

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2009
5:30 p.m. – Prairie Oaks Nature Center

Board members in attendance were, Karen Reimer, Mark Mergen, Doug Stevens, Rod Crawford and Bob Wright.

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

Rod Crawford made a motion to approve the April 14, 2009 meeting minutes. Bob Wright seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Gezer Park Update

Brian reported that construction is moving forward. The imported stone from Israel has arrived and has been installed on the shelter and restrooms. The cedar siding work which goes on the front of the restroom will begin soon. The two buildings are moving along well.

Brian reported that the bases for the light fixtures are in. The parking lot light fixtures should arrive soon. They are custom cut, which caused a bit of a delay.

Mark Mergen asked what the fixtures will look like.

Brian reported that they are more modern than he initially thought. They are unique with a mineral bronze finish with a circular disc in the middle and above.

Brian also reported that the backfilling work around the pond is near completion. The electrical bonding was tested today for potential static electric shock. The only problem issue is the wadie. Water is unable to get out of the sand layer quickly when it rains. This causes pressure build-up. As a result, the rubber liner inflates due to all of the water underneath. The flagstones in the bottom rise, which makes it appear that you are walking on a water bed.

Brian reported that a change order has been prepared to present to Council at the Monday meeting. The designers have decided it will require taking most of the wadie apart, which could cost an additional \$55K. The eastern two-thirds will be taken out and an under drain installed. They will also put in a storm sewer line on the western half of the park, south of the shelter house to capture rainfall. The work should be completed by mid June.

Chris reported that the Gezer Development Committee met yesterday morning. The donation/fundraising packets are complete. They are putting together a contact list and working with the Leawood Foundation and the Jewish Federation.

Chris also reported that the Press Release went out last Thursday. It received a lot of media response. Several news stations were there. There will also be an article will be in the Kansas City Star on Saturday. The Jewish Chronicle was also there. Pictures were taken and a story will be featured soon. The next Gezer Park meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 26th at 7:30 am..

B. Green Initiative Update

Chris reported that the Green Committee is working with the Blue River Watershed Coordinator on putting a rain garden in Brooke Beatty Park. Typically rain gardens are not placed in parks, but this is being done to invite residents to come and see how rain gardens are built, in hopes they might want to put one in their own yard.. The planting will be held on Saturday, June 6. They also requested the Parks Department prep the ground the week prior to this date. The proposed location is near the sculpture and is not very big in size.

Chris reported that Leslie Alford, one of the coordinators from Blue Valley Watershed was present. She spoke about classes that they offer on how to build a rain garden. Chris hopes to offer classes at the Nature Center in August or early September for those interested.

Chris reported that she would feel better if the committee would take action on this. She is a bit concerned about the location. She hopes it will not impede access to the sculpture. She will check on this to make sure everyone is in agreement with the location.

Rod Crawford made a motion to approve the instructional rain garden installation pending staffs' approval of the final location. Bob Wright seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chris reported that in regards to Gezer Park and the Green Initiative, they are looking for a more visible way to access information on the website. She is working with Mark Andrasik of IT to relocate the turtle into a bar and place it on the left side. This will enable people to see a schematic of the park, photos of construction in progress, and some of the initiatives.

Chris reported that the Bicycle Friendly Community work session scheduled for June 15 will begin at 6:30 prior to the Council meeting.

Brian reported that the recycling bins are going well. People are putting the proper recyclable items in the proper cans, which is good. It is early in the shelter season, but he anticipates they will continue to do well.

C. Discuss Council Action on Ordinance Amendment for Parks.

Chris reported that the Council approved the amendment to the ordinance regarding profiting in the parks. It was determined that if anyone is interested in working with us via an agreement we are willing to try to work with them. The main goal is to make sure it is beneficial for everyone and we are protected from liability and damage to our property.

D. Review Updated Design on Oxford Township Sign at Ironwoods Park

Chris reported that she forwarded a copy of the wording for the sign to the Committee last week. This was given to her by April.

April reported that she is in the process of editing the wording for the sign. She passed out a draft and asked the committee to take it home and read it and inform her of any feedback, suggestions or comments.

Rod Crawford appreciates April offering this suggestion. He expressed his concern of approving it without thoroughly reading it and the risk of someone saying that there are inaccurate and/or inappropriate phrases or not racially sensitive.

Rod reported that he feels comfortable with the staff working on it, but doesn't feel comfortable approving it at this time.

