



## **LEAWOOD PARK BOARD MEETING Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2007**

**5:30 p.m. – Maple Room**

Board members in attendance were Steve Martens, Dr. Gregory Peppes, Amy Vlastic, Karen Reimer, Bob Wright and Rod Crawford. Staff members in attendance were Chris Claxton, Kim Curran, Dan Mahanke, Jeff Peterson, Brian Anderson, Lindsay Youle, April Bishop, Jackie Buser, Jeff Peterson, and new Administrative Assistant Tonia Morgan.

Steve Martens called the meeting to order at 5:55 p.m. Karen Reimer made a motion to approve the June 12, 2007 minutes, Amy Vlastic seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously. Chris introduced Tonia Morgan the new Administrative Assistant.

### **I. Discussion of Planning Commission Meeting at 6:00 pm**

Chris discussed what was on the commission agenda and what we would be presenting.

### **II. Staff Reports**

Brian reported that he is currently interviewing for one full time position.

He ordered 65 pounds of wildflower seed for trail plantings today. Councilman Rasmussen gave \$1,000 to the City of Leawood and requested planting wildflowers along the trail. Brian will meet with Chris, and Mike Noll to go through the trail system from College to 119<sup>th</sup> Street to determine where to plant them. They are perennial seeds and the survival rate will be enhanced if they are planted in the fall

He attended the Metro bicycle pedestrian trails meeting today. This meeting is basically made up of all Johnson County and cities in Johnson County that have trail systems. They discussed unifying the trail mileage signage throughout all of the Johnson County systems similar to Overland Park. He'll be on a sub committee, meeting with Overland Park, Olathe and Johnson County Parks and Recreation. The City of Leawood recently re-did the trail signage mileage markers and he is hoping to be able to keep them the way they are.

Bob Wright suggested having an in ground brightly marked stone that they can mow over like on a golf course. According to Brian, the current markers are pressure treated, 6x6, with fancy details on the top and inset with the city logo and the name of the trail at the half mile marker and are marked every half mile. They start at the eastern border, and as you go west the mileage increases. These are more visible, and easy to notice as people go by without looking down. They have worked out really well, and are modeled after Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department.

He also reported that he and his staff attended a Kansas Turf Grass Foundation Field Day at the research farm in Olathe. The research farm is doing turf research and have annual and perennials flower bed research plots there. Kansas State puts out a list called the “prairie star” list that has annuals of specific cultivars and they rate them for two years of what really grows well in our climate. If you are interested in planting annuals at your home, this website may be very helpful. It can be found at [www.oznet.ksu.edu](http://www.oznet.ksu.edu).

Brian thanked April Bishop, Mary Tearney, and Bill Ellwood for providing lunch at the shop for the park staff thanking them for their support this year. Brian and his staff were very appreciative of this.

In closing he reported that he is getting ready to finish a pool painting contract for a bid opening on September 4. He hopes to begin this project on the September 17 council agenda, and have it completed by Halloween.

Kim reported the pool will begin half-day operations on Thursday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. The Swim and Dive Team came in third place this year. The pool rentals are up from last year- there have been nine this year compared to seven last year. It was opened up to non-resident season pass holders, and has been really successful. Swim lessons finished a couple of weeks ago with 933 kids in the system.

Bob Wright shared several areas of feedback/questions regarding the pool:

**In/Out privileges for daily users of the pool.** If a patron has a daily punch card and leaves the pool for any reason, why do they have to use an additional punch on their card when they return? He also added, if it’s raining and the pool is temporarily closed, or if parents need to go pick up another child and come back an hour later, it is a problem to have to use the card again.

Kim said that it is our policy to not entertain in/out privileges unless they have a season pass. It is really hard to keep track of who has paid or not and it is hard to monitor. If they need to run to their car for a short time, or run home for ten minutes, they will be allowed to come and go, but anything other this is not allowed with daily pass users.

**Satellite Radio.** Is it possible to offer commercial free satellite music at the pool? The radio station isn’t bad but the repetitive commercials are annoying.

Kim reported that it is considerably more expensive for businesses, and Sirius radio is not governed by the FCC, and may not be family friendly.

**Swim Lessons.** Is it possible to base lessons on skill level instead of age? He has found that when children are placed by their age, their skill level could be different and children tend to get bored with the class if they are more advanced than others, and it is not as challenging as they thought it would be.

