

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – March 10, 2009
5:30 p.m. – Maple Room

Board members in attendance were, Jacquie McKinney, Amy Vlastic, Mark Mergen, Doug Stevens, and Rod Crawford and Council liaison Jim Rawlings.

Staff members in attendance were Chris Claxton, Kim Curran, Brian Anderson, Brock Shafer, Jeff Peterson, Cody Kennedy, Lindsay Youle, Tonia Morgan, Dan Mahanke, and April Bishop.

In the absence of chair Karen Reimer, Jacquie McKinney called the meeting to order at 5:42p.m

Mark Mergen made a motion to approve the February 10, 2009 meeting minutes. Amy Vlastic seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Draft of Ordinance – Profiting from Park Facilities

Chris reported that Patty Bennett, the City Attorney suggested to take the existing ordinance and amend it rather than creating a new one. This is in reference to the discussion of the ordinance to regulate using parks and recreation (city) facilities for profit. Patty also suggested including language in the ordinance that would allow this under certain conditions, if that might ever be an option.

Amy Vlastic asked how you would decide when the time would be to grant permission.

Chris reported that you could situations that have the biggest potential.

Chris reported that an example would be boot camp. If there were a written agreement with the City to work with them, this might be acceptable.

Chris passed out a copy of the ordinance revision “draft” that was sent to the committee prior to tonight’s meeting via e-mail that she and Patty revised.

Mark Mergen asked what the staff thinks of this.

Kim reported that it is something that we need to manage.

Amy Vlastic asked if it is enforceable.

Kim reported that it is, within reason.

Amy Vlastic suggested notifying the police department prior to an approved event.

Chris reported that we should allow some variance to the ordinance to avoid the need to go to the council for each situation. It will also allow us to place the ordinance where it is likely to happen, i.e. the tennis courts.

Mark? asked if the ordinance would prohibit the ice cream vendor from selling in the park.

Chris reported that they are allowed to sell in the park, but the ordinance was changed a couple of years ago to prohibit them from doing so during certain city sponsored events.

Brian reported that allowing an ice cream vendor to sell during the pool season takes away from pool concessions. If they sell at a park where there aren't concession areas, this is fine, but the concession at the pool loses money when this is allowed at City Park.

Amy Vlastic made a motion to recommend the city ordinance revision as proposed. Rod Crawford seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Chris reported that this will be on the April 20th council agenda.

B. Gezer Park Update

Brian reported that the pond is full but draining. It should be empty by the end of the week.

The contractor is ready to put the fly ash down and will lay more gravel.

Brian also reported that they received some shelter door frames that have been on order for awhile. The two buildings should be progressing quickly within the next two weeks.

Brian discussed the problem they were having with the soils at the pond, as reported at the February meeting. He is happy to report that a simpler remedy has been determined and the estimated of \$40,000 is now slightly above \$27,000.

Brian reported that the Geo Technical Engineer suggested treating the top foot with fly ash and modify the soil. The engineer also suggested adding 15% fly ash to the foot of soil to keep it from swelling and shrinking.

Brian also reported that it won't change the depth from the original plan and will save a lot of money. He reported that more landscape will be kept than originally planned.

Brian reported that Council approved the change order to allow putting the parking lot lighting back in. A generator that was to be purchased was moved back in order to make way for this expense. This will avoid coming in later and doing damage to the wadi. It will be better to get it done.

Brian reported that the rain last night caused the flag stones that were sitting in the wadi to wash up in some areas of contraction. Unfortunately it will have to be cleaned out. There are segments that aren't done because they have to drive back and forth through it, which may have contributed to it. The architect will look at this to avoid it from happening again in the event of a major rain storm.

Chris reported that she and the Gezer Park Development Committee meet every two weeks. There are two new additions to the committee, Bruce Steinberg and Julie Bartels-

Smith. Julie will be responsible for some of the public relation efforts and Bruce will be assisting with networking and cultural accuracy.

Chris reported that committee members Alice Hawk and Julie Cain reported at the last committee that they have heard some concern from citizens about the cost of the park, but does not think that Mayor Dunn has heard any.

Chris reported that the committee is trying to educate people and make them aware that the park was budgeted and additional funds were proposed against it primarily due to figures given early on by the architect at the time being below real costs.

