

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – March 11, 2008
5:30 p.m. – Maple Room

Board members in attendance were Amy Vlastic, Karen Reimer (chair), Bob Wright, Mark Mergen, 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 6:00 p.m. Bob Wright made a motion to approve the January minutes 8, 2007 meeting minutes and Amy Vlastic seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Staff Reports

Jeff reported that he's getting busier as the weather gets nice with a lot of cabin calls. Cabin rentals start April 1 and run through October. April and May are nearly full for weekends, and there is also a few weekdays booked when there isn't school the next day.

There are approximately nineteen scheduled nature programs and birthday parties for April and May. Attendance has been up slightly with people stopping through as they've been out at the park. In the month of April the nature center business hours will be Tuesday through Saturday 10-5, and Sundays 1-5.

He also reported that the challenge course will be hiring additional new employees. On March 29, they will host a Tomahawk Trail cleanup. It was listed in the paper for two consecutive weeks, and so far there are 75-100 people signed up. He is working on the budget with Kim and preparing for some new programs and also purchasing supplies and equipment.

Brock reported that Spring Break Camp starts next week. It is very similar to the Holiday Camp (days, times, and activity structure). The camp will be held Monday – Friday. We are just about full everyday with the exception of Friday, with five to six openings. But, every other day is full with one to two spots left. He also reported that he has a lot of new classes in the new guide that recently went out. He is offering a lot of science and technology classes along with new cooking classes and camps.

The Junior Tennis League (JTL) met last week and he hopes to get closer to 70 participants this year compared to 55 last year. We will build our own teams and compete against other clubs. The ages are 11 and under and 13 and under and there is also a high school division for boys and girls. This program continues to grow each year.

Karen Reimer asked how many were at the meeting. Brock reported that the meeting consisted of all the clubs meeting together, and there were probably 15-16 different clubs present, but there are as many as 25 clubs. Brock also reported that we are one of few parks and recreation departments that do it. Leawood, Prairie Village, and Blue Valley are the only other recreation departments that do it; everyone else is a tennis club of some sort.

Jackie reported that she is hiring camp counselors. She also reported that she is putting together a slide show for the lodge full of pictures that will be linked to the website, so hopefully when people call and

want to see pictures, they can go directly there to see them. This will help with tours also and maybe hold them back a little. They have been extremely busy on Wednesday nights.

Jackie also reported that the newest thing that she has been working on along with Lindsay, Kim and Chris (on page 42 in the new program guide) is the Live Healthy Leawood Challenge. This is a health initiative that is a free program for ages 5-13 to encourage them to do one hour of physical activity per day, four days a week for eight weeks. They are trying to get kids involved and Leawood will supply the activity logs and a welcome packet. They will also receive a free pedometer sponsored by Commerce Bank. A registered dietician is on board to answer any questions they may have. If you look closely at the guide, you will notice bananas next to certain classes throughout the guide. These activities are eligible for participation points that are worth prizes. Hopefully this will get people involved in more of our programs.

Chris added that they also applied for a \$10,000 grant which we will know about in May. We will receive good support from Commerce but the grant will allow us to do more. Mark Mergen asked who the grant was from. Chris replied that it is from General Mills.

Jackie reported that the dietician works with Ball Foods as well as with the schools and she hopes this will be a good way to start this off and get into the school system.

Chris reported that what we are trying to do is to try to be a good role model and recognize that Parks & Recreation needs to be a tool for kids to become healthier with the obesity level on the rise. Jackie mentioned it is free, and they will receive a packet of information when they register. For example, if you want to walk on the trail with your kids, they can receive points for that, but if you want to participate in soccer, obviously you have to pay for soccer, but you will get points for that also. She said it is important to keep kids going in this so they can find alternative ways to not only participate in physical fitness activities, but to also get the nutritional information that they need. We must find ways to present this in a fun and interesting way

Chris also reported that unfortunately for us, Jackie will be leaving us, and will be going to work part-time for Blue Valley. She has done a great job for us and as you can tell, she is keeping going till the end. Her last day is Friday.

Lindsey reported that she has taken on the responsibility of the aquatic center and is busy with hiring, interviewing and getting all of the paperwork done for the seasonal staff. Almost all of them have been hired and are ready to go.

