

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – April 14, 2009
5:30 p.m. – Prairie Oaks Nature Center

Board members in attendance were, Karen Reimer, Amy Vlastic, Mark Mergen, Doug Stevens, and Rod Crawford, as well as 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.

Doug Stevens made a motion to approve the March 10, 2009 meeting minutes. Rod Crawford seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Guest Jeromy Ratlidge, a member of the Historic Commission was also present.

I. Old Business

A. Gezer Park Update

Brian reported that the other half of the pond floor was poured today. The next step will be to pour the walls for the outside edges and backfill it, then start setting the stones that will outline the perimeter.

Brian reported that they are working on closing off the roof of the restroom building.

Brian also reported that they are waiting on the Jerusalem stone to arrive. It is in the United States but will have to go through customs, which may take a while.

Mark Mergen asked how it is tracked to see where it is.

Chris reported that the contractor has a tracking number which reports the location of the stone.

Brian reported that the stone will go around the columns of the shelter house when it arrives but so far, the shelter is near completion.

Brian reported that they are roughing in the plumbing in the bathroom, but no toilet fixtures have been set as of this point.

Brian also reported that the wadi continues to receive damage from water getting underneath the liner and causing the stones to rise. He is trying to figure out what needs to be done to keep the water from causing a hydraulic pressure buildup and causing this problem.

Brian reported that the parking lot lights have been ordered. They may be one of the last things to complete because they are custom cut.

Brian reported that the contractor wanted to keep their crews busy on pathways so they offered to pour concrete instead of asphalt. They began doing this, and staff agreed that it is a much better look, more durable, and has a longer life than asphalt.

Chair Karen Reimer asked Brian if we are ahead of schedule or behind schedule.

Brian reported that the last time he met with the contractor we were on schedule providing there aren't any delays. The contractor predicts a completion date the first week of June.

Brian also reported that the contractor discussed losing available time while they were trying to amend the soils and make the pond work. They've stressed that there are some concerns in this aspect, but still feel that they will meet the completion date.

Chris reported that there was a Gezer meeting on the 27th of March. They discussed completing the press release and making the playground the number one fundraising opportunity. The committee is looking at \$150K for three phases of playground that would include some poured in place product., The structure and the swings will be combined on phase 1. The archeological digging pit will be phase 2. The third aspect will be the boulders with the ropes.

Chris reported that she met with Alice Hawk who is working along with Chris with the foundation discussed preparing a draft packet that is due Friday.

Chris also reported that Julie Bartels-Smith, who is also on the committee and has a communications company, is helping with the final press release.. This has a lot of valuable data and will hopefully assist people in understanding the parks better.

Chris reported that Julie also has great ideas for talking points in case it gets picked up for an article with media.

Chris reported that some may question if it's a good idea to spend such a large amount of money in the current economy. She noted that there are many projects that many municipalities are moving forward with.

Chris also reported that there is value to the fact that the land was donated. Ten acres of land in that location is worth a considerable amount of money.

Chris reported that the delegation visit for Gezer has been postponed from May to sometime between September 15 and October 15. She is hopeful for the tablet to arrive by this time. Once the tablet arrives, the footings will need to be designed and bid then installed.

April Bishop introduced Jeremy Ratlidge, a member of the Historic Commission who will present the design information for the Oxford Township sign they are proposing for the park. He will make his presentation during the New Business portion of the meeting.

Chris welcomed Jeremy to the meeting and looks forward to his presentation.

B. Green Initiative Update

Brian reported that they have been working diligently with placing the recycle containers at the park and in City Hall. All of the shelters currently have recycle containers.

Brian reported that the area that will house the big recycle container where the plastics and cans will be dumped is on site but the wooden structure needs to be built and asphalt torn out to complete the project. He will work on this as soon as weather clears up and it is not raining.

Brian reported he is working on the final logo for the front of the cans. A decision will hopefully be made soon.

Brian reported that it has rained so much lately that we have had two soccer Saturdays cancelled and his crew hasn't had a chance to check to see if people are truly utilizing the recycle bins properly. He hopes to check on them as soon as the rain subsides.

Chris reported that there is a lot of activity at the Green Initiative Committee meetings. They are still working towards a bicycle friendly initiative. They hoped to have the work session June 1, but has been moved back a month to July. Chris reported that this will allow more time to gather information. She will make this correction on the website.

Chris reported that there will be an E-Shred event at Shawnee Mission South. The event will be held from 10:00a.m. – 3:00p.m. on the 25th.

Chris reported that there will be a tent during Freaky Fall Fest and the committee members will pass out literature that people can post in their garage with valuable information regarding scary products in your home.

Chris reported that there was discussion about Brooke Beatty Park and a playground. Chris informed Councilmember Debra Fila that it was discussed at the last Park Board meeting and there was concern about challenges with parking as well as space at the site.

