

**PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes – January 8, 2008**  
**5:30 p.m. – Maple Room**

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

Chair, Karen Reimer called the meeting to order at 5:58 p.m. Bob Wright made a motion to approve the December 10, 2007 meeting minutes and Amy Vlastic seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**I. Staff Reports**

Jeff reported that he started taking reservations for cabin rentals on January 2 and they are filling quickly. Lots of classes are soon to start as well. The price for cabin rentals increased this year, and he hasn't received any complaints yet. He is currently recruiting staff; hiring existing staff from last year and recruiting new staff members. He needs 30 staff members to be fully operational for the nature center, challenge course and cabins during the season.

Jeff also reported that he is working on year end reports and performance proposals. He is working on the nature adventure and climbing adventure camps, which are camps for the summer.

April reported that the seventh annual Kansas Day Lecture will be Tuesday, January 29, 2008 in the Oak Room. Marlene Katz will do a presentation on Esther Swirk Brown, a pioneer in Civil Rights with Judge Jon R. Gray. This is a free event with refreshments.

She also reported that if you are interested in doing an adult middle of the day event, there will be a Write Your Life Story in Four Weeks class at the Oxford Schoolhouse offered February – March on Wednesday afternoons.

Perhaps the biggest news is the council approved the recommendation from the amphitheatre steering committee to contract with Kevin Cowan architects to complete the master plan for potential future expansion of the amphitheatre. They hope to start the contract negotiations soon to determine the final costs for these services.

She reported that porch lights is in a holding pattern right now but it's working. They are getting the necessary permits to move forward.

Dan reported that he is gathering information for end of the year reports. He is getting a lot of calls for spring soccer, which will begin in a month. He is also getting a lot of calls for t-ball. There are a lot of coaches for 3 & 2 baseball that play in other leagues but rent our fields until our soccer and baseball begins.

Jackie reported that she is busy with the Lodge. There are two big events coming up, The State of The City as well as The Sister City event. She is busy getting everything ready for these events. Dr. Peppes asked how many are expected at the State Of The City. Jackie replied that she doesn't have an accurate count of R.S.V.P's, but heard approx. 220, but we are maxing out at 290.

She is also working on the summer program guide information, and end of year reports. She has also received a lot of her camp counselor's paperwork back.

Lindsey reported that there haven't been any events since the last meeting but she is busy working on upcoming events. Daddy Daughter Date Night is February 2. The Eggstravaganza event seems really early this year because Easter is so early. It will be March 16, which is the Sunday before Easter and unfortunately coincides with Spring Break. She hopes this doesn't hurt our numbers. Chris passed out flyers about each event.

Lindsay also reported that Senior Lunch is this week.

Kim reported that she is working on the Feasibility Study. The kick-off meeting is tomorrow. They will meet with the staff in the morning and the stake holders in the afternoon.

Jeff King of Ballard & King will attend as opposed to Ken Ballard, who interviewed with us. He has a lot of practical experience and is Ken's partner. Ron Vine, who will be the one to create and initiate the survey, will also attend. It should be a very informative day with more meetings to come.

She also reported that her returning seasonal staff has been turning paperwork in and she hopes to start interviews within the next few weeks.

Kim reported that she will begin the master plan development process at the staff retreat, which will take place on Wednesday of next week.

Bob Wright asked what the time frame is for the survey and other aspects. According to Kim, she believes it is six months for the entire study (including the survey) but will take a look at the RFP to confirm this. She reported that they will start formulating survey questions and it should go out within the next month or so, once they figure out what questions they need to ask and it will go through a few revisions.

Bob asked if the surveys will go to all Leawood City residents. Kim reported that it will not but there is a guaranteed return rate of four hundred, random sample. This will be discussed at the meeting to determine if certain amounts will be in each ward or if it will be divided by north and south.

Chris added that it was discussed not to divide it by north and south because there's already a division between these two portions of the city. But there will be a sampling that would cover all the wards. Kim reported that there is a guaranteed minimum return of plus or minus five percent. It should be pretty interesting.

Bob added that his co-workers have inquired about it (the community center) and have wondered when you will actually know and when is the next point when you can discuss it. Kim reported that it is actually broken down in two phases, after phase one is complete you then decide if this is actually something you want to move forward with.

Brian reported that the contractors submitted a plan for “porch lights” and made comments on it. They are waiting on a few details on the lighting as solar is an option. As soon as weather permits, they are ready to go. .

He also reported on the trail at 123<sup>rd</sup> & Mission. He is working with Phelps Engineering and hopes to have the contract ready for the approval on February 4 for them to do construction documents and run the bidding to hopefully get the trail fixed in the spring.