The Eggstravaganza egg hunt is this Sunday at Leawood City Park from 11:30 – 1:30p.m. The National Bank of Kansas City is the sponsor again this year. They pay for most everything. We are responsible for the newspaper ad and signage. This is a free event for participants. She also reported that everyone that buys a meal from the Kiwanis Club on Sunday will receive a free koozie with the City Of Leawood 60th Anniversary logo on it to promote this event.

Chris interjected that by the end of the week you will be able to go to the bottom of the city's website and click on the 60th anniversary logo, and if you click on it, it will have upcoming events pertaining to the 60th Anniversary.

According to Chris, when we have an event, if we can do something to promote the 60th that makes sense with the event we will do so. For example, the pedometers for Health Initiative and National Trails Day, and the water bottles for Mom & Sons sports night. For the Doggie Dunk, they will receive bandanas for the dogs with the 60th logo, and at the pool patrons will receive mini lanyards to be able to keep all of their pool membership cards together that advertise the 60th logo. We have a budget to work with to get the word out, and these are all cost effective items.

Dan reported that he is working on his budget as well as hiring kids for the concession stand, and a field supervisor for soccer, which is approaching quickly. He is also working on soccer schedules and

placing the individuals that came in without a team. He also reported that he will schedule soccer games March 22, which is the weekend ending spring break and the day before Easter, and he is aware of this, but unfortunately if it is moved back any further, it runs into Memorial Day weekend. They have always played the weekend before Easter, so this isn't a change. He sent out a nice letter to the coaches explaining why. Last season we chose to skip the day for spring break, and he received as many complaints so he tries to encourage coaches to have someone help out, if they will have enough players in town, and the main coach may be out of town. He will go directly from soccer into T-ball; the deadline for T-ball is April 30.

Lindsay interjected and passed around an events calendar that list all of the special events for 2008.

Brian reported that he has also been doing seasonal interviews for the greenway workers program. The greenway workers will mainly pick up blown debris, and litter along the trail and in the trees. His staff is working on repairing a piece of trail at I-Lan Park that was damaged during the construction phase that wasn't anything major. They will also repair a piece of playground equipment. He also reported that he is working on playground safety surface repair at City Park. Over the years, he is starting to see some of the first course starting to weather off in some places. It will lead to the stuff underneath it not being as well glued, and he thinks it will get worse. The method is to cut areas and replace and match as close as they can, but this fades out over time.

Staff is still working on the design issues at the trail on 123rd and Mission. Chris came out with Brian to review how the trail would move a little bit in one spot and to look at the area of the hillside that collapsed as it has gotten worse. He's asked the soil engineer at Terracon to look at it again to see if it needs to be extended.

Dr. Peppes asked about the additional expense. He asked if we would incur an additional \$50k or \$100k. Brian said he is unsure without actually bidding it. The plan was to get the design done and bid it in April and then get the pricing in, with hopes to be done by July. If the weather cooperates it could be earlier but August would be the worst case.

According to Chris it has failed even more with very little asphalt left on the trail in about a ten foot section. The whole piece has slide down the hill to the east.

Dr. Peppes asked what people do in that area. Chris reported that it is closed and people in that area have to come down Mission or drive down to Tomahawk Park and park to access the trail. He asked if people can't just jump on there. According to Brian they have been taking the fence down and sometimes do go up there. Amy Vlastic added that it is pretty tough on a bike. Chris added that it is very dangerous. Brian reported that it is well posted and there are barricades up before the actual failure and further down notifying patrons that the trail is closed. There is orange snow fence up at the street and at the park with a barricade up from tree to tree. It would have to be taken down to get in.

Brian also reported about a water issue with the state. He reported that they irrigate City Park from the creek. The creek fills the pond and the pond pumps water to the soccer fields. The city was given 13 million gallons of water, which is not enough to water 40 acres of turf grass. This is not realistic. Brian's understanding was that the City had a certain amount of time to establish how much water they were actually using, but according to a letter from the water department, we only had that amount of time to establish that we would use that much (13) gallons of water.

Brian contacted them and it isn't a big issue. We are currently using 16 million gallons of water and the previous year, and the water usage depends on how dry the year is. The water company told Brian that the City can apply for a secondary water permit, which can be added later.