Chris reported that this led to a discussion about the Estates of Old Leawood (a residential development at the old Country Club). Chris reminded the committee that one of the stipulations when it was built was that a play structure had to be put in. She informed the group that most of the infrastructure is in, but they have not constructed any homes yet. There is a lot of work yet to be done.

Chris reported that this also brought up the discussion of having a rain garden in that area.

Chris reported that she would not potentially be opposed to this option but will need more information. Once more detail is determined, it can be discussed at a future Park Board meeting.

Chris reported that the Essay Contest is complete and the winners will be recognized by the Mayor on April 20 at the City Council Meeting.

II. New Business

A. Discuss Signage Location and Style for Oxford Township Sign in Ironwoods Park

April reported that the Historic Commission was approached a year ago by a Trustee from the Oxford Township, in regards to placing a sign visible in the park that would discuss the history of the area.

April reported that they met with Scott Fanning, of the parks department and decided on a location.

April reported that the location is in the open flat space on the northwest corner of the parking lot above the playground area near the amphitheater by the path. This is a great visibility spot but not in the way of park activity.

April reported that guest Jeremy Rutledge is a fairly new member of the Historic Commission and has a scout who is preparing for his Eagle and will be in charge of fundraising efforts and the construction of the sign with the guidance of Scott Fanning.

Jeremy Rutledge reported that he is making the report on his sons behalf that is sick and unable to attend the meeting.

Jeremy Rutledge reported that he works at Walton Construction and has an architect friend who volunteered to complete the drawing of the proposed sign. He will provide the committee with handouts as soon as they are available.

Jeremy reported that the proposal is to complete a two-sided triangular sign built in the same style as the existing signage throughout the park. It was suggested not to paint the frames of the signs, but make them out of cedar and sealed a natural color. This would help significantly with the maintenance of the sign.

Jeremy reported that the initial construction would be in his workshop at his home by five-six scouts who will assist his son with his Eagle project. His son has raised more than \$600.00 to fund the materials for the project. The initial estimate was \$650.00.

Rod Crawford asked if the wording for the signs has been determined or is this something the committee can have the opportunity to preview and approve. He would like to see the sign before it is installed.

April reported that the signs will be in groupings of Oxford Townships and how it relates to Kansas today.

Chair Karen Reimer asked how soon it will be installed.

Jeremy reported that installation will be in approximately 3-4 weeks.

Rod Crawford made a motion to approve the proposed location and the construction of the sign itself, with the copy pending separate approval at a future date. Doug Stevens seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chris Claxton and the committee thanked Jeremy for coming and making a fine presentation.

B. Staff Reports

Brian reported that he is working with Jeff Peterson on an Arbor Day event that will be held at the shelter in Ironwoods Park on April 24. Blue Valley High School students will

volunteer from 9a.m – 1:30p.m. They will assist in planting sapling trees along the parking lot and cleaning up litter.

Brian reported that they will have a picnic lunch for the volunteers and any committee members and staff who would like to attend. The Mayor will also attend the lunch.

Brian reported that his staff put sod and landscaping around the new sculptures at City Park for the dedication.

Brian reported they fertilized the soccer fields last week and have sprayed for dandelions on Tomahawk Creek Parkway.

Brian also reported that they've treated pine trees for needle problems along with the crab apples.

Lindsay reported that the rescheduled Eggstravaganza event was held this past Friday. It rained all morning, which resulted in the fields being wet, but the sun came out in the afternoon and it was a really nice event. The activities weren't rescheduled but everyone had a really good time. The event started at 5:00p.m and ended shortly after. The original date was scheduled for Sunday, April 5, but it was snowing and sleeting that day.

Lindsay reported that April 24 is the first movie night at Park Place. The movie E.T. will be shown on a big screen in Barkley Square. All families are invited for this free event. Some restaurants will offer special discounts for people attending the event. The movie begins at 8:00p.m.

Lindsay also reported the second movie night will be held June 5 at the pool. It will be "Surf's Up"

Lindsay reported that she has been busy getting staff paperwork completed.

Cody reported that upgrades began today on the Maple Room at City Hall. Hopefully this will increase the appearance of the room, which will result in an increase in rentals.

Cody reported that he has also been busy completing summer employment paperwork and started summer intern position interviews today.

Cody reported that there are a lot of 2010 rentals scheduled on Fridays and Saturdays. He is happy to see that the rate increase didn't affect rentals negatively. It was a huge selling point to grandfather prices for those who already had a reservation and deposit in, and continues to go strong.

Jeff reported that the Tomahawk Trail Spring Clean-Up initially scheduled for March 28 was postponed until April 4. There was a much lower turn out on the second date with only 60-75 participants instead of the usual 200 +.

