

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, October 18, 2007, 7:00 p.m.

ARC, 1701 West Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloepfel, Marin Blevins, Dennis Knudson, Dan Devine, Julia Grus, Gary Kespohl

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Mike Griggs, Tammy Miller

Kloepfel called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. He welcomed new Commissioner Gary Kespohl to the Commission.

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

Minutes: The September minutes were approved on a motion from Grus, seconded by Blevins.

Monthly Report:

Blevins asked about the soccer kickboard?

Griggs answered that the board would likely be renovated over the winter...it was considered a "cold weather" project, much like signs.

Hood commented that the kickboard has deteriorated and in need of plywood repair.

Devine asked about an item on the Park Ranger's report regarding a Skate Park injury?

Griggs said a parent assisting his/her child was hit by another skateboarder and required treatment.

The September monthly report was approved on a motion from Blevins, seconded by Knudson.

Regional Park Planning Process

Hood informed the Commission that planning meetings would be held from 6:30-8:30 pm on November 8 at the ARC and November 12 at Rock Bridge High School to start gathering input on the new regional park. He showed a Powerpoint to the Commission, demonstrating how the planning process would work.

Hood shared the Goal Statement which is implement a community acceptable master plan using best management practices to protect the environment while maintaining high use recreation facilities. Gans Creek is an especially sensitive area which will be treated cautiously.

Parks and Recreation planners will take the lead in the process but a consultant will be hired that specializes in environmental planning and design. The process begins now and will take about 18 months to complete.

Hood said at the meetings, staff will share photos and details of the Crane and Philips tracts, showing features, such as the lake, cave, spring and rock formation. The meetings will consist of a staff presentation with small group discussion, then prioritizing needs, followed by the public voting on what they think the park should contain.

Following the public meetings, staff will meet with focus groups, much like the process used to plan Stephens Lake.

Devine asked if the process confirmed or changed the thoughts of staff as to the direction of Stephens Lake?

Hood answered, a little bit of both. Staff used some ideas from the public, such as the arboretum, and discounted other ideas, such as a floating casino in the lake.

Once the information-gathering phase is over, Hood said that planners hoped to develop 2-4 concepts and present those back to the public. After receiving input there, the recommended Master Plan would then go to the Commission for a recommendation, followed by approval by City Council.

One item to be considered during the planning process is the grant from the Department of Conservation for

development of Philips Lake. The \$157,500 grant must be used within a certain timeframe and will be used to fund construction of the entrance road, parking lot, boat ramp, docks, restrooms, lighting and sidewalks. These features will be located at the south end of the lake, near the dam.

Griggs added that a lake perimeter trail will be built at the same time.

Blevins asked about the progress of the Gans/63 interchange and how that would impact development of the park?

Hood said he believed the interchange would be built within 12-18 months and completed well before the majority of work on the park is done.

Kespohl asked for clarification on the purchase price of the Crane property?

Hood explained how the park sales tax was used for the purchase and said the amount of the sale would be paid off by 2011, in time for renewal of the sales tax.

Kespohl asked if development of the park would be hindered by lack of funds until then?

Hood said the sales tax in 2011 would generate funds between \$13 and \$14 million and would likely include development of the new park, although the City Council would ultimately choose the list of projects to be funded by the sales tax.

Fees, Charges and Staffing Study

Hood told the Commission that interviews have been conducted with consulting firms to analyze the department's fees and charges for recreational programs, as well as the department's staffing. The last time such a study was done was about 20 years ago. At that time, staff did research in establishing the department's revenue recovery goals, reviewing each recreational program, and set goals and fees. Hood said staff felt it was time to consider this again to ensure fees are fair and just, with the help of an outside consultant.

The analysis of fees and charges will include revenue recovery goals, identifying pertinent costs, comparing fees with other communities, and establishing revenue recovery goals.

The staffing analysis will consider all full-time staffing levels in all divisions of the department, comparing staff with other comparable communities. The consultant will then make recommendations for future staffing needs.

Hood said six firms had submitted bids for consideration. One firm has been chosen, but details are being finalized so the name is not being made public yet. Hood said the study would begin in November with the intent to be completed by the time plans start for FY'09 budget in the spring.

NRPA Conference Report

Blevins commented that he enjoyed the conference (held Sept. 25-28 in Indianapolis) and learned a lot about accessibility issues in parks. He encouraged other Commissioners to attend national conferences if they had the opportunity, as it offers a good comprehensive look at the industry. He added that the Expo was enlightening, with regard to the cost of equipment.

Kloppel added that the Conference was a good opportunity to compare Columbia with other cities. He shared handouts with the Commission he had picked up from a session on Commissions and Boards.

Hood said that next year's national conference would be in Baltimore and the MPRA State Conference would be at the Lodge of the Four Seasons at the Lake in late February.

Council Items

Hood shared these updates:

Council approved the Oakland Pool water slide project. The goal is for the slide to be installed and operational by Memorial weekend 2008. The original plan for the pool included the slide but the project budget did not allow for it.

After a lengthy public hearing and discussion, Council voted 5-1 (with Nauser recusing herself) to accept the

Commission's recommendation to not adopt the alcohol sales policy.

In coming meetings, public hearings will be scheduled on restroom work at Cosmo-Bethel and Cosmo Park. The City Manager has asked departments to hold interested party meetings before beginning capital projects, to allow maximum public input. The interested party meeting for the restroom project was held prior to the Commission meeting.

Capital Project Update

Griggs shared updates as follows:

Atkins: showed photos of the irrigation system being installed.

Maplewood Barn: roof and soffits have been replaced.

PMC: work will begin on the roof.

Longview Park: shelter and playground are under construction.

Stephens Lake: boulders have been placed on the sprayground, mist shower has been installed, and boulders have been moved for the waterfall.

Cosmo-Bethel: curb work is complete.

Grindstone: curb cut has been made at entrance to make path smoother for vehicles.

Harris Shelter: paving is complete.

Douglass: finish work (fencing, seeding, mulch) has been completed.

Garth Nature Area: sidewalk has been installed, improving accessibility.

Flat Branch II: Benches have been placed around the sprayground.

Providence/Stewart underpass: stair railing has been installed and gravel mulch added.

Devine asked if flooding was a problem? Griggs answered that the water did come up. Knudson suggested posting a sign when there is high water.

MKT Trail at MLK: stair railing has been installed.

Nifong Park: process of moving lake continues.

Commission Comments

None

Staff Comments

Hood updated the Commission that the Crane and Herigon purchases have closed.

Public Comments

A member of the audience asked about the cave on the Crane property, if it would eventually be open to the public?

Hood responded that staff would have to research the cave to see if it would even be a possibility. He said not much is known about it at this point.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.