

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, October 15, 2009 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloepfel, Marin Blevins, Bill Pauls, Dan Devine, Gary Kesphol, Sue Davis

Commission Absent: Meredith Donaldson

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Tammy Miller

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

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

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

Monthly Report: Blevins asked if the additional and improved dog parks decreased the number of citations given by the ranger for off-leash dogs?

Hood said he doubted it. He said typically the Ranger will issue a warning before writing a ticket. The problem is that she can only be in one place at one time.

Griggs added that our increase in parks is also a factor. Stephens Lake Park is a popular spot for owners and dogs and it was formally private. Now people have to have their dogs on leashes there and are getting used to it.

Davis asked about helmet warnings at the Skate Park, if the same kids violated the policy?

Griggs said no, because the kids are suspended from the park for 30 days, so there are no repeat offenders. He said that has been a tough population to control with enforcing helmets.

Monthly report was approved on a motion by Pauls, seconded by Blevins.

2009 Trails Master Plan

Hood refreshed the Commission on the Master Plan details, including maps, routes and a list of priority projects. He said if Commission does not vote on the plan tonight, they will be able to in November and still meet the Council deadline.

Kloepfel asked why the priority was changed to tertiary on the connector to Rock Hill Park?

Hood said the connector would have opened the East Campus area to the trail, but there was major opposition to the project. Council directed staff not to proceed with the connector.

Pauls asked about the encirclement of Columbia with trail system, if that was in the primary and secondary tiers?

Hood confirmed that it was, with the exception of one portion of the Perche Creek Trail in the northwest quadrant. The City is not developing as quickly there, and therefore staff assigned that portion a lower priority. Hood said staff would prefer to establish right of way for the trail before that area develops. It is more difficult to acquire land through neighborhoods already developed. Devine asked if the Park Sales Tax would be critical to many of these projects?

Hood answered yes, and said that this Plan when approved will provide guidance as to which projects will be included in the proposed ballot for 2010.

Kloepfel commented that it seemed the trail from Cosmo under I-70 should be a higher priority. Hood said the issue with that is getting across the interstate. The culvert there is not big enough to allow for a trail.

Pauls asked if the proposed new interchange would play a role?

Hood agreed that when the interchange is built, that would be the best opportunity to link the north and south parts of the City by trail.

Pauls asked about the area north of Harmony Creek?

Hood said that land is so hilly and rocky, it would be difficult to build a trail there.

Kloeppel remarked that if a trail would cross the interstate, the loop in the northwest may not even be needed.

Hood said that the Commission could change the trail to primary status with the stipulation that the City work with the state on any interchange project in the future.

Kloeppel agreed, saying that would provide the connective loop around the city without having to extend through the northwest to achieve it.

Pauls commented he liked the connectivity idea of the plan.

Devine made a motion, seconded by Pauls, that the Commission accept the plan changes as recommended by staff, with the additional recommendation that staff work to take advantage of any interstate interchange crossing to complete the trail loop around the city.

In further discussion, Blevins asked about cliffs in the northwest area?

Griggs said staff has avoided bluffs, and is trying to stay to the opposite side of the bluffs, unlike the Katy Trail with the trail winding under the bluffs.

Hood said the Katy Trail worked well that way because the railroads had already been through that area and cleared the way.

Kespohl asked if the interstate portion of the system was the most expensive part?

Hood answered yes, along with acquiring right-of-way. He said staff may have to deal with getting the trail down an outer road with no shoulders, so there would be challenges.

Kespohl commented that if the shoulder loop would cross I-70, it seems more costly to cross I-70 twice.

Hood said staff had designed that with the idea of opening up those neighborhoods to the northwest with two trail connectors.

Griggs added that it is tough to access neighborhoods such as Valley View. Planners have walked those areas extensively and came up with ideas they felt to be most effective and cost-efficient.

Kespohl asked about the cost of the projects?

Hood said he did not know immediately but could provide that information for the next meeting.

Pauls asked if the trail linking Clinkscapes to Cosmo has dropped off the Getabout list?

Hood said it is still listed but is not funded. He commented that the Master Plan is just a conceptual plan to provide guidance and that it can be changed at the discretion of Council. It's important to identify corridors and priorities, yet still keep some flexibility as situations and funding change.

Kespohl made a motion to table the motion previously made by Devine, seconded by Davis. The Commission will take action at the November meeting, pending more detailed information about costs of the trails crossings related to I-70. All in favor, motion passed.

Bonnie View Park Planning Update

Hood told the Commission that the Council was not comfortable with the different master plan options staff had prepared for Bonnie View Park. Staff was directed to begin the planning process again, so on Oct. 7, a meeting was held to gather input. About 80 were in attendance.

Hood said parks staff gave the public basic information about the property, including a site tour and neighborhood factors. The group was divided into smaller working groups which brainstormed ideas. A master list was formed from these ideas, Hood said, and the group then participated in a priority setting exercise. Some common themes were the public seeming to want an environmentally-oriented park.

Hood said staff is proceeding with a web survey to gather more input. Staff will also meet with various special interest groups, such as the Audubon Society, Friends of Bonnie View and Fairview School.