Jeff reported that Passport To Adventure was Sunday March 29. Jeff passed out a booklet to the committee members. There are 21 sites that participate and once the booklet is filled with the answers to all of the questions, it is brought in for free prize for the kids.

Jeff reported that it is a good way to get people in to the venues and is a good program for the kids, as well as being a good publication piece. The kickoff was at the Bass Pro Shop in Olathe and over 300 people attended, which resulted in a lot of calls for the Nature Center.

Jeff reported that the cabins are nearly full for the season, including many weeknights as well.

Jeff also reported that the challenge course is opening soon. There is a great group of staff members coming on board. Training will begin this weekend. The first open climb will be the last Friday of April.

Jeff also reported that there are a lot of birthday parties scheduled for the upcoming months. Several scout programs as well.

Jeff reported that the Eagle scouts are busy working on three different projects. They are working on a new granite bubbling rock, the primitive trail and planting the butterfly garden.

Brock reported that Spring Break Camp went really well. It was full for three days and half full the other two days.

Brock reported that summer programs are moving along. The JTL (Junior Tennis League) program is filling fast.

Brock reported that people are slowly registering for Tween Camp. Hopefully enrollment will increase soon.

Brock also reported that classes are moving along. There will be a new belly dancing class starting soon. He was contacted by an instructor who feels she can pull a lot of people from Prairie Life and another fitness center where she teaches because they no longer want to pay the membership fees just to be able to take her class.

Brock reported that he hopes this works out well with people only responsible for paying class fees instead of membership fees. Class will begin the week of April 20, with a Monday morning class and one class offered in the evening mid-week.

Brock reported that the Senior Lunch was held at Park Meadows located near Shawnee Mission South. They offered a free program with lunch and bingo. Twenty-six seniors attended. It was a nice event and a way to introduce our program to those that may not be aware of what Leawood has to offer for the seniors.

Brock also reported that the May senior event will be held at the Nature Center. The last times the seniors met at the Nature Center it was a very popular event. Hopefully doing two good programs back-to-back will help increase the numbers. It will be held at the Lodge.

Dan reported that he has been busy with soccer. We've experienced quite a bit of rain, but it hasn't resulted in many cancellations of practices or games, which is good.

Dan reported that there are 125 teams with over 1800 children signed up. He hopes this will continue to increase.

Dan reported that this will be the last fall to advance to second grade. The four and five year olds, Kindergarteners, first graders and second graders will all do 7 vs. 7 teams. The third graders will go back to 11 vs. 11.

Dan also reported that the T-ball registration deadline is April 26. He will be busy organizing teams for play to begin the week of June 2.

Kim reported that The First Tee junior golf instructional started last week at Ironhorse. The beginning level classes are full. Another class was added for summer. The mid-level classes aren't as full as she would like. She will send a blast e-mail again this weekend to past participants to encourage them to register.

Kim reported that she is recommending switching soft drink providers based on the recent bids by Coke and Pepsi. Pepsi offered a great deal that they couldn't refuse. This will be a great sponsorship opportunity.

Kim reported that she will present this to the City Council on the April 20.

Kim also reported that she is looking into upgrading Rec-trak. There is a new version available and we pay a yearly maintenance fee that includes an upgrade every year.

Kim reported that she is in the process of finishing the budgets and getting seasonal employees on payroll.

April reported that after the last meeting the first art show was held. It was quite the event and well attended.

April reported that "Brigadoon" auditions were held recently. The cast is ready to go. She is excited about the cast that was selected.

April also reported that the dedication for the new sculptures in City Park will be Saturday, April 18 at 2p.m. near the Lions shelter. April passed around ballots for committee members to cast their vote for the names of the sculptures. April invited everyone out to meet the artist who will be present at the dedication.

April reported that on Sunday, April 26 is Tea with Shakespeare. There are still seats available for this event if anyone is interested.

April reported that Laundry Day on the Prairie will be the next event at the Oxford School House. It will be held on Sunday, May 3rd. April will teach kids how to use wash boards and hanging clothes on the line.

April reported that there will be a reception in honor of Jessie Small on May 18 before the Council meeting. His art on loan art piece is located in the lobby of City Hall.

April also reported that there will be a dedication for Porch Lights at the end of May. It will be held at the site. More details will come at a later date.

C. Misc.

Mark Mergen reported that the banquet held at Starlight for Metro Park Board members was a really nice event and a lot of fun. It was nice to mingle with other Parks and Recreation Departments from both Kansas and Missouri.

Chris reported that she also thought it was a great event. She will offer one suggestion for future events to offer more interaction between board members from different areas.

Chris reported that the City of Leawood will be hosting the Areas Directors meeting on May 8, 2009. The event will be held at the Ironhorse Golf Course. She will present and discuss Gezer Park and the renovation of the golf course.

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

The meeting adjourned at 6:57p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department