Kim answered that the age level is merely a guideline. Chris added that we try to be as dependent as possible on the instructor to make sure each student is in the appropriate level class, but it may take several days to notice the difference among the children.

Kim said that she appreciated all of his feedback and will take all items under review and consideration.

Bob inquired about the revenue compared to this time last year. Kim reported that we are slightly down, but the season pool passes are about the same. The daily admissions are slightly down due to the weather.

Lindsay reported that the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration went great despite rain at the beginning, which resulted in approximately a 45 minute late start. The attendance was almost even with last year.

She is getting everything ready for the Labor Day Run, which is September 3. Registrations are coming in and she is working with the sponsors to gather prizes and donations.

Freaky Fall Fest is Friday, October 19, from 5-9 p.m. We will do the haunted hayrides again this year, they will be the same with the exception of charging a \$1.00 per ride in hopes to cut the lines down with teens continuously riding several times and others waiting in line for long periods of time. You can ride as often as they like, but each ride is \$1.00 to make sure that everyone gets a chance to ride. There will also be a costume contest and the same fun as last year.

Bob Wright shared feedback in regards to the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration.

**Starting earlier.** He attended at party at a friend's home in Mission Farms and after the show asked for feedback. He suggested changing the start time closer to 9:15p.m. This would be better for families with smaller children. Lindsey said that she understands but the radio station, and fire department would rather start at 10:00 but she has compromised to be able to begin at 9:45p.m. Also, the show cannot start until it gets dark. She and Chris agree that maybe it could start at 9:30 and will look into that for next year.

**Length of show.** He enjoyed the 20-25 minute performance-good amount for kids and the high show was great.

**105.1 Simulcast.** Do they help underwrite the show? Lindsey replied that they do not, but they advertise for us with long and frequent spots about two weeks out from the show with increased frequency as the date gets closer. They did wonderful job advertising and the music was a great choice-very patriotic.

Dan reported that August 3 was the end of the second session of Challenger Soccer Camp. The soccer deadline has come and gone since the last meeting. He is almost finished placing kids and will start forming teams in the kindergarten and for four and five year olds.

He also reported that field twelve will be turned sideways. This is the first field coming in off Tomahawk Creek-the two that are off to the side, which have always been the kindergarten fields by the baseball fields. He will put smaller goals on the field turning it into two fields to accommodate the 4 and 5 year olds and kindergarteners.

This will be the first time to have 7 vs 7. For the past 30 years, it has been 11 vs 11 for kindergarten through eight graders.

April reported that Music Man was a big success. 10,500 people attended in seven days of the run. There were a lot of volunteers this year that worked really hard. The entire production went really well.

She also reported that the jazz series starts on Sunday, which will run for three consecutive Sunday evenings at the Amphitheatre at Ironwoods Park. Come out, bring picnics and listen to free music. Chris added that this is sponsored by our friends at Town Country Bank and we appreciate them paying for the performers. They will also provide free popcorn and water.

The next art show is August 24. This is the highest end collection of artists that we've ever had. All four are pretty well known people. It should be good entertainment, with good food, good art, and it's free.

Ballet in the Park will be at Ironwoods Park on Thursday, September 6 and starts promptly at 6, and will be over by 7p.m.

Jeff reported that attendance has been slow at the nature center due to the heat, but is up for the year. Cabins have also been slow in August without air conditioning. September is nearly full on weekends and October is starting to fill up.

He and Dana (outdoor education specialist), met with the developmental specialist for the newly organized Girl Scouts of northeast Kansas and northwest Missouri that have nearly 5,000 sites. They would like to get on their website for cabin rentals and the challenger course as they were on there last year for their badge programs to gain interest.

The challenge course has been very busy with five programs this week alone. There are three more open spots, August 25, one in September and October 4<sup>th</sup>. It normally slows down when schools are in session.

He's received a lot of calls for scout programs and birthday parties. There are six or seven lined up within the next month. He believes things will pick up further as school starts and troops are active again.

There are currently four scouts troops working on projects. One was referred by the Mayor.

Today there were ten really pretty butterfly houses put up in the garden area and there are two scouts building bat houses.