Dr. Peppes asked how big a deal it is to apply for the second one. And, does it cost money. According to Brian, it does cost money, but it is not a huge amount, he believes it is less than \$1,000. He will have them come out to inspect the sight and perform a field test of our pump, something they have never done before.

Brian reported on "Porch Lights"; the only thing standing in the way is the weather to allow them to work with the concrete footing and the lighting issue. They want to use solar lights and we finally were able to look at what they were proposing to use and Brian doesn't feel it is a good commercial type system. He asked Chris what he should do about it. She supported the idea of telling them to provide us with a price for dedicated lighting from a power source and we are waiting on this.

Chris reported that we didn't want to get ourselves in a situation like we have had with Llloppi. We don't want to change bulbs all the time, nor do we want any maintenance problems. She asked them to provide other options, and this is where we currently are.

Brian also reported that Overland Park will widen Indian Creek to alleviate some of the flooding at Fox Hill, which will also help the land north of I-435, and west of Mission. They are going to lift that area up out of the flood plain. When they studied the creek at Mission, south of Lee, there is a bottle neck of the creek that causes water to back up. He also reported that they have to do some work on our land on the north side of the creek on the east side of Mission, which will cause the trail to be torn out and re-built. This will result in some elevation changes. They will lessen the grades on the trail that we have now and it will be easier to ride or to walk, which is good. Brian reported that his main concern is their timing. They are discussing doing this in July, which is not good in regards to our July 4th celebration. They will also have to haul dirt back and forth along the road which is a concern with the heavy traffic going to and from the park for the pool and other activities.

Dr. Peppes asked if the area south of I-435 will flood. He wondered if it would be in the flood plain more so now than what it was before. Chris replied that the portion they are giving to Overland Park could potentially flood in an event, but should not flood on our property.

Mark asked who is doing the work. Chris reported that the City of Overland Park is in charge. Mark asked if it is a SMAC project. Chris said she does not think so.

Dr. Peppes asked if the work will be done in a timely fashion. Chris reported that she believes that the City of Overland Park is initiating it. Brian reported that they have been working with Joe Johnson of Public Works as well. We are working with him to ensure that the details for the park land are addressed. They also discussed a permanent easement, so they are able to maintain the area so it will not silt in.

Chris replied that this will have to be presented to the council but she does not know in what format they are proposing it.

Chris reported that Dr. Ann Kenney, the Art in Public Places Initiative Chair, and also of the Arts Council is present now, so we will table the rest of the staff reports so that she and April can present the proposed art for City Park.

Ann passed around a photograph of the actual pieces of artwork. She reported that the soccer players will be up on a pedestal that will be on mounded earth. The runners will be on a 12 ft pole. She also reported that she doesn't see how anyone could get hurt, or can hurt the artwork. They are made of aluminum and are powder coated (paint).

Chris reported that the artist is Jorge Blanco from Sarasota, Florida. Chris asked a question regarding if the art piece will be lit. According to Ann, they will have to have lighting. If nothing else, they will show better and possibly prevent vandalism. There are two locations that where the art will be placed. One location is up on the hill near the two twin shelters on the east side of the park. The other location is north and west of the Lions shelter, not on the soccer field, but also not real close to the Lions fountain.

As Ann mentioned, they want to mound it, add concrete and set the piece on there. Chris asked Ann if they want to take this to the council April 7. Ann said yes, the 7th.

Dan Mahanke asked if the pieces are made for children to climb on because he is sure that children will try.

According to Ann, they are not, and according to the artist said they are very smooth and no one can be hurt on them. They are two-dimensional and flat but they do not have any sharp edges.

Chris added that we are definitely not saying to anyone that they are available to climb on but we must recognize that people will. The pedestals and runners on the east end are too tall for anyone to get to, but they will be able to get to the soccer player.

April reported that the hope is to have the pieces installed in the fall during soccer season and have enamel pins made for the soccer players to have of the sculpture. The hope is to make this as exciting for the soccer players as possible. It should also be visible from the highway and the Lee bridge.

