

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, September 21, 2006

ARC, 1701 West Ash

7:00 pm

MINUTES

Commission Present: Terry Kloeppe, Dennis Knudson, Julia Grus, Marin Blevins, Dan Devine

Commission Absent: Bill Pauls, Mike Jones (half meeting)

Staff Present: Mike Hood, Gary Ristow, Mike Griggs, Tammy Miller

Meeting called to order at 7:10 pm by Kloeppe

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

Minutes: The August minutes were approved on a motion from Knudson, seconded by Grus.

Monthly Report: The August report was approved on a motion from Kloeppe, seconded by Blevins.

Ash and Clinkscales Property Use

Kloeppe mentioned that a public hearing was held at the August meeting regarding use of the property by the ARC at Ash and Clinkscales. He said the Commission had received excellent information and input from the public regarding the four proposals. Kloeppe asked staff for any updates since the August meeting. Hood said staff has received no additional information to share with the Commission. He added that staff welcomed new commissioner Dan Devine, who was not present at the August meeting. Hood said if Devine had specific questions, staff would be happy to answer them.

Hood added that there were 24 pages of minutes detailing what was discussed at the meeting. He noted that the Boone Ice Group (BIG) had said they would be submitting a feasibility study by early September. He had not heard from the group by the time of the Commission meeting on September 21. He had made contact with C.K. Hoenes of the group. As of that afternoon, C.K. had not received any information from those representatives of the group who were preparing the study. Hood said he was not sure of BIG's current situation.

Kloeppe asked Commissioners if there were any questions?

Blevins said he had no questions, but wanted to state that part of the charge of the Commission is to ensure that Parks and Recreation and the City stays heavily involved with whatever facility is located on the property.

Hood said that Parks and Recreation staff would be involved with whatever group is selected. The Farmers' Market has a long relationship of working with the city, but they would be running their own operation. The CYBA-Rising Stars is the only group proposing to give a facility directly to the city.

Blevins asked Hood about staffing the proposed CYBA facility?

Hood told Blevins that the sports staff currently housed at the Armory would be relocated to the new facility. He thought additional hourly staff would need to be added but no permanent, full-time staff.

Ristow clarified that it would be custodial and concessions staff.

Hood continued that in fairness to other proposals, PRIDE board members had expressed an interest in partnering with Parks and Recreation staff in operating their facility, but that they would be the primary managers.

Mike Vangel, representative of the PRIDE organization, asked for and was granted permission to speak.

Vangel told Commissioners that he wanted to make it clear that eight of the basketball courts proposed by PRIDE is merely picking up from the CYBA proposal. He said that these courts would be managed by Parks and Recreation staff.

Vangel then distributed copies of minutes from the September 5 City Council meeting. Vangel said one of the Council members mentioned she had met with PRIDE which had proposed a fifth option for use of the property, combining Farmers' Market, CYBA and PRIDE. Vangel told Commissioners that if they read that portion of the minutes, there was a sense from City Council that they would like the groups to work together to come up with a fifth option.

Kloepfel asked staff for clarification.

Hood said that Ms. Hoppe had brought the issue up for Council discussion. He told Commissioners that he expressed to City Council that the issue had already been referred to the Commission for their discussion and recommendation. He did not know if it was appropriate at that time to introduce another option for the property. Hood said the Council did not direct staff to move in that direction. He suggested that Commissioners read the minutes to get a sense of the discussion that occurred.

Grus asked Vangel if PRIDE had met with the CYBA since the September 5 City Council meeting or had any type of outreach to them?

Vangel said the two organizations had had a very good meeting. Following that meeting, CYBA representatives sent a letter to PRIDE, saying they preferred to pursue a pure CYBA facility. Vangel said PRIDE sent another letter to CYBA and had no response.

Grus said she felt that the issue of working together had been addressed.

Two other speakers, Dewey Crepeau and Craig McGonagle requested and were granted permission to speak. Crepeau said they were both youth hockey coaches who had to travel to Jefferson City for rink time. He said they have been looking for a site for a rink off and on for 15 years. They are now working with Tom Fagen of Rink Management Services Corporation to discuss the feasibility of a rink in Columbia. Crepeau said Fagen's company would be interested in managing a rink, if the city wanted to build one. He requested that the Commission consider this opportunity.

Crepeau said that Fagen believes a sheet-and-a-half ice rink could be built for \$2.5 million. Crepeau added that he does not expect the Commission to digest all of this information at once. He said Fagen would be glad to come to a Commission meeting and discuss it further.

Kloepfel asked the gentlemen if they were affiliated with the Boone Ice Group (BIG)?

Crepeau said no, this is a totally new, totally separate proposal.