Chris reported that she would suggest approving it in general with the assumption that the historical facts have been researched by the Historic Commission. Chris asked April if it had been formally approved by the Historic Commission and April said it had not.

Chris reported that she assumes most things from them have been researched. There haven't been any problems in the past, however; she would like the Historic Commission to review the facts of the signage language and then the park board could approve it based on their recommendation..

Chris also reported that she didn't report this at the last meeting but she was taken back by the size. There are three columns, four feet wide and three feet high. We need to make sure we do our due diligence to all involved. The residents on the northern border are very vocal and may object to the size and location. It should probably be run through the signage permit process.

Doug Stevens reported that he can appreciate the comment about not wanting to create more maintenance than we currently have, but he is bothered by the fact that it wouldn't match the style and compatibility with the current signs in the park. It should have a finished look like the others. This could be a potential concern. Not going with the brand or style that is already there seems odd, in his opinion however; if it looks out of place after it is completed, he assumes it could be painted at that time.

Brian reported that it is a prominent sign and he agrees that it should be uniform with the others, but maybe the same concern was to initially minimize maintenance when it was decided not to paint it.

April reported that the sign will look like the others, but it will not be painted. The good part is, paint can be added later if decided upon.

Karen Reimer reported that this should be added as an agenda item at the next meeting to discuss the final language of the sign.

E. Discuss Conceptual Plan for Rain Garden at Beatty Park

Chris reported that this was previously discussed earlier in the meeting.

II. New Business

A. Discuss Donation of Land from Edgewood Homes Association

Chris reported that this agenda item was going to be discussed at length tonight but Councilmember Rawlings requested being present and he was unable to attend tonight.

Chris reported that there is a piece of land headed west on 117th past the entrance to Edgewood, the gated community next to City Hal, of which they would like to work with Leawood and place a piece of artwork in the open space area directly pass their gate.

They initially wanted to donate the land. Chris said that the city prefers a permanent easement for placement and maintenance of a piece of public art. It was determined that the site has a lot of landscaping, which will need to be kept up.

Chris reported that the Arts Council is interested in placing artwork at this location.

April reported that this would be a great location that is very visible and a gateway to Leawood from the west..

Chris reported that that her main concern is the amount of work it would require from staff for the upkeep if the land were donated. Also, how would that timeframe match up with the other landscaping to the east of it? We may be on different schedules. She speculated that this might set a precedent wherein, other Homes Associations might want to donate land for art . This will be discussed further at the June meeting.

April asked the committee members to go by and take a look at the potential location before the next meeting to familiarize themselves with it..

B. Staff Reports

Brian reported that the Arbor Day event went really well. He thanked Mark Mergen for attending the event and working the grill. It was well attended. Brian also thanked Jeff and Dustin for all their hard work.

Brian reported that two weeks ago the North lake on the trail was two feet low and losing water. The overflow pipe had a crack in it and the water ran into the creek. It was sand bagged off and concrete poured to stop the leak. It is slowly filling in with the rain we've had lately.

Brian also reported that his staff is filling the pool. Staff has also been busy spraying dandelions. They have been aggressively growing this spring.

Jeff reported that the cabins are filling quickly. April and May are almost full.

Jeff reported that they are in the process of training on the challenge course. The Caribbean Course is in need of minor maintenance in regards to the routine inspection. He hopes to have this done this week before the Fire Dept. comes out for their team building event.

Jeff also reported that birthday parties have averaged approximately three per month and the numbers are ahead of last year. They are fun to implement and great revenue for the nature center. There has been a flurry of scout programs as well.

Jeff reported that nature camp training started yesterday. Camps should go really well this summer.

Jeff also reported that he has been busy ordering supplies and working on animal exhibits. There are several new animals this year. He thanked Brian, Dustin and Jana for all of their help with the outside plantings.

Jeff reported that there are currently over 22 different species and a total of 30 animals at the nature center.

Kim reported that there are two and a half weeks before the pool opens. Training is this weekend.

Kim reported that the first movie night at Park Place took place on April 24th. It was well attended. She thanked Rod Crawford and his family for attending. Everyone appeared to have fun. Hopefully there will be more to come. The dive-in movie is scheduled for June 5th at the Aquatic Center.

Kim reported that she has been busy working on gift cards. They will be for sale at City Hall. Kim passed around a sample copy of the gift card. The cards will be gold with green writing.

Bob Wright asked if there is anything new at the pool.