Jackie reported that camps are over, and they were excellent this year. Very minimal problems- everything ran smooth. Balloon Tree increased available spots this year to 70 kids as opposed to 60 in the past. This was due to running full about 3 years straight and staff decided to open up another ten spots by adding another aide. This way we did not have to continue to turn kids away. Amazingly each session filled to capacity again this year. There was ten returning staff for half-days which was great. Next year, hopefully she will have eight. The outdoor camp has definitely turned around from last year, this year it was 75% full. Fifty of them were repeats from week-to-week.

The Lodge continues to be extremely busy. Putting an ad in the KC Weddings magazine has increased rentals, especially during the week.

She is currently finishing up end of activity reports.

Chris introduced Dr. Peppes, to the new board members. She shared that Councilman Gill is also a Liaison.

She reported that the golf course is going along very well, the greens were completed June 20, and so far there have been zero problems.

All of the projects have gone along well. Hopefully this will continue and can open as planned on Memorial Day weekend or sooner if proposed. We've budgeted money for a grand reopening, and have been working with Orion on a marketing campaign to bring the course back up.

A question was addressed to Chris about opening the practice range earlier. According to Chris, this isn't possible because there is still construction going on and we don't want to encourage any activity out there so as not to have to police the inviting new greens, including those up by the range. We also have monies budgeted to update the range by putting some synthetic material there. She also reported that we are getting ready to begin work on the clubhouse in about a month. It will be "updated". Chris reported that the storm water project is moving along well. They are not really ahead of schedule, but they are not behind.

In regards to The Lake at Ironwoods, she and Brian met with Brett (Continental Engineers) and the Corps of Engineers and the good news is we're going to be able to get a very simple permit from the COE and won't have to go through the very elongated procedures that sometimes you have to deal with. She shared that this went very well, and is very happy with the outcome. Brett has already made the application for the permit. The plans were not changed in terms of wanting to pull it back a little bit on the North, dredge it out, and keep the weirs that are there so they are more functional. Chris also reported that the actual stream is currently blocked, so the water that comes to the creek and comes from the storm water is all going in there, which is causing a lot of different problems. We are working with Continental and we're moving along. This will be good winter work to dredge it out. We hope to have it completed by spring.

Chris passed out the fall program guide and suggested visiting the website. Staff is considering a distribution of twice a year versus three times and utilizing the web more. This would save the City another \$10-\$12,000 per year between printing and postage. She will discuss this with staff to get their input. The program guide is a major piece of advertising but the web is very user friendly. WebTrac on line continues to be a huge asset.

She reported that thanks to the I.T. department, and the use of a special camera, you will soon be able to go on-line and access virtual tours of the cabins, lodge, shelters, nature center, cabins and the school. This will be very nice for staff to market those places and more convenient for our users. We really appreciate them doing this.

## **II. Discuss Election Of New Board Chair.**

Steve Martens officially resigned as Chairman of the board. He has been on the Parks & Recreation Board for ten years and Chair for over three years. He is traveling a lot with his

job, which makes it difficult for him to attend every meeting. He would like to pass the torch on to someone else, but will remain on the board.

There was a discussion on the floor as to who could take over as the chair. Steve nominated Karen Reimer to serve a one year term as the new Chairman of the Park and Recreation Advisory Board. Rod seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously. Effective at the September meeting Karen will become the new Chair.

### **III. Update on Ironwoods Park Improvements**

Chris reported that the plans are still in plan review. Everything is ready to go as soon as the plan reviews come back. She and April have committed themselves to getting the RFQ out for the Amphitheatre master plan next week. Several companies have shown interest. April is working on a new piece of public art for City Park. She reported that they asked artists to submit a sports related piece to go in the Park. They received fifty eight entries from all over the country. The selection committee met last week and narrowed it down to three. They have contacted them and asked for proposals specific to the site. The piece will be large scale and hopefully visible from the highway.

Chris also reported that there is a meeting next Friday with Dennis Reynolds to get actively moving on Gezer Park and the Porch Lights art project at Somerset and Lee. Dennis is the designer of both projects.

### **IV. Update on Feasibility Study for Potential Future Community Center**

Chris reported that the Facility and Design school was held in the metro last week. Chris has served on the planning committee for the last year. Kim and Brian attended the four day conference. Chris passed out informational books with information about each recreation/community center facility they toured. She understands that it is a lot of information, therefore she asked the board to review the book at their convenience prior to the next meeting. Chris briefly shared a few areas of interests from the book, and reported that most of the facilities discuss their project summaries, unique characteristics etc.