Chris stressed that in order to get this to the council by the 7th of April, there needs to be a recommendation to accept the locations and once the council agrees they can get the artist under contract. She opened the floor for questions. The pieces are fun and whimsical. She has seen some in the medians in Sarasota, Florida where the artist lives. Ann agreed and thinks families will enjoy them as they go out to do lively things together and she feels they are right for the park.

Amy Vlastic made a motion to accept the sights for the particular art pieces. Mark Mergen seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting continued with the remaining staff reports.

Kim reported that she has been busy working on budgets and trying to get this finished to present to Chris tomorrow. She also reported that the department underwent a major upgrade with RecTrac, MainTrac and WebTrac. We should be able to do gift cards by the end of the year for programs etc. She helped Lindsay with swim and dive registrations and there are actually a few spots left. Non-residents/new member registration is tomorrow. Kim has met with Lindsay on a regular basis to get her up to speed to completely turn the pool over to her. She has also been working with The First Tee getting their summer programs scheduled for the golf course.

Karen Reimer asked who the parent rep for the swim team board. Kim reported that it is Kimberly Dodd. We have a great board, - some wonderful “doers” that are excited about it.

Karen Reimer asked if there were a lot of younger swimmers. According to Kim, there are.

Chris reported that a request was submitted to Scott Lambers, our City Administrator for a new position for parks and recreation in the 2009 budget- an Arborist II. We will ask the council to approve this. The current need is someone who can run the bucket truck and handle all of the issues with the trees etc., as well as be a contact “resource” for information for homes associations.

Chris also gave an update of the golf course. She reported that things are moving along. The clubhouse is nearing complete. It looks really nice and a lot of problems on the inside were fixed during the renovation. She also reported that we are looking for a supplier for the zoysia grass that will be needed in some of the fairways. The bunkers are also being filled and Pete is starting to work on the other “detail” work around the course preparing for the opening in late May.

She reported that the 60th anniversary committee met last night. Things are going really well. Gary Flick with the Lions has already secured fifteen or sixteen units for the parade that will be held on November 8. The gala party with the D.J. will be Friday night November 7th at the Lodge, probably from 7-11p.m. The event will include dancing, food, and music. It is going to be a real celebration.

She reported that the next event is on March 29. The Lions will provide all soccer kids in uniform with a free hot dog. This is a good will gesture on behalf of the Lions and should be a lot of fun.

Chris also reported that on June 8, from 1-3, the Lions will do a rededication of the Lions shelter and the fountain with an ice cream social. She is working with Kevin Jeffries on doing something in conjunction with the Taste of Leawood. Also, Associate Pastor of the Church of the Resurrection, Clayton Smith, is heading up hosting a luncheon or dinner for all of the pastors from the churches in Leawood so they can discuss the history of their church in the community.

Chris reported that the Garden Club will do a cookbook. Currently there are 182 recipes for the book. There are a lot of fun things that the committee is going to do. Check the city's website for a complete list of events.

II. View Final Draft of Survey for Community Center

Chris passed out a draft of the Feasibility Study citizen survey, on a potential future Community Center, and asked the board to take a few moments to look it over. This is a draft that hasn't been approved by the governing body yet, but will be on the April 7 agenda. Chris reported that some changes were made to make sure it was personalized to our situation. The consultant has guaranteed 400 returns (100 per ward). The survey implementation will take 5-6 weeks. She would like to ask any board member to come to the meeting if you can make it.

Karen Reimer made a suggestion of adding an optional place to include a name of the person completing the survey. If we have their contact information, a thank you note could be sent to them thanking them for taking the time to complete it.

Amy Vlasic asked if board members are eligible to complete the survey. Chris reported that they are eligible to complete the survey if it comes to their household.

Mark Mergen made a motion to accept the draft with changes that were added. Bob Wright seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

IV. Update On Ironwoods Park Buildings

Brian reported the contractors are getting started working again. The original superintendent is back on the job. They will have to take out three trees and move the sanitary line slightly behind the cabins. He will meet tomorrow to get a rough idea to look at what it will take to put gravel down to rebuild the road to go back to the maintenance building. Public works will complete this project to save money for the city. It looks like they are hoping to be done in Mid July. They should get moving pretty quickly.

V. Update on Lake Renovation at Ironwoods Park

Chris reported that the lake renovation is looking good. She will e-mail the board pictures tomorrow that she received from Continental Engineers.