McGonagle added that they were both dads with kids who played hockey and have to drive 30 miles one way to get to the nearest rink. The issue of ice in Columbia has haunted him for years, McGonagle said. He added that he knows the difficulties that investors have had with ice in the past. He thinks that a lack of an ice rink in Columbia creates a huge void and would be a wonderful recreational opportunity. McGonagle said there were 50 kids in the ice hockey program in Jefferson City and there is pent-up demand here. He believes a rink would be a jewel in the crown of the community and would be a nice addition to the City. Hood told Commissioners this was a new proposal. The City did advertise for proposals earlier this year and had a deadline which was past. He reminded Commissioners that construction of an ice rink was on the ballot last November for voter consideration and it failed. This was the reason that BIG came forward with a proposal for a rink to be privately funded, Hood said.

Crepeau said he realized that the tax issue failed and that the rink would be a capital expenditure. He said that cities smaller than Columbia had a municipal ice rink.

Knudson asked staff where we stood on the ice issue?

Hood said the need for ice was identified in the Parks Master Plan and the issue has been pursued for 10 years. At one point, there were four proposals on the table for an ice rink and none of them came to fruition, one of those being at the Fairgrounds. Funding from the private sector was very marginal, Hood said.

Staff discussed with City Council the need for ice, and it was placed on the ballot to be funded by the parks sales tax in November 2005. The issue was defeated.

Hood said staff has worked for an ice rink for the better part of 10 years. He said it is not realistic for the City to put up the funds for construction of an ice rink at this point since there are no funds available. He said the only way to get the funds to build a rink would be to put the issue to another vote and the next parks sales tax issue is at least four years away.

Ristow mentioned that staff had had discussion with Tom Fagen and knew that the option he proposed exists.

Hood said that the BIG proposal would bring rink management with a lot of experience operating rinks in the St. Louis area.

Kloepfel invited other public comment. There was none.

Blevins referred to the minutes Vangel had distributed. He asked for clarification of Mayor Hindman's comments about doing what's best for the community and not being satisfied with the four options on the table?

Hood said he believed the Mayor was expressing a personal opinion. He said the Council had referred the four options to Commission for their recommendation but had taken no vote and given no formal direction to staff regarding the four options. The only thing City Council has done formally is ask for a staff report and refer the matter to the Commission. Hood said he had some concern with the issue being discussed at the City Council meeting while the Commission was still in the process of reviewing the proposals.

Knudson said his Councilperson had contacted him and asked what was happening. He said City Council members do want a recommendation. He believes this recommendation should be based on what was discussed at the public hearing at the August 17 Commission meeting.

Kloepfel stressed that what the Commission decides would be a recommendation only. Ultimately, City Council will make the decision as to what will happen to the property. The issue will not necessarily conclude with the recommendation made by the Commission.

Hood reminded Commissioners that they did not have to endorse any of the four proposals made in the staff report. He told them they have the ability to make a recommendation based on what they believe is best for the community based on their study of the issue.

He said staff was directed to provide information on the proposals and they have strived to do that.

Kloepfel said he felt it was important to make a recommendation tonight after the lengthy public hearing at the August meeting.

Knudson asked for clarification about the money for the PRIDE proposal?

Hood said the organization plans to raise the \$9 million to construct the facility.

Vangel added the facility is essentially the CYBA proposal plus other facilities.

Knudson asked the CYBA representative in the audience about these two proposals merging?

Wendell Coonce of the CYBA said that he had emailed a letter to Commissioners detailing the reasons why the CYBA chose not to work with PRIDE. Coonce said the main reason was financial. He said the CYBA felt that a \$9 million price tag would be a tough row to hoe when it came to fundraising. He believes the \$3 million for the proposed CYBA facility would be more feasible. He also said the CYBA facility would pay for itself and would not rely on grants to keep it operational. Coonce said the fact the PRIDE is proposing to operate its facility somewhat based on grants is not reasonable.

Vangel said the PRIDE group has revised its pro forma and is still early in that process. He encouraged the Commission to analyze the things that were said by the City Council regarding the issue at the September 5 meeting. He pointed out that City Manager Bill Watkins had suggested that the groups be told they needed to meet to discuss the issue. Vangel said PRIDE wants the opportunity to sit down and discuss what can be

done and what is feasible.

Kloepfel asked if there was more discussion.

Blevins made a motion to recommend to City Council that the Council accept the option endorsed by staff of locating the CYBA-Rising Stars facility and the Farmers' Market facility on the site. Knudson seconded the motion.

Grus stated that all proposals were well-prepared and provided and she appreciated the efforts of all organizations involved. She suggested other options were viable and may work in another form elsewhere in the city, and perhaps still in partnership with the city. Grus added she was impressed with the effort and cooperation displayed by the organizations and thanked them for their time.