The number one thing she hears from everybody on the inside which are recreational professionals, and the people you meet along the way when you're in different facilities is that the community wants these type of services but you have to get the community behind the project. Potential citizen "users" are the ones that are actually going to make the difference if and when it comes to a decision. This all starts with feasibility study to see if citizens actually have an interest and; more importantly if they are willing to fund it.

We received a proposal from Bill Yarger of Yarger Design Group. Chris handed out a copy of the Project Approach for Feasibility Study form. A copy of the project approach is attached. Chris shared her views with the board. In regards to TASK 1.1: Project Research, she reported that we only have \$30,000 to spend and maybe a little bit more, but feels that there are a lot of items we'd be jumping the gun on. If you look closely at this document, and read what this involves, she is good with the market analysis, project overview, citizen participation and the community survey. She feels strongly about the community survey because if you don't do the survey you have no idea what your support factor is in the community.

In regards to Task 1.2: Project Analysis & Programming, she reported that she isn't interested in programming as this would be a head of the game, but is interested in looking at who some of the potential community partners are. This may include hospitals, rehab centers, senior living establishments, etc. The project site analysis fee is \$2,000 but she would ask them to do it under a "limited" approach, which would likely bring the cost down. Chris reported that there are several good firms that she feels are qualified to do good work such as E.T.C. which is Ron Vine here in Leawood (although they will likely be a sub on the survey), Bucher Willis, which is also a good local group, Green Play, out of Denver, Co., and Pros Consulting in Indianapolis. She would like to receive a breakdown from each company to see if they can handle the work and how much it will cost. She likes working with Bill, who works with Ballard-King who is also very good, but, she doesn't think we would be representing the interests of the city optimally if we don't seek out other firms. She reported that once we once we receive this in September, the board can select the top two companies. Chris opened the floor for feedback.

Bob asked Chris, "Wouldn't the community survey be step one? "Why do we need to do all of the items unless we know what the demand is, and what the price points are?" In response, Chris passed around a hand out that better explains the feasibility study.

Chris explained that the market analysis, survey, and the citizen participation go hand-in hand. The survey will be sent to citizens and some will participate in focus groups. They use different tools and approaches to gather information. She also reported that the partnerships are out there, but it would be better to complete the study first before approaching the council.

Chris suggested reading through the main documents to see if there are things we need or don't need and we can discuss them at the next meeting.

Chris reported that next Wednesday, Overland Park has invited area P&R agencies to its brand new facility, which will open to the public the following Monday. It is called the Matt Ross Community Center. She and other staff will attend.

We will do the facility design school next week, at that time. Gladstone is still under construction and is about the same population size as Leawood, and is landlocked just as we are, but it is great information coming from them, meeting with architects, talking with people who have started the process, been through the process, and share the good and the bad side of the process.

Steve added that the board should review the information and it will be discussed in detail at the next meeting.

Chris also shared that she told the council that the board would have a recommendation of who we think would do the best job on the study and why and would also reiterate with them what the scope would be.

Chris also reported that it would be nice for the board to share this information with people in the community that aren't aware that this is being considered and get their feedback.

Rod Crawford asked if there is a sight being considered? Chris reported that the site tentatively being discussed is the 12.5 acres north of waterway carwash behind Camelot

court, which is also the site for the future justice center. This would allow us to share some of the infrastructure such as utilities, parking, etc.

Brian responded to Bob's earlier question in regards to the survey being the first thing. He learned at the school that you have to get the city leaders, council and park board members and people that are involved in the city to get some questions answered in terms of what are the expectations for how much money we are supposed to make to cover the cost of the facility. Communities are different; some feel that that it should cover all expenses, some feel that it is an asset to living here and should not cover the facility. This will form the questions to get feedback from the citizens. To find out if they want it or if they will pay for it from a citizen survey.

Rod also asked about the public relations efforts that the city undertakes on projects such as this one. Chris replied that the park board is usually the catalyst for getting things discussed in the community. They were a key element in helping the city approve the \$12.5 million bond ballot in 1998 for the three parks.

Chris feels that they will get about 300 samplings back once the feasibility study starts.

Steve asked the board to review all of the information prior to the next meeting. Please contact Chris with any feedback.

Chris reported that the board will discuss 2008 fee recommendations at the October meeting. The board will make a recommendation at that time and staff will present to the council in late November or early December.

Amy Vlastic made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Rod Crawford seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department