Blevins, who attended the meeting, said he thought it was well-conducted. He complimented Griggs with the moderation of his particular small group. Blevins said some of the top choices expressed by the public included nature trails, natural habitat, no internal roads, interpretive trails, a nature center, and no practice fields.

Kloeppel asked if the Council set a deadline for the planning?

Hood said no, although staff had hoped to have construction started by the spring, since it was promised as part of the 2005 ballot issue.

Kespohl asked about formally naming the park, if it was too early in the process?

Hood said it was not.

Blevins made a motion, seconded by Kespohl, that the park be officially named Bonnie View Park. The motion passed unanimously.

Council Items

Hood informed the Commission of these Council actions:

A report was presented at the Oct 5 Council meeting regarding the replacement of Bridges 12 and 13 on the MKT Trail. Some Council members had expressed concern about the removal of trees and the Mayor also was concerned about the replacement of Bridge 12 from a historical perspective, as it is an old railroad bridge.

Hood said the report included photos and a thorough review of what trees would be removed and how they would be replaced. The Council toured the site on Friday (Oct 9). They will vote Monday to either proceed with the bridge replacement as planned or they may vote to either table the issue or direct staff to come up with other alternatives.

Kespohl asked about the comment made at the Council meeting about the bridge being dropped into the creek?

Hood said the bridge would not literally be dropped, it would be lowered down and then placed at creek level.

Kespohl commented that the bridge is not really unique, that many of those exist on the Katy Trail.

Hood concurred, saying that this was only the one of its type on the City section of trail.

Kloeppel asked if it would be appropriate for the Commission to take a position on the issue?

Hood said it would be up to them.

Kespohl made a motion, seconded by Blevins that the Commission recommend to Council they accept the staff report and proceed with the bridge replacement project.

In further discussion, Devine asked about the costs that are in place now with the bid?

Hood said if the project was rebid, costs could come in higher, but that with the timeframe, staff would have to start the project over with new engineering and new bids. Staff had wanted to award the contract this fall so work could take place over the winter when the trail is not so busy.

Devine asked about the condition of the bridge, if it is imminently dangerous?

Hood responded that it is safe for only bike and pedestrian traffic at this time, but it may not be safe a year from now. No emergency vehicles or maintenance vehicles can travel on that section, which poses a liability in case of a medical problem with a trail user.

The Commission voted unanimously, 6-0, to approve the motion on the floor.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

Philips Lake: perimeter trail is complete, and parking and boat ramp are nearing completion.

American Legion: entry drive has been overlaid with asphalt.

Valleyview: new asphalt is also on the basketball court.

Stephens Lake: work continues on the amphitheater with footings, regarding and reseeding.

Rock Hill: entrance to park at Rollins Road has been improved.

Cascades: connecting walkways are in.

Smiley: playground has been installed and shelter is nearing completion, as well as full court basketball.

CVB: landscaping in front of the building has been refurbished.

Dedications: Auburn Hills and Grasslands were dedicated Oct. 10.

MKT Tunnel under Providence: lights have been installed to improve visibility.

Recreation Services Update

Since Erika Coffman is at the NRPA Conference, Hood shared these updates:

Heritage Festival: Held on Sept 19-20 was a huge success again this year.

Family Fun Fests: These have been very successful as well. The next one will be Oct 21. Staff is making accommodation for darkness, Hood said, and next year, the Fests will likely end in September.

OAK/50+: The group has collaborated with Osher for some classes this fall, day trips have been well attended and the musical groups have been active.

Classes: have been going well, particularly music, martial arts, dance and the Armory Science Klub.

In **Aquatics**, the Pooch Plunge was successful with about 80 dogs in attendance with their owners.

Upcoming **Halloween events** include the Bring Your Own Big Wheel, where kids will be able to ride around the ARC Track in costume and the annual Tiger Night of Fun on Halloween night.

Commission Comments

Pauls asked when the Bear Creek Trail would be reopened in the Providence Road area?

Griggs said only a silt fence is there now blocking the trail, and staff has made a request to be allowed to gravel the trail and open it again for users, since the work seems to be nearly complete on Providence.

Pauls suggested that users could at least be on the trail during evenings and weekends when workers are not in the area.

Hood and Griggs agreed, saying they hoped to open it soon.

Pauls asked about the CVB parking lot at the second phase of Flat Branch. He said he had talked to Arens, but was unclear exactly who could use the lot.

Hood said that has been an issue since the park opened. The Chamber has first priority for the lot, since they gave funds to build it. It was originally intended to be an overflow lot for them and the CVB. He said he did not think they minded occasional park users on the lot, especially on weekends, but they are concerned about university students using the lot.

Kespohl asked about using part of the future Park Sales Tax ballot issue to build a new swimming pool to replace Hickman, with the school district matching the funds. He thinks that it would be a good sales tool for the ballot.

Hood said that it would depend largely on what priorities are set by the City and by the school.

Kespohl agreed and he would really like for that to be considered.

Staff Comments

Hood informed the Commission that there would be an event at Cosmo Park on Saturday (Oct 17) featuring professional skateboarder Tony Hawk. Members of his team contacted the department about holding the event which will consist of demonstrations by his team at the Skate Park and a half-pipe that will be constructed. The event has been mostly under wraps, because Hood said it is being promoted through Twitter.

Public Comments

None

Meeting adjourned at 8:55 pm.