

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, October 23, 2008, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloepfel, Marin Blevins, Bill Pauls, Dan Devine, Dennis Knudson, Gary Kespohl

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 Devine, seconded by Blevins.

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

Special Meeting Minutes: Hood commented that shortly after the special meeting—held to approve the naming of the bridge in Flat Branch Park in honor of Ron Shy—that Mr. Shy requested that the Chamber of Commerce not name the bridge for him.

The minutes from the special meeting were approved on a motion by Kespohl, seconded by Devine.

Monthly Report: The September monthly report was approved on a motion by Blevins, seconded by Pauls.

Land Dedication Ordinance

Commissioners had received in their packets a large amount of information regarding a possible land dedication ordinance, which would require developers to set aside some land for a park.

Hood said the term is known as exaction or takings. The issue has come up in Columbia at least seven times that he can remember. It can be very controversial and the development community has been opposed in the past.

Hood reviewed some of the material with the Commission, including some court cases and information about some cities that don't have ordinances, but instead will charge the developer a park development fee. In those cases, the City would have the option of accepting land in lieu of the fee. Cities in Missouri that have a land dedication ordinance include Boonville and Kansas City. He is not aware of others but said staff could research it.

Devine commented that he had asked for this information because it seems like the Commission discusses something like it every time a rezoning request comes before them. There are funds from the park sales tax dedicated to land acquisition, but Devine said it seemed to make more sense having the land from the beginning rather than trying to acquire it later. He said it seemed like it would be more efficient when master planning to have the park land dedicated. Devine asked staff what type of program would be the best fit?

Hood answered that often when developers offer land, it is not the highest quality tract for development. He said if such an ordinance were drafted, it would be important to ensure the land had certain characteristics as far as size and topography. Hood said if the park development fee were in place, that does not ensure that there is available land to purchase. Most development fee ordinances indicate that the fee cannot be used to purchase land in other areas of the City, only in that particular affected development.

Hood added that the City does have some ordinances in place that dictate land use for developers, including the stream buffer ordinance and the tree preservation ordinance. He would assume that in order to pass a park land dedication ordinance, some support from the development community would be important.

Devine said he thought such an ordinance would be a positive thing for developers, in that parks are an added attraction in selling lots and homes. He sees the ordinance as a positive step, rather than a restrictive one.

Kespohl commented that the only problem he saw was that a land dedication ordinance may impede developers as they try to sell in this tough economy. He said he is not against an ordinance but is afraid that it would drive prices up and those would be passed on to the home buyer. He sees it as a double-edged sword.

Devine added that as it stands now, park land is paid for by taxpayers all over the city, whether they use the park or not. A park land dedication ordinance would mean that essentially only the residents who would use the park would pay for it, because in a majority of instances, it would be a neighborhood park that is built.

Kespohl asked if stream setbacks can be used to develop parks, in addition to trails?

Hood answered that it depended on the space. It would have to be accessible and would have to be buildable.

Kloeppel asked if staff would have time to look further into the issue and research current ordinances?

Hood said yes, that staff could look into it.

Pauls commented that he has concerns about a land dedication ordinance. He said people now have a choice on where to purchase a home or lot and if they don't want to live near a park they don't have to. They have the choice of paying what they want to and can afford on a home. He said he is torn anytime government tried to force you to do something with land that you own. He sees parks as amenities and that some people may not want to pay for them.

Kespohl asked about the size of development and how that would fall under an ordinance?

Hood said the ordinance would have to clearly define what size development falls under it. He said staff would get back to Commission with more information at a later meeting.

Kespohl commented that it would be nice to include a donor clause in such an ordinance, that if land is donated, the park must be named in honor of the donor.

NRPA Conference Report

Kloeppel shared some information he received at the NRPA Conference regarding commissions and boards. He commented on the citizen day held at the conference, which was something unique.

Hood shared some of the latest trends in parks and recreation, including a major move toward sustainability in products used, methods and programs. The issue of programming for seniors continues to resonate, as the baby boomer population ages and the WW II generation shrinks. Another trend is in the golf industry, where rounds of golf continue to be flat and even decline, which we are experiencing in Columbia, Hood said.

Another highlight was in team sports. Hood said participation at the adult level is declining as younger people do not seem to have the same interest. This appears to be especially significant in women's sports.