Chris reported that they also discussed identifying fundraising opportunities. The playground equipment and its surface will cost \$100,000 to \$150,000. Chris will scan and e-mail a copy of the proposed equipment to all committee members.

Chris also reported that a great suggestion from Council Member Gill is to have a dual tree donation program. If someone donates \$1,000, one tree will be planted in our park and one in Gezer. This would also help replenish some of the landscaping.

Chris reported that Steve Burnstein, from the Gezer region and former Overland Park resident, will attend the next Gezer Park Committee meeting.

Brian reported that his plans are to take him on site and get his feedback.

Chris reported that everyone on the committee has been doing a lot of research and have been very helpful. Karen Reimer is working on the interpretive signage for educational purposes.

Mark Mergen asked if the Lions Club will be involved with the signage.

Chris reported that Alice contacted them. The signs are roughly \$2-\$3,000 each and are museum quality.

C. Green Initiative Update

Brian reported that his staff will place recycling barrels at City Park and every shelter in all of the parks. Hopefully this will encourage people to start collecting recycling in our parks.

Chris said that Pete is also working on a similar initiative at the golf course.

Brian reported that he is meeting with the representative from a recycling company who charge a \$25.00 fee each time they pick up and empty our recycling dumpsters.

Brian reported that the company offered to pay us money if they can store a recycling paper retriever at the parks shop. Brian reported this will be nice to generate some money.

Chris reported that currently we pay a Shred It Company to take our papers that we recycle. It would be nice to have another alternative for items of a non-sensitive/privacy matter.

Brian reported that they will build enclosures for the paper retriever and eco dumpster so they are out of sight and follow the city ordinances and codes.

Chris reported the Green Initiative Task force met last week. There was an essay contest about recycling. All of the Catholic grade schools participated but none of the public schools.

They will award one winner from each school and one overall winner.

Chris reported that there is an E-Shred event that we will participate in with Overland Park. It will be held April 25 at Shawnee Mission South from 8am-2p.m. 100 volunteers are needed. This is a great event for scouts or anyone looking for community service hours.

Councilman Rawlings reported that there are shifts available if you aren't able to volunteer all day.

II. New Business

A. Staff Reports

Brock reported that Spring Break Camp starts next week. The camp is doing a lot better than the Holiday Camp in the winter. Registrations are nearly full on three of the five days.

Brock reported that Senior Lunch is Thursday. The numbers have increased recently which is great. Several new people have attended lately. He hopes to continue to gain new people.

Brock also reported that there are two new sessions began last week, Tae Kwon Do and Ballroom Dancing. He is happy to report that the classes are working out well.

Brock reported that he is busy working on summer programming and staffing.

Brock also reported that he attended an area meeting with area JTL participants. It was a very informative meeting. Hopefully tennis will be a strong program this year.

Jeff reported that there's been a big increase in calls since the program guide was sent out.

Jeff reported that he is busy working on cabin preparation. There are a lot of cabin rentals for the upcoming season.

Jeff also reported that he's received a lot of scouts program calls and birthday party inquiries.

He is hoping to get more groups during the week. The weekends generally fill quickly.

Jeff reported that he is busy interviewing for challenge course facilitators and cabin/nature center attendants.

Jeff reported that the Spring Cleanup will be held March 28 at Tomahawk Creek Parkway. The time is 1-4. There are currently 7-80 participants enrolled in the program.

Jeff reported that he will attend Passport to Adventure located at Bass Pro Shop. in Olathe.

It is the interpretative sight coalition and the Oxford School is a new member beginning this year. The new passport books will be stamped with the Nature Center and The Schoolhouse.

Jeff reported that they are working with four Eagle Scouts. He is able to keep two of the scout's busy working with the butterfly garden with the generous donations from Jack Lawless that average \$5 them busy. One of the scouts is busy working on the primitive trail. The other scout is busy working on the benches and updating the bubbling rock.

April reported that she has been extremely busy at the school house with school field trips.

April reported that the Life Story Writing Class has been fabulous and they best thing, by far, that she's done. The registrations were so full; the class was separated into two classes.

April also reported that a session was held recently with the playwright for Mary & Myra. She flew in from New York City last week and was very impressed with Leawood. There was a huge turnout for this event with a lot of new faces. It will be good to include their names on the mailing list for future events.

April reported that the first art show will be held Friday at M&I Bank. It begins at 5:30p.m.

