

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – July 14, 2009
5:30 p.m. – Leawood City Hall – Maple Room

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

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

Amy Vlastic presided over the meeting in Karen Reimers absence. The meeting was called to order at 5:59p.m.

Mark Mergen made a motion to approve the May 12, 2009 meeting minutes. Rod Crawford seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Party in the Park Recap

Cody reported that the event was well attended. A lot of people stayed until the end. There were many visitors to the nature center and the lodge, which was great. The event ended with a nice concert at the amphitheatre.

Chris asked Jeff Peterson for an estimated total based on the number of visitors to the nature center.

Jeff reported that he would estimate there were a minimum of 300 visitors.

Amy asked if attendance was greater this year than last year.

Jeff reported that it was about the same.

Kim asked how many people climbed the wall.

Jeff reported that seventy people took advantage of the free open climb.

Chris reported that this has become an annual event. With that said, she noticed that it was difficult transitioning people from the area where everything was going on to the amphitheatre area. She will work with staff on a solution for next year's event.

Mark Mergen suggested a Parks & Recreation Advisory Board climb in the future.

B. July 4th Recap

Cody reported that it was a really nice event. The weather played a huge factor. He has received a lot of positive feedback. The vendors also did a good job. Overall, the event was a huge success.

Jacquie McKinney reported that she has been asked by a lot of people why the fireworks started so late.

Lindsay reported that the fireworks began earlier this year than the past three years. They are normally scheduled to begin at 10:00p.m., but started at 9:50p.m.

Jacquie reported that it poses a problem for families with small children when it starts so late.

Mark Mergen reported that he believes it starts late to wait for it to get dark.

Councilman Jim Rawlings reported that he along with others who attended wondered the same thing. He would suggest starting at 9:30p.m., it is usually dark then.

Chris reported that she expected more attendance because Shawnee, Lenexa, and Johnson County (who usually team together in Shawnee Mission Park for their fireworks display) weren't having it this year.

Chris reported that she numbers appeared to be down from last year.

Mark Mergen asked if this is based solely on attendance in City Park.

Chris reported that it is.

Mark reported that cars were packed along State Line on the Missouri side all the way to Red Bridge watching the fireworks.

April reported that it is always packed in that area during the fireworks display. You can barely get through.

Councilman Rawlings told Chris that she can claim more attendance with the number of people who didn't actually watch from inside City Park.

Chris reported that the food vendors also did a good job. Blanc Burgers has already asked to come back next year.

Councilman Rawlings reported that this was the best bargain. The burgers were half off the regular price.

Chris thanked staff who worked so hard to get it going and also those that came back the next day to clean up. Great job by all.

C. Gezer Park Update

Brian reported that progress is going well. There are very few projects left to complete. The only items remaining are landscaping, installation of some irrigation and minimal odds and ends.

Amy Vlasic reported that everyone is curious to know if grapes vines are being planted at the park.

Brian reported that they are native grape vines with small berries on them.

Brian reported that his staff has been working on putting in some retaining walls. There was an area where the paths graded out a gap in the berm that left a tree really exposed. He

purchased rock and will install a wall on the west end in hopes to save the tree. This will save us a change order.

Brian also reported that everything is coming along well. The sod is scheduled to be laid tomorrow. With the anticipated rain, this may be delayed because the ground needs to be prepped first and if it is muddy, it will be hard to do.

Brian reported that the restrooms are near completion. There are a few minor details but they should be finished soon.

Brian reported that the irrigation has been turned on the west half of the park.

Councilman Rawlings asked if the large stone has arrived yet.

Brian reported that it hasn't arrived to yet. He recently received a call that it is in New York and should arrive in Kansas City soon.

Brian reported that he will meet with Chris, and the Public Works staff to decide a location to store it. It weighs nine tons, and is approximately 8.5 ft tall and 6.5 ft wide.

Jacquie McKinney asked if it will be marked.

Brian reported that it is an agricultural calendar; and has writing etched in it.

Chris reported that it will probably have a kiosk near it that will explain it and the fact that it is a gift from the Gezer Region.

Chris reported that Scott Lambers, the City Administrator, has suggested it be placed in a body of water to protect it.

Chris also reported that they are looking into having special protectant put on the shelter, restrooms, park signage and potentially this tablet from Israel to be able to get graffiti off immediately in the event it happens. Since this is a special piece, she may contact the Nelson for their recommendation on preserving it.

Chris reported that a meeting was held with the Gezer development committee on Monday and fundraising efforts are moving along well.

