

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, September 16, 2010, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

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

Commission Absent: None

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

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

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

Minutes: The August minutes were approved on a motion by Kloeppel, seconded by Donaldson.

Monthly Report: Blevins asked about the health of the Park Ranger?

Griggs responded that she was doing well, that she is working half-days.

Pauls asked about the repairs on the ARC's triple loop slide?

Coffman said that the stair system was removed, then sand blasted and galvanized. It was rusting badly and was not repainted. The stair treads were replaced also.

Pauls then asked about graffiti removal and if staff noticed any patterns in any parks or times of day?

Griggs said no, it usually happened in waves at particular parks. Policy is to remove the graffiti within 24 hours of it being reported.

The August monthly report was approved on a motion by Kloeppel, seconded by Hutton.

Citizen Survey Presentation

Hood reminded the Commission of the citizen survey that was conducted in the spring. Data from the survey is intended for two purposes: the Council used the information in determining the ballot issue projects and the information will also be used for the new Parks and Recreation master plan.

Hood showed a presentation with results from the survey.

Devine questioned a slide with information as to parks most visited, with the top parks being Cosmo-Bethel, Stephens Lake, and Twin Lakes. He was surprised Cosmo was not included.

Hood said staff thought maybe respondents were confused by the survey referring to commonly known Bethel Park by its actual name Cosmo-Bethel. Cosmo Park was referred to in the survey by its full name, Columbia Cosmopolitan Recreation Area.

Hood reviewed slides which showed results of use of recreation programs, marketing, levels of satisfaction, green space, needs, maintenance, and facilities.

Hood pointed out one disconnect is respondents saying there is a need for nature education, but then related programs offered by Parks and Recreation are not always well attended.

Hutton asked how the department defines nature education?

Coffman said some related programs include canoeing, caving, orienteering, archery, and some hiking.

Hutton commented that maybe the disconnect was a difference in how the public and how staff defines those type of programs.

Donaldson said staff may want to consider what Runge offers and do something similar.

Hood replied that Parks and Recreation does not have a naturalist on staff, someone who would operated more interpretive type of programs.

Hood then reviewed slides what showed what respondents would support and be most willing to fund with their tax dollars. He commented that this information carried a lot of weight with the Council, particularly a question that asked the respondent how they would allocate \$100 of the Park Sales Tax among the categories.

In summary, Hood said the survey was very positive and the consulting firm was optimistic that the Park Sales Tax renewal would be supported based on the responses. He ended the presentation with demographics of the survey respondents.

Blevins complimented staff on the survey and presentation.

Park Sales Tax Update

Hood thanked the Commission for offering to serve on the Friends of Columbia's Parks campaign committee. He asked for their thoughts about the initial meeting on September 9? Donaldson mentioned that the Audubon Club voted to support the renewal and will send a contribution to the committee.

Hood mentioned that the next meeting of the committee would be September 23 at Boone County National Bank.

Pauls commented that the committee seems very savvy and it all seemed very sound. He asked if there was any idea as to public sentiment?

Griggs said that the firm that did the citizen survey felt somewhat confident.

Hood agreed, saying that the same firm predicted the result of the vote when the ARC was built as being a close result and it was.

Kloepfel asked if there was any organized opposition?

Devine said he read online comments on the Tribune's web site and some seemed negative, mainly that some did not see the need for new parks and felt the department was not able to keep up with what we already have.

Hutton agreed, saying she had heard some of the same sentiment.

Blevins mentioned a recent editorial by Inside Columbia publisher Fred Parry and added that he felt the timing was right for the park sales tax, with no other local tax issues and tax changes in the future.

Hood said he thought the committee would focus on raising funds, speaking engagements and would use the electronic media to get the word out.

Council Items

Hood informed the Commission of these Council actions:

Budget: will likely be approved on September 20. Parks and Recreation's budget is in relatively good shape with some decreased in travel and training.

Hominy Creek Trail: Council authorized Phase I, which connects Stephens Lake Park to Woodridge Park. Hood added there are deadlines with this project, since the department has an enhanced transportation grant to help fund it. Phase I may be under construction by late spring.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

Indian Hills: a new playground on the east side of the park has been installed.

American Legion: bank along east field is being stabilized to keep water line in place.

Lake of the Woods: green #12 is being renovated.

Cosmo Park: Soccer field 7 is being irrigated.

Nifong Park: lake is being made ADA fishing accessible.

Eastport Park: estate fencing was installed to help separate the park from adjoining property.

Stephens Lake Park: concrete at amphitheater was stained to improve appearance. A presentation was recently made to the Columbia Garden Club regarding the new Discovery Garden.

Philips: single table shelter installed and a solar/wind powered light was installed in cooperation with Water and Light.

ARC: pool and slide maintenance conducted.

Hickman Pool: annual maintenance conducted.

Bear Creek Trail: Griggs showed series of photos which illustrated the repairs made to the trail.

Recreation Services Update

Coffman shared these updates:

Family Fun Fests: Around the World was held in August and was successful, but the September festival, Creative Kids, was rained out. It was a great season overall.

Heritage Festival: will be held this weekend (Sept 18-19). Coffman thanked parks staff for their assistance in preparations.

Older American Klub (OAK): working to fill a fall trip.

One Sky One World kite event: annual event at Bethel Park and will be special this year with visit by world renowned kite master Jianguo Qian.

Sports: soccer is starting which will make for a busy fall.

Golf: August and September have been good months.

Upcoming: Annual Tiger Night of Fun and Bring Your Own Big Wheel on Halloween weekend.

Commission Comments

Blevins asked about the status of the trout fishing program?

Griggs said Trout Unlimited will make a contribution. Details are being worked out but the program may be reinstated.

Blevins then asked about the NRPA Conference?

Hood said all travel budgets will likely be cut. He is unsure what funding will be available. No Parks and Recreation staff will be going.

Pauls asked about the parking lot at Flat Branch Park that is shared with the Convention and Visitors Bureau. He asked if something could be done so the lot is more readily available to park users during the week?

Hood said the Chamber donated the funds to build the parking lot, which is why their staff parks there. The lot is an issue mainly because of students. It is watched closely so that students don't park there daily and fill the lot.

Donaldson informed the Commission that the Missouri Rivers Communities and EPA would be having a press conference Oct. 14 at West Boulevard Elementary with legislators in regard to outdoor classrooms.

Staff Comments

None.

Public Comments

None.

Meeting adjourned at 8:40 pm.