April reported that there will be a studio tour the following weekend, there will be a studio tour to Crossroads. There aren't many reservations at this time so a bus may not be needed. If anyone is interested in joining, please let April know. The cost is \$35.00, which includes transportation and lunch. April reported that if the registrations remain low, she may go ahead and just charge for lunch and everyone can provide their own transportation.

Chris asked April if she will promote this event at the art show on Friday.

April reported that she will encourage people to sign up.

April reported that Brigadoon auditions will be held the last weekend of March. She recently met with the Highland Dance Studio in Leawood. They are all interested in participating.

April asked committee members to spread the word about the auditions for anyone interested in dancing, singing, and/or acting. Please encourage them to audition.

April reported that Tea with Shakespeare will be April 26th in the Oak Room. It is filling quickly. If you are interested in attending, you may want to sign up quickly.

Cody reported that he has been busy hiring seasonal staff. He sent letters today to his camp staff. He is working on National Trails Day and the Fourth of July events. He is working with the Overland Park Parks & Recreation Department and the Johnson County 50 plus Club. The event is the first Saturday in June.

Dan reported that he has been busy with soccer. The season starts March 21. There are currently over 1800 children registered.

Dan also reported that registrations for T-Ball have begun. He is surprised to receive so many calls so early. Teams are already forming and the deadline isn't until the end of April.

Lindsay reported that swim and dive registrations have been very busy. This was the first year for on-line registration. Forty-three percent of the registrations took advantage of this. This has worked out extremely well. She's received great feedback about this.

Lindsay reported that she looks forward to more people doing on-line registration in the future to avoid coming in and standing in line. There are approximately ten spots remaining for swim team and twenty-five for dive team. She is hoping to have a full team this year.

Lindsay also reported that she has hired most of her seasonal staff. The only positions left to fill are for lifeguards.

Lindsay reported that Eggstravaganza will be Sunday, April 5th at City Park.

Lindsay also reported that there will be two movie nights. The first event will be in conjunction with Park Place and they will host the event. It will be Friday, April 24. This is a free event. The movie that will be shown is "E.T. the Extraterrestrial". Lindsay encouraged committee members to come with blankets come enjoy this event. The rain date is Saturday, April 25th.

Lindsay reported that the second event will be a dive-in movie night at the pool. The featured movie will be "Surfs Up".

Kim reported that summer enrollment started last Friday. Seventy-five percent of registrations are being done on-line. This works out very well and frees Sally up to answer questions and take incoming phone calls more efficiently.

Kim also reported that she is working on 2010 budgets.

Kim reported that The First Tee beginner level is near full with all Leawood residents. Non-resident registration will begin Thursday. This program continues to grow in popularity

Brian reported that he hired a new Landscape Supervisor, Dustin Branick. He brings a strong horticultural and background to the City and is very knowledgeable in insect and disease diagnosis as well as landscaping. Dustin will bring a fresh prospective. He replaces Mike Noll who worked for the City for many years and retired in December.

Brian also reported that his crew will be busy cleaning the trails from the significant storm damage this past Saturday. There was also a tree that lodged against the 119th St trail bridge that will need to be removed.

Brian reported that 10 ft of the trail at the North Lake, south of College, was also buckled and will need repair. When it dries it will be cut out and the repaved.

Brian reported that he's been interviewing seasonal applicants. The economy has had improved the number and quality of candidates he's received. The seven available openings can easily be filled with the applicants he's received so far. The seasonal employees generally start work the first week of April and typically last until November.

Brian also reported that a lot of the summer crew from last year is returning which is great.

Brian reported that the Heartland Tree Alliance (through MARC) contacted him and asked if he would be interested in displaying tree signs for Arbor Day. The signs will show the value of the tree will return to the community and energy saving information. The signs will be displayed for a month and then removed.

Councilman Rawlings reported that he has seen these signs before and is very impressed to learn all of the information the signs offer. The signs are very effective.

Brian reported that he will work along with Jeff and Blue Valley High on Arbor Day, Friday, April 24, 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., for an Arbor Day event. The high school students will assist with tree planting and general clean up of the park.

Brian reported that lunch will be provided for the volunteers. He invited the committee for lunch if their schedules permit. The Mayor will attend the lunch to thank them for their hard work.