Chris reported that the playground structure company has offered a 40% discount which is close to a \$20k savings. But, they are questioning if it is feasible to purchase this at this time. If purchased now, to receive the great discount it will need to be stored until it is needed. On the other hand, if we wait we could possibly lose out on the discount. This will be discussed with Scott, once we know the time frame of the offer.

Chris reported that the committee is working on a button that will be a replica of the art piece. It will read "Gezer Rocks". This is something to gain the attention of others and hopefully strike up a conversation about the park.

Jacquie McKinney commented that the art piece is a very unique design.

Chris reported that everything is progressing well and everyone involved is very excited to get the park open so it can be viewed and used.

D. Approve Recommendation of Historic Commission – Oxford Township Sign

April reported that nothing new has been done in this regard. There isn't any specific information to report.

This will be tabled again until a future meeting after action has been taken by the Historic Committee.

II. New Business

A. Discuss Donation of Land from Edgewood Homes Association (*Tabled from May 12th Meeting*)

April reported that this has also been tabled.

Chris asked April to bring the committee up to date on what was previously discussed.

April reported that the Edgewood Homes Association would offer the City of Leawood land for placement of a sculpture. Once the piece is placed, they will maintain the landscaping, grass, etc. This is a change from the initial conversation, wherein they wanted to donate the land to the city.

April reported that we would have a permanent easement to maintain the art. This will be re-addressed when a specific piece of art is decided for the location. The next piece in line will be placed in the sculpture garden along Tomahawk Creek Parkway.

Amy Vlasic asked if the homeowners association will choose the piece.

April reported that they will not. It will go through the process like all other pieces.

Chris reported that the Art in Public Places Committee will make the selection.

Jacquie McKinney reported that her only concern would be if Edgewood is allowed to donate land, other homes associations will also want to do the same.

April reported that if another homes association has prime property at a gateway point as Edgewood does, it will also be considered. It is all about location.

Jacquie McKinney reported that there is so much going on in that area near Edgewood, she wonders how this will play into traffic.

Chris reported that currently the homes association has reconsidered donating the land. If it comes into fruition in terms of placing something there, they will still own the land. At that time we will consider a permanent easement as April mentioned.

April reported that this will probably not happen in the next couple of years. It can be tabled until that time. There is no date certain to hear this at this time.

B. Staff Reports

Jeff reported that they have been painting the nature center this week. It is near completion. It looks very nice. The outside of the nature center was painted last year. They will begin painting the Lodge tomorrow.

Jeff reported that they hosted the water garden tour Saturday and Sunday. Approximately 200 people attended. The gardens looked really nice. Jeff thanked Brian's crew for doing extra touch up work.

Jeff reported that nature camp is next week and the challenge adventure camp begins this week.

Jeff reported that June was a record month with cabin rentals. In a two week period almost every night was booked. July and August rentals appear to be down some from last year. He attributes this to heat and family vacations. We are also low on corporate challenge course events this year. Companies are cutting back on programs such as this due to the economy.

Cody reported that as Jeff discussed, the lodge is being painted this week. The high areas will be dusted next week. Once these projects are complete, the lodge should look new again.

Cody reported that the first session of Live Healthy Leawood has ended. We are currently in the second session.

Cody also reported that this is the last week of the half day summer camps. There are two more weeks of the full day camp. Camps are going really well this year.

Cody reported that lodge rentals are going really well. He is booked most weekends for the rest of the year. Saturdays are also going fast for next year.

Brock reported that tomorrow will officially end the Junior Tennis League season. It went really well. Approximately 100 kids completed the JTL part of it. Another 3-4 participated in the practice only portion and didn't compete in any matches. All together there were 105 total participants. This is 20 kids more than last year.

Mark Mergen asked the ages of the participants.

Brock reported that there is an 11 and under team and also a high school program. Some participants are as young as 9 years old and some as old as 17. The program may have to be scaled back next year due to court space.

Brock reported that Labor Day Run/Walk is coming up quickly. It will be held September 7th starting in City Park.

Brock also reported that he is working on the fall program guide. He is thinning out the information in the guide to make sure we aren't spending extra money on the guide with information that doesn't need to be in it.

Brock reported that this is the first meeting in the maple room since it was officially renovated. The white board was removed from the wall and a rolling board was purchased instead. The closet area was also shrunk to alleviate the holes and the rods that were there. A more permanent structure was added.