Kim reported that there are new awnings and a few new food additions. We are trying to offer healthier food choices. We also switched to Pepsi this year for our soda vendor and the paper products we will be using are made from recycled materials.

Kim reported that Scott and his crew have done a great job getting the pool ready.

Dan reported that last weekend was the official end of the soccer season. This was the worst season in all of his 14 years with the City trying to schedule around all of the rain we received.

Dan also reported that he had to schedule games on Sundays as well as Mothers Day. He received a few calls from upset mothers about this, but had no other choice in order to get all of the games in.

Dan reported that he immediately started working on t-ball and baseball. He is behind because he was busy trying to reschedule all of the soccer games. There are 42 baseball teams, which will create byes in the schedule. The ideal number is 32 teams for the season. This may push the season back a few days but he can easily work around this.

Dan also reported that Hershey Track and Field will be held June 6. There are seven kids signed up from Leawood. He will work this event.

Dan reported Leawood also offers a summer soccer camp. Registrations are going well.

Tonia reported that shelters have been extremely busy. There are times when several people request the same date and unfortunately have to be turned away. There are months when most dates are fully booked, which is great.

Cody reported that he is gearing up for the camp season. His staff is in place. Shirts were ordered today. Most of the staff are returning from previous years. He is also very busy with the fourth of July event.

Cody reported that the rentals at the Lodge and Community Center are steady. They will get busier as the months go by.

Cody also reported that the renovations in the Maple room went really well. The walls were painted and a portable white board will be installed. Curtains will also be installed in the storage area, which has been made smaller. Upon completion, it should look really nice.

Brock reported that the deadline to turn in all paperwork for the Junior Tennis League is this Friday. There are currently more participants enrolled than they would like, but it is better to have more than not enough.

Brock reported that he is also busy working on organizing fall classes. He is working with the Kansas City Sports Commission in regards to the Labor Day run event. They will be in charge of the on-line registrations this year instead of Active.com. The Race Director recommended them and they have been extremely great to work with so far. This will be a good change and keep it local.

April reported that May is Public Art month. There will be a reception on May 18 before City Council at 6:30 in the lobby of City Hall for the art on loan sculpture.

April reported that "Porch Lights" will be dedicated on May 27 from 4:00-5:00 p.m.- rain or shine. Mayors from both cities will attend this event.

April reported that the book club will meet every Wednesday in June at the school house. They will do a craft and activity each time they meet.

April also reported that the library series usually held at City Hall will be held on Thursday mornings at Ironwoods Park because of the construction at the library.

April reported that the stage company production of "Brigadoon" rehearsals will begin June 1.

Chris reported that the Taste of Leawood event will be held June 13 at the City Hall Courtyard. Contact the Leawood Chamber office for tickets.

Chris reported that she attended the quarterly Chamber Luncheon today. She was amazed at all the new members. .

Chris also reported that the fall program guide will be mailed the first week in August. All submitted information is due soon from staff on June 18.

Chris reported that new trees have been planted at I-Lan park. They are a nice addition and will hopefully deter some of the parking issues we've experienced in the past. Dustin did a great job on the tree selection, location., and installation.

Chris reported that things are going well at the golf course. They are offering specials Memorial Day weekend for \$49 , which includes the cart, a shirt, and lunch. Orion is hopeful that this will bring players back who have left. The greens are really good and the course looks nice.

Chris reminded the committee members that if they would like to add anything to the next agenda to let her know and she will include it.

C. Misc.

Karen Reimer suggested to Dan that the next time he schedules a game on Mothers Day, it would be a nice gesture to offer mothers a carnation, budget allowing. She has experienced attending a game on Mothers Day in the past and it was always nice to receive a carnation for attending on this special day to show appreciation.

Bob Wright reported that his son recently finished a soccer season in Leawood. He asks for commentary about the program and received positive feedback in regards to the actual program, but would like something to be done in regards to the highway noise. It would be inexpensive to add a couple of rows of evergreens to block some of the noise. It is extremely hard for a coach to call plays and for the players to hear when the noise is so loud. He suggested if someone offers to make a donation to the parks in the future, it would be great to add trees in this area.

Bob thanked Dan for a great season.

Chris thanked him for bringing this up. This is a good idea and would look great and serve a purpose. This will be discussed in the near future. She asked Brian to get in touch with Linda Lanterman, of the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, and check into potential grant opportunities.

Bob Wright made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mark Mergen seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:13p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department