Dr. Peppes asked how big of a deal it is with what you originally thought dollar and cents wise. According to Brian it was budgeted for \$100k, but you never know how it will go if they run into problems. They are surveying the area now in part because he wants to be really careful as the easement is sketchy and he wants to make sure he is not encroaching on private land.

Chris added that they thought it was going to be closer to \$200k - \$225k initially and the preliminary estimate has come in at \$80k, so they bumped it up to \$100k for any potential contingencies.

Bob Wright asked about the timeframe. According to Brian, they will probably do the work in spring and it should be complete by June if everything comes out alright. He wouldn't think it will take a great deal of time once they get their equipment in there and begin working.

Brian also reported on Gezer. The Lions Club has an interest in doing audio stops in the park. He researched this and has a few options. He's in the process of getting a proposal from a group that has a speaker system and then he'll work with a company that makes the signage, but this could be incorporated into it. So far, he has found two options, one system will talk to you in multiple languages when you walk up to it, and the other option is a hand crank version that doesn't run on power. Amy Vlasic asked what languages they were considering. Brian opened the discussion of having Hebrew, and English. Amy suggested getting some political feedback regarding Spanish so they may want to consider this, if it is available.

He also showed the schematic boards that Dennis Reynolds did. According to Brian, they are trying to get Phase I completed by the end of May. He would like to have the parking lot built; as well as portions of the trail and the pond where the sculpture will be set, the utility work and the sanitary lines. Phase II would be completed in the fall after the delegation, and at this point the shelters, restrooms, playground and detail work would be done after the grading and landscaping.

Karen Reimer asked when the delegation gets here what will they see. According to Brian and Chris, the sculpture should be there as well as the pond and the wadie.

Brian also reported that he has received more calls from people wanting to donate more benches as well as a tree donation for a memorial for a child that passed away. He emailed them the policy and they will contact him if and when they are interested in proceeding.

He is also getting ready to hire his seasonal crew to help mow and clean creeks this summer. He hopes to have them start in March.

He will attend the shade tree conference tomorrow in Topeka. A speaker who is an expert attorney in the field of tree law will discuss liability issues, etc.

Chris reported that the 60th Anniversary banners are up. Many thanks to all who helped particularly Mary Tearney for helping get them up and paid for.

The C.I. P. meeting was last night with the council and the work session she feels that things went really well. They talked a lot about the amphitheatre and the near term projects that are in progress right now or to be in progress in 2008.

Dr. Peppes asked if she thinks next year there will be a community center discussion at the C.I.P. meeting. Chris says that she feels there will be some kind of discussion but cannot predict the level or specific topic. She looked at this year, and once we complete the feasibility study, the only other option at that point is to determine whether there is enough information to move to the second phase but other than that she doesn't see anything happening until we start talking about the 2010 C.I.P.

Amy Vlasic asked if the justice center is going to go ahead. Chris reported that this is on for 2009. Amy asked could you possibly have enough information by the time they start that. Chris thinks so, but added right now, it is on an out year and unfunded. It is not even contemplated until 2013 or 2014. But, because we go through this process every year we really are usually focusing on the next two years. Even though the information is out there for budget modeling purposes, it is pretty narrow in scope because things change. Chris believes we will know a lot more once the feasibility study is complete and it starts to get talked about. Right now it is unknown what the future will bring.

Chris reported on the staff retreat of which the purpose will be to do the preparatory work on our own master plan. Once they return from KRPA they will begin working on the 2009 operating budget.

She also reported that at the end of this month, the information is due for the summer program guide, which will probably be the biggest issue we've ever had. It will highlight the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary and also some new things as well. There is a lot going on in January.

She reported that she, Brian, Kim, Dan and Lindsay will attend KRPA in Wichita the 22-25<sup>th</sup>.

## **II. Discuss Feasibility Study Interviews/Recommendation**

Chris reported that this item has already discussed in the previous discussions above.

## **III. Discuss Progress On Ironwoods Building Additions**

Brian reported that he discussed with the contractor laying out the sanitary sewer line, to save as many trees as possible there. The way the sewer has to be installed is very difficult to do; they may have to move some trees as they've done all they can to save them.

He also reported that we are in a holding pattern right now because of the weather; this may or may not affect the finishing date that we were hoping for the first of April. But, the contractors are saying that in all actuality this may not happen until the beginning or middle of June. Chris reported that she and Brian have talked and looked at the agreement and right now the contractor needs to perform to the terms of the contract. According to Chris this is a design-build agreement and they need to move forward. Any costs of “winter work” should have been figured into their costs and will be on them.

#### **IV. Discuss Lake Renovation At Ironwoods Park**

Chris reported that the contractor is not wasting any time. They are already out there this morning working. They already opened the drains on the lake and will start excavation soon.