Chris reported that there wasn't any damage to the golf course from the storm. There was a small amount of flooding, but it was free of debris.

Chris reported that she worked diligently with Orion to increase communication about the golf course. She passed out a copy of a newsletter that was created in house that will be mailed and also available on the website explaining what is going on at the golf course. The content of the newsletter is educational as well as informational. It will be distributed quarterly.

Chris also reported that there will be a legislative luncheon tomorrow in Topeka to discuss the alcohol tax. There will be a short presentation and discussion on the impact it will have on the communities if the money is taken. Typically, smaller communities and recreation commissions will feel the affect more because funding is lower.

Chris reported that the shade structures at city park baseball fields and the shelter at Ironwoods Park will not be constructed this year, as a result of this.

Jacque McKinney asked the amount the City of Leawood receives.

Chris reported that the City of Leawood receives approximately \$900,000, which is split three ways between, parks and recreation, police DARE program, and the general fund.

B. KCMPRDA Park Board Banquet 3/26

Chris reported that the deadline to R.S.V.P. for the banquet is Monday. If you are interested in attending and haven't replied, please let Chris know.

Jacque McKinney asked if the committee plans on carpooling.

Chris reported that it is up to committee members if they plan to do this. Staff that plans to attend lives outside of the city, so we will drive independently.

Chris also reported that she will send another reminder out for those that are undecided.

C. 2009/2010 Budget

Chris reported that they have internally made adjustments to manage the budget through a combination of reduction expenses and/or fee increases.

Chris reported that there was a delay of vehicles this year as a result of potential action in Topeka.

Someone asked whether the economy is having any effect on the recreation programs.

Chris reported that we have not noticed any decrease in participation but said that a great indicator will be during the pool season when attendance is determined.

Chris reported that the Council decided that there won't be any new positions in 2010. This will make taking care of Gezer Park to our standards very difficult for Parks Maintenance, as it will be up and running in just a few short months. The arborist position approved for 2009, is on hold until July.

Chris also reported that the budget is due to Finance on April 3rd.

C. Discuss Possible Playground at Brook Beatty Park

Chris reported that Councilmember Fila was contacted regarding why there isn't a playground up in the north portion of the city, specifically Brook Beatty Park, located at 86th and Lee.

Chris was asked to discuss this with the Parks Advisory Board to research if this could be done.

Chris replied that if this were a possibility, it would have to be a small playground based on the size of the park, minimally.

Brian reported that a small park could be put there, but parking would definitely be an issue. The only option would be to park on the street.

Chris reported that it would be nice to have for the residents who live there, but agreed that parking would be a challenge.

Chris reported that there are future plans for the Historic Commission to take over the old City Hall and turn it into a museum. No decision has been made about what to do with the old police station once the justice center is constructed, but if it were taken down, this could be a nice location for a small park that could include a playground. Parking would already exist and would be about the right size to service the area.

Jacque McKinney reported that the citizen who contacted the City should be notified that we are researching this, and it is a great idea, and we are trying to find a location because parking is an issue.

D. Misc.

Chris reported that the electric meter is in and is "live" at Porch Lights so the glass pieces should be lit. She will drive by tonight to verify that the lights are on.

Chris reported that there is some concern about the bulbs. The leaves get in the cavities of the stone and it needs to be researched to make sure they don't catch on fire.

April reported that there are ballots available in the program guide and at the front desk to name the Blanco sculptures at City Park for those who would like to vote. The names will be selected April 18 during the dedication.

Brian reported that all of the light components are in to re-light Lllooppi. He will paint the pole during warmer weather.

Mark Mergen reported that he is on the Public Policy Committee for NRPA. They are encouraging everyone to talk with your State Representatives. Nationally, they are hoping to show the impact and there has been legislation that would exclude parks from being funded.

Mark reported that the NRPA lobbyist have done a good job to get some of the money to the Parks and Recreation department. These things are important.

Jacque asked Chris if she has a list of e-mail correspondence of the representatives and if so, to provide the committee with this information.

Chris reported that she will locate the list and will send it out to the committee members soon.

Jacque reported that the committee members can e-mail their representatives and share their thoughts.

Mark reported that this will have a huge impact for them to see a personal message.

Jacque thanked the Parks and Recreation Staff for all of their hard work.

Rod Crawford made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Mergen seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department