request for proposals (RFP) and only received one from First Chance for Children. Hood said at this time, the building was also cited as a local notable historic property. The First Chance board was awarded the use but had to ultimately withdraw due to finance concerns.

Several organizations have contacted the City about the building. Hood said he has showed it several times. One of those is Legacy Construction, which offered an unsolicited proposal for the building. They are suggesting transfer of the building at a minimal cost; they would also restore the interior and add an overhead door. Hood showed drawings of their plan.

Hood said that in 2000, it was estimated to cost about \$150,000 to restore the building. First Chance's proposal mentioned \$300,000. Legacy is citing \$75,000, but Hood reminded the Commission that they are a construction company, and these costs are likely materials only. Hood presented the plan to Council at their November 15 meeting, at which time it was referred to the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, HUD (through Planning), and the North Central Neighborhood Association. Council hopes to take action in January.

Blevins asked if the land would be a sell-lease option?

Hood said the land would be leased to them, but the building would be sold. By controlling the land, the City can manage future use of the building.

Donaldson asked if Council would once again put out the building for bids?

Hood said staff did suggest that Council could consider another RFP, but it would be the Council's option as the last RFP only garnered one proposal.

Donaldson asked about parking lot?

Hood said staff was opposed to a parking lot, as it would take away park land. Legacy has agreed to have street parking only. Since the park was obtained with federal funds, use of the land for other than park purposes is restricted which could eliminate the possibility to locate a parking lot.

Donaldson asked if staff and the Commission had in the past considered the building for recreational use?

Hood said they had, but the costs of renovation and size of building had not made it viable for recreational purposes.

Hutton commented that she felt the building should have been razed when the park was first obtained in 1999. She said the entire site would be a beautiful park, but it is difficult to even see the park with the building on the corner. She added that she was opposed to the request by Legacy because she felt it was not fair that they should get the building for so little at this point, after the RFP in 2008.

Davis asked if there would be a public hearing at some point on this issue?

Hood answered yes, he thought the Council would likely schedule a hearing to get public input at some time.

Davis said she would be interested to hear what the neighbors and surrounding area felt about the Legacy proposal.

Pauls said as a long-time commissioner, it seemed as if they had been talking about this building for 10 years. He agreed with Hutton that it should have been taken down in the beginning. He said the building was deteriorating as he spoke. It would cost more money to rehabilitate than any non-profit organization could afford and he thinks that a construction business may be the only type that would be able to do anything with the building. He does not think it's necessarily the best use of the property, but it may be the best option other than tearing it down.

Hutton said she did not think it was really the role of the Parks and Recreation Commission to determine the best type of business to locate there.

Blevins asked when the building was recognized as a local landmark?

Hood said it was after the decision had been made to allow North Central to raise the funds.

Devine added that his recollection was that North Central had specific grant proposals and felt optimistic, which is why they asked for more time for fund-raising. He said he was left with the impression at that time that if the North Central proposal did not succeed, the building would be removed and the entire area would be made a park. He asked staff if there would be funds to do anything with the property if the building was removed?

Hood answered that if staff was directed to remove the building, it could be accomplished easily with minimal costs from annual park improvements.

Devine said that he felt since the original plan did not go through, he had a problem restoring a building just because it's there. He said the site should be parkland.

Blevins agreed, saying the building has been sitting there for 10 years.

Pauls disagreed, saying that this might be the best opportunity to do something with that building. He said it would be a public relations nightmare if the city removed the building, due to local support for it. He said if this opportunity isn't taken, the building will continue to sit there with more groups coming forward with proposals for the next 10 years.

Hutton commented that the commission is not into economic development, they are into parkland.

Blevins mentioned it seemed there were several options the Commission had discussed.

Donaldson made a motion, seconded by Pauls, that the Commission recommend that Council take one of three actions:

- 1) accept the proposal from Legacy Construction**
- 2) open the RFP process for proposals**
- 3) remove the building and develop the site as parkland**

Motion passed 5-1 with Hutton casting the dissenting vote.

Council Items

Hood mentioned several items the Council will be taking action soon regarding donations and appropriations. These include \$40,000 for the 3M project, \$25,000 appropriated for Grant

Elementary playground equipment, CDBG funds for Again St. Park and Brown Station Park, and more than \$70,000 for the Hindman Discovery Garden. That exact amount should be known next week, Hood said.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

Gans Creek Recreation Area: A gate was installed at the elbow cave entrance to keep out unauthorized use but to allow bats access. A gate was also installed at the hunters' parking area.

Cosmo-Bethel Park: rain garden is being renovated.

American Legion: fencing is being installed and irrigation system installed for aggregate fields.

Again St. Park: bridge on south side of park at Pinewood Drive was removed.

Hinkson Creek Trail: trail between Grindstone and Stephens is 85 percent complete.

Stephens Lake Park: connecting walkways are being completed as well as benches at the amphitheater. Some of these are being purchased by donors.

MKT Trail: showed photos of where the 3M urban restoration project will occur.

Indian Hills Park: parking at east entrance cul-de-sac.

Lange Park: shelter is under construction.

Lake of the Woods Golf Course: tees are being extended at #13, #14, and #15.

L.A. Nickell: tees are being extended at #4 and #7.

Cosmo: irrigation project at soccer field 8.

Philips Park: concrete apron added around restroom and boat trailer back-up ramp extended.

Rock Quarry Park: new entrance sign is being constructed.

Douglass Park: lot adjacent to park has been cleared.

Forum Nature Area: Americorps project conducted there to remove invasive Callery pear trees.

Recreation Services Update

Coffman shared these updates:

Winter Leisure Times: out on November 10. It was mailed again this time with paper copies available at facilities and the public library. Copies were distributed to Commission.

Golf Fall/Winter Special: new special rate this winter, after 12 green fees are \$10 on weekdays and \$13 on weekends and holidays, cart not included.

Missouri Loves Company ultimate Frisbee: event at Cosmo with more than 40 teams around the country participating.

Sports: new this fall includes lacrosse at the ARC, women's rugby at Cosmo and International Men's Soccer at Cosmo. Youth soccer and CYFL football have ended.

Preschool Halloween Party: holiday themed activities continue.

Bring Your Own Big Wheel event: was a big success with about 60 participants.

Tiger Night of Fun: also another successful year.

Warm-Up Columbia Coat Drive: More than 500 were served with coats with line outside the door and down the street at the Armory.

4th Friday Kids Night: continue to be successful but will take a break until January.

OAK Tours: Branson trip was well attended.

Upcoming: Holiday events include Santa's Splash and Dash, Santa Hotline, City Kwanzaa Celebration, Christmas at Maplewood, and First Night.

Commission Comments

Donaldson asked about the Tree-ching program?

Hood said it was a project through a TRIM grant designed to promote the value of trees in the community. Staff affixed price tags to trees at Stephens Lake Park to demonstrate their value. Donaldson then asked about the Stephens Lake Activity Center, whether the city would ever purchase the facility?

Hood said that the current rental agreement was for 5 years with option to purchase after that. It's been just two or three years. Staff would have to consider it that point.

Pauls thanked staff for cleaning up the "mess" at the Garth Nature Area. He said the chairs and other items left there were becoming an eyesore. He said the neighbors there appreciated parks staff cleaning the area very much.

Hood said the items were taken to the Parks Management Center where people could pick them up. Benches were installed there that will give patrons more places to sit.

Staff Comments

Hood said the Commission traditionally cancels the December meeting unless critical items arise for discussion. He asked commissioners what they would like to do?

Commissioners agreed to cancel the Dec. 16 meeting unless something comes up. Hood said a notice would be sent closer to the date.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:43 pm.