Karen Reimer asked when this will be done. Chris reported that it should be completed by June 6 which is a Friday.

Dr. Peppes asked if there will be an issue with a smell left due to the wet silt being spread out. Brian reported that the only smell that he foresees is when they pile up the grass as they will scrape all the top soil off of the entire area. And, as the grass breaks down there is a potential that this may have a compost odor.

Chris said that we started this project three years ago and it is very exciting to have it finally started. It will be usable, and what it can do for the area with the amphitheatre and the parks aesthetics will be amazing.

Amy Vlastic reported that she has a neighbor that wants to build a butterfly garden at Ironwoods. Her neighbor would love to work with someone in the park and volunteer to plant and do everything that needs to be done. This is his huge hobby.

Jeff reported that they have a butterfly garden that wraps around the nature center and it is growing each year. They would love to have a volunteer. Jeff and Amy exchanged information in hopes to get him started.

#### **V. Review Current Department Project List**

Chris passed out a list of projects from January of last year. The yellow highlighted items are major things that are everything we were able to accomplish this year. This is something that Chris will provide the board with every January to let them know where we are going.

Chris reported that we did a good job getting most of the things done. She also passed around the latest version, a list of 32 things that the Parks & Recreation Department would like to complete by the end of 2008. As things come up, if there is any reason to update the list, we will make sure that the board receives an updated copy.

She opened the floor for questions. Chris highlighted a few important events/projects such as the public art master plan that has been scheduled to be presented in a work session with the council on May 5. This will allow the council to get reacquainted with that plan. We need to complete our brochure of public art., if we have to reprint as a new piece comes on, we will do it so at that time. We have “Porch Lights” and also need to complete Gezer.

She also reported that we need to work on the tree donation policy. She and Brian looked over the draft of the brochure and it needs a little tweaking but it should go out in the spring. She reported that we would like to get better information out to the citizens about our tree care and look at different ways to do this with information on the website or an additional brochure, and maybe have a meeting with homes associations, as suggested by Councilwoman Deb Fila.

Chris reported on city park art; we are waiting for a potential mock up from one artist. According to April this is supposed to arrive in the next week. Chris reported that there is a plan (b) if this isn't to the group's preference.

We are working to promote healthier lifestyles among the youth of Leawood. We are trying to get a grant, but also have interest from Commerce Bank for them to underwrite it. If we don't get the grant, we still have a source that is willing to help us implement getting Leawood to live healthier lifestyles.

Temporary art pieces will be moved from the front of the lobby of the parks & recreation department. A new piece has been selected for the lobby. It is very nice and made of glass and steel.

Chris reported that the expansion of the library is going to necessitate that "Growing" be relocated. It could be located somewhere else on this property or on the parkway. They will be closed for a year for renovations and are looking for an alternative place to operate.

Bob Wright asked if there is anyway we can plant a row of evergreens along the highway at City Park as a sound buffer. It is hard to hear anything at all when you attend a baseball game; it is as if baseball fields are underneath the highway. He suspects it is the same thing for soccer.

Chris suggested that it could be part of our tree city U.S.A. initiative. Brian added that when they re-did City Park, this was one of the options but it wasn't done at that time because of funding to stay in the budget with everything else. According to Brian, we can start out really small and make this happen.

Bob also received a question as to what happens to the police station, after the justice center is built. Chris reported that it is up for debate. Dr. Peppes says he is bringing this up in two weeks at the CIP meeting.

Bob asked about the options. Chris replied that the options are to tear it down or to use it for alternative space to be decided in the future. Dr. Peppes reported that the trailers will go but the structure itself is paid for and it would be terrible to have to tear it down.

According to April, the historic commission is hoping to acquire the old city hall, refurbish it and make it a museum.

Chris suggested that Bob inform the people inquiring that it is soon to be discussed by the council members. Or, they can call their council members.

Chris reported that we are going to take responsibility for the first tee program at Ironhorse working with the first tee executive board, which is Dave Farris, formerly of the golf committee and the GCS Association and Dan Zook. This is being headed by Kim. We have to do the trail, pavement and enhance the lighting of the tunnel under Roe. There is graffiti and the pavement is uneven.

Rod Crawford asked who makes the decision for the billboards that you see along interstate 35 that says 'we're back'. Chris reported that it is decided by the management company and they bring it through their marketing. Rod thought it was very nice, in a high traffic area coming from out of downtown.

April suggested added moving growing; the stainless steel sculpture by the library will have to move. Chris agreed that this should be added to the list.

Chris suggested that the February meeting will be a good time to go to Matt Ross Community Center. If we don't go next month it likely will not happen. This will be February 12. Kim says she will try to schedule this.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department