Brian reported that the contractor has been really good to work with. There is an area behind the creek channel that is high compared to where the weirs are located. They will dig it down a little bit to straighten it out so water flows more regular through there. According to Chris they have been aggressive despite the rain events. Their target completion date is June 1st.

Brian reported that the overall depth of the pond will be 9 ft. Chris reported that previous to this in some areas it was 2ft or 6 inches. The lake will now be able to support habitat and fish.

Amy Vlasic asked if it will be stocked. Brian reported that it will be stocked by the state on a routine basis.

VI. Update on Gezer Park

Chris reported that staff is pushing Gezer progress hard. Brian went over the plans. There were some concerns from the pond (the fountain to hold the art piece) and where the restrooms are. All of these concerns were sent to Dennis last week, and he hasn't replied.

April reported that there is an art show at M&I bank coming up on Good Friday. The invitations will go out soon. Tea with Shakespeare is to take place in the middle of April and it is almost sold out. If you are interested in going, please act quickly.

She reported that a lady that resides in the Oxford Township is a trustee and has an extensive history on the area. They would like to have a historical marker in Ironwoods Park near the Schoolhouse. In the Arts Council meeting, they discussed putting a sign up near the service road towards the cabins on the down side of the hill. Possibly a map of the township with some stone benches and list the seven points they would like to have highlighted about the area.

April was asked to present this to the Park Board to see if they would be interested in making this happen. This group has some funding. The foundation has some money, and the historic commission would probably get a grant for the rest.

April opened the floor for discussion and if this is something that should be pursued.

Chris asked how big the sign would be. According to April it would not have to be large, it could be a small plaque on a stone pedestal.

Dr. Peppes asked would it just be a historic landmark, or would it tell a story.

April reported that it would tell a little story.

Brian suggested placing it over by the playground. He feels it is really congested by the schoolhouse.

Mark Mergen thinks this is a really good idea. Also, Chris feels it is worth investigating and would be interesting, but agrees with the location Brian suggested would be the best place for it.

Karen Reimer asked if it is a possibility to have a Leawood landscape architect to come in and propose 2-3 different designs to make sure it is done correctly. Karen has several names of Leawood architects that may be able to donate time to this project.

April also reported that she met today with Kevin Cowan, the architects in charge of the amphitheatre master plan. The architects are looking at other facilities that are similar that we can explore to see what is working, what hasn't worked, and how they maintain them. Once this is done, they will host a design charette with the amphitheatre steering committee.

She reported that a park board representative may want to be a part of the design charette. We will basically give them the detail of what we are anticipating and they will go out and create the design.

April also reported that auditions for "Annie Get Your Gun" will be held at City Hall on March 29 and 30th in the Oak room.

VII. Discuss Interest in Dog Park

Chris reported that a goal from the councils work session is to explore the opportunity for a dog park in Leawood.

Chris noticed on a web-site today that they will be opening a dog park in the vicinity of 135th and Metcalf.

Brian passed around an e-mail from Bill Cobb, the Superintendent of parks for Johnson County Parks and Recreation District. They have several dog parks. This is from a couple of years ago, but states 11 points that you need to consider if you are contemplating opening a dog park.

Brian reported that in his opinion we don't have enough land to have a dog park that would have ample parking and be able to run it right.

He added that in the event we are able to find enough land to do this, he would suggest having a control mechanism like at City Hall and the pet would have to be registered in Leawood. He feels it is a good idea to make it a Leawood only park.

He suggested having a swipe system where you would have to swipe in and out to use the park. Dr. Peppes added that it would have to be dedicated only for this. You could certainly not have children playing anywhere near the area.

According to Dr. Peppes, as limited as we are on green space in Leawood, he would rather see a park for children to play versus a dog park.

Chris reported that if we are able to do this, it would be good to consider it only being used by Leawood residents, but this should be thought out. Chris and Brian feel that the only potential place is the 11 acres east of the wastewater plant where we store mulch, etc.

Chris asked the board to table this for further direction. She will ask Scott if she should pursue further discussion on this.

Amy suggested adding it to the survey to see if residents would be interested in having a dog park.

It was agreed that the board will bring additional suggestions and opinions to a future meeting.

Amy Vlastic made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Mergen seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department