Recreation Services Manager Vacancy

Hood told the Commission that Gary Ristow is leaving the department to take the position as director of parks and recreation in Lenexa, Kansas. Gary has been with Parks and Recreation for 23 years.

Hood commented that the city is losing a really good person. He added that the job will likely be advertised by October 31 and will be advertised nationally. Hood anticipates that the application

deadline will be early December with interviews held after the first of the year.

He informed the Commission that a farewell reception is planned on November 6, the day before Gary's last day. Gary is not at the meeting tonight, because of his son's Senior Night soccer game, Hood said.

Council Items

Hood shared these updates:

Anderson property: Council approved the acquisition of the 20-acre property which is south of I-70 along the Perche Creek. It is a key piece of property for building the future Perche Creek Trail.

Tentative agreement has also been reached on the 100-acre tract to the south of the Anderson tract, which is Public Works property. With Council approval, the land will be transferred to Parks and Recreation at the same price Public Works purchased it.

Eastport Park: The Council will review the master plan for the park, which has been under development since the spring. Some residents in the neighborhood have opposed the trail. A public hearing will be scheduled as part of the Nov. 17 Council meeting. Hood shared a copy of the recommended plan. Griggs added that a buffer is planned for the trail, including fencing and vegetation in the hopes to offer privacy. The park's design is a good example of how a stream buffer can be used in park design, Griggs said.

County House Branch Trail: This project from Twin Lakes to Stadium is moving forward. Kespohl asked if the sewer line is bisecting the property?

Hood answered no, the line would be to the north away from the Lutheran property.

Cosmo-Bethel Park: Council approved a donation in the amount of \$18,000 from the Bucherts for completion of the tennis court at Cosmo-Bethel Park. The funds will allow the construction of walkways and windscreens.

Albert-Oakland Park: Council approved a resolution naming the park. The resolution consisted of some portions drafted by the City's legal department and some drafted by Kurt Albert. Hood told the Commission that staff is working to change the park name in all references.

Capital Projects

Griggs shared these updates:

PMC: Repairs are being done on the roof and construction of the greenhouse is ahead of schedule.

Atkins: Paving and seeding projects are underway.

Stephens Lake Park: construction continues on the waterfall, with two upper pools being built which will be similar to rain gardens in the way the water is treated.

CARP: The volunteers completed a project at Flat Branch Park.

Treekeepers: Volunteers planted 64 trees at Auburn Hills Park and 24 trees at Westwinds Park. The trail at Westwinds was also resurfaced.

Cosmo and Cosmo-Bethel Park restrooms have been completed.

Hickman: baseball field is being prepared for new sod.

Cosmo-Bethel: New tennis courts are being used, the Leech Shelter is about complete with new grills. Sidewalk connections are being completed. A dedication was held on October 12 and new maps of Cosmo and Cosmo-Bethel were presented to members of the Cosmo Club.

Bear Creek Trail: repairs continued after flood damage in September. It has been particularly difficult in low-lying areas between the boardwalk and the bridge. Staff became stuck numerous times trying to reach that area to make repairs. Those have been completed.

Commission Comments

Pauls indicated he would like to recognize Ristow in some way for his years of service.

Blevins suggested a signed photo. Commissioners agreed to have that done and present to Ristow.

Pauls asked about the sport of pickleball?

Hood said it is like tennis but slower and played on a smaller court. It is played mostly by seniors and is gaining in popularity. It is actually a sport in the Show Me Games and some pickleball players have asked for courts. A court at Albert-Oakland Park was marked for dual use (pickleball and tennis) to see how heavily it is used by pickleball players.

Kloppel mentioned the Howard Lange volunteer awards and the January 9 deadline. He asked if a new member has been named?

Hood said yes, Sue Davis was just appointed to the vacancy on the Commission. She will likely be at the November meeting.

Staff Comments

Slides were shown of recent events, including the Senator Biden campaign event at the ARC, the Stream Extravaganza at Flat Branch Park, and the Heritage Festival. Hood said in light of the cancellation of the Twilight Festival, recreation staff is considering some options for families in Flat Branch Park.

Public Comments

Several students in the audience who were there for a class project asked questions in regard to the land dedication issue and balancing economic growth with the number of parks in the community. Staff answered those questions.

Meeting adjourned 8:35.