Kloepfel echoed Grus' statements and added he saw a need for the other proposals. He felt the CYBA's proposal was most well-thought through of all of them and that they were the most stable organization with the most ability to be successful. All had merit, Kloepfel said, but he thought the CYBA proposal was the most feasible.

Blevins asked about how Parks and Recreation staff possibly moving to the new CYBA facility would impact the Armory?

Hood said this would open the Armory to increase programming for inner city individuals and would allow staff there to do additional things not currently possible because of lack of space.

Blevins mentioned that recommending the CYBA proposal meant that the Commission is meeting their charge in ensuring increased recreational opportunities for everyone.

Knudson added that the PRIDE concept was a great one, but for the purpose of the Commission, it was more about recreational opportunities and CYBA fulfilled that.

Devine commented that he has strived to catch up with information and previous discussions through reviewing minutes and the proposals themselves, as well as the staff report. He encouraged Vangel and the PRIDE board to talk again to the CYBA about working together. Devine said it was difficult to disagree with anything proposed and he will be interested to see what comes out of those discussions.

Kloepfel called for a roll call vote.

Voting yes: Grus, Devine, Blevins, Knudson, Kloepfel. Voting no: no one. Absent: Pauls and Jones.

Motion passed unanimously.

City Visioning Process

Hood distributed literature and surveys to the Commission, informing them of the city's visioning process. Currently, staff and volunteers are collecting citizen input from the surveys and trying to compose 12 committees covering a range of topics important to Columbia. Hood encouraged Commissioners to complete the surveys. Hood added that he had seen preliminary survey results, and that parks and greenways were ranked high on the list of "areas most appreciated" in Columbia. Arts and culture and downtown were also highly ranked.

Hood told Commissioners that a series of vision festivals will be held on October 7 and 14 to help get the word out to the public and recruit more volunteers for committees.

Ristow mentioned that the city's visioning should not be confused with the visioning being conducted by the school district.

Grus asked about the focus groups that are being developed?

Hood answered that leaders of focus groups are being recruited.

Council Items

Hood told Commissioners a public hearing was held on improvements to Cosmo-Bethel Park. Council authorized staff to move forward on a new shelter and playground with additional parking just off of Bethel Street. The park is well-used with its proximity to schools, the tennis courts and the trout program, so the

improvements are important, Hood said.

Capital Projects Update

Griggs shared updates as follows:

Cosmo Tennis Courts: Work on the courts is proceeding. Paving has been completed.

Fairview Tennis Courts: The holes for the net posts have been completed.

Garth Nature Area: Earthwork has been completed. The leash-free area will be completed next spring.

Stephens Lake Park: showed photos of completed entry signs.

Louisville Park: Showed photos of cul-de-sac with curbs and the shelter.

Douglass Pool Renovation: Showed photos of the renovations. Currently, the shell is being stripped.

Basketball court resurfacing: Resurfacing has been completed at courts at these parks: Oakland, Rock Bridge, McKee, Again, Woodridge, Bear Creek and Oakwood Hills.

Bear Creek Park: Showed a slide of what the shelter would look like.

Stewart/Providence accesses: Showed photos of various accesses to the MKT, where the “stairsteps” are at the south access and concrete work at the north access.

Flat Branch Phase I and II: Showed photos of the MKT-Locust underpass at Phase II and Phase I.

MLK Memorial Dedication: Showed completed photos of the Memorial as well as a photo of the dedication that took place August 28.

Commission Comments

Kloppel welcomed Dan Devine back to the Commission. Devine was recently appointed Ward 1 representative. Previously he had served as Ward 3 representative before relocating.

Staff Comments

Ristow announced there are two positions open on the recreation staff. One is an aquatics position; the former recreation specialist in that position took a promotion with the University of Missouri’s aquatics team. The other opening is the Special Olympics/Adapted Recreation specialist. The former specialist in that job left the state to be with her fiance. Ristow added that several events were coming up, including the Flat Branch Circus at Twilight Festival on Sept. 28,

Hood asked Commission members about their meeting site. Usually, meetings are held at the Daniel Boone City Building in the Mezzanine Conference Room, but the last two meetings were held at the ARC. Hood said it was the pleasure of the Commission to discuss whether to return to the Mezzanine or stay at the ARC. Kloppel mentioned that the parking at the ARC is easier.

Griggs added that it was easier to show presentations with the room layout and equipment at the ARC.

The Commission agreed to hold the October meeting at the ARC. Hood said he would check into whether they were required to meet in the Mezzanine as a city board, or if they could meet elsewhere.

Kloppel asked how attendance was at the Heritage Festival?

Hood answered that Saturday was packed, as parking was a bit of an issue. On Sunday, rainy weather affected attendance.

Public Comments

None

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 pm.