Brock reported that hopefully this makes the room more useable for classes and rentals.

Chris reported that the room looks very nice-clean and more appropriate for meetings.

April reported that June has been a very summer. There were four kids events sponsored by the Arts Council. This is the first year the events were moved from City Hall to Ironwoods

Park. Well over 2,000 kids participated in the programs. It was nice to have the event at Ironwoods. The numbers increased tremendously.

April reported that the school house is participating in the passport program. A lot of new people are visiting the park which is good for the school house.

April reported that the last art show was very successful. The next one is scheduled for August 21. Invitations will be sent out.

April also reported that Brigadoon is the most aggressive production so far. This will be the biggest orchestra, cast, costume, and sets. Everyone is getting along very well.

April reported that after the last performance the kilts will be sold. They include the sporran and the sash for \$40.00. The shirt is an extra \$20.00. The Stage Company is also hosting a trip to New York City in September. It is an expensive trip but they will attend two shows- Jersey Boys and Billy Elliott. They will also attend a Harvest Dinner Cruise and much more. (April passed out brochures).

Lindsay reported that she is in the middle of pool season. It is going really well. Something new they are trying this year is extending the hours on Monday nights in the month of July until 9p.m. She had received feedback from members that closing at 8p.m. every night but Friday is too early with family's busy schedules. They will try it on Mondays in addition to the normal Fridays and see how it works.

Lindsay also reported that swim and dive season is nearly over. They hosted the dive championships yesterday. The swim championships will be today and Thursday at the City of Mission. The banquet will be held Friday night.

Lindsay reported that Doggie Dunk is will be held Tuesday, September 8. This is the day after the pool closes. Hopefully we will have a good turnout.

Lindsay reported that a weekly revenue report was recently produced to see where we stand in comparison to last year. We are up \$4,000 compared to this time last year.

Lindsay also reported that she is thinking ahead to Freaky Fall Fest in October.

Kim reported that she ran all of the mid-year financials and found that the expenses are up slightly due to the minimum wage increase.

Kim reported that the pool, classes, day camps, birthday parties and cabin rentals are up significantly.

Kim also reported the lodge and community center weekday rentals are down. She attributes this to the economy and company rentals.

Kim reported that The First Tee summer programming ends for the classes next week. She started working on fall programming and has already received a lot of calls.

Kim reported that Dan is out of town. His soccer deadline ends in two weeks.

Kim also reported that the t-ball and coach pitch season is scheduled to end the week of August 4, pending we don't receive anymore rain.

Chris reported that there is an amphitheatre work session on July 20. The stage company is inquiring as to whether the council is supportive of moving ahead with an amphitheater at

Ironwoods. At this current time, nothing has changed nor has anything been done, since the presentation in July 2008.

Chris reported that the proposed project, if the design remain in tact, will cost about \$6 million. Most recognize that this may be a far reach at this point, but the stage company is willing to do fund raising efforts to help fund it. Since it has been a year, the work session will be an opportunity to have a discussion with the council, and members of the stage company, to see where we are at this point.

Chris also reported that the golf course is coming along well. The Kansas City Amateur was held there last week. They were very pleased with the play of the golf course.

Chris reported that the golf course had a scare last Monday when the main line irrigation line blew. We were fortunate to repair it quickly although the fix may need additional work in the future.

Chris reported that the Gezer Region delegation gave the Mayor a visit date of October 14th - 18th. The dedication will take place some time during this time. There will be a soft opening sometime in August. It will be a simple event to notify the general public and the surrounding neighbors that the park is ready for use.

Chris reported that Gezer has been a great project. Construction company has been really well to work with and has done a good job meeting the city's requests.

Brian reported that his staff has been really busy working in City Park. They have also been doing a lot of work at the amphitheatre to make it useable for "Brigadoon".

Brian also reported that his staff recently worked at the police station clearing branches that were hanging over the building and along the property line. Earlier this week they were busy cleaning weeds out of the median along 135th Street. If the weather permits, this will be done by the end of the week.

Brian reported that he attended a Mid America Regional Council (MARC) meeting today. Cities were invited to discuss recycling efforts in parks. He discussed what we were doing and had the opportunity to listen to what other cities are doing.

Brian also reported that our recycling efforts are going really well. We've recycled over one ton of plastic, aluminum and cardboard. The Lodge, pool and the cabins have been big contributors to our recycling efforts.

Chris reported that the Golf Course is recycling also and has had great success as well.

Brian reported that the tennis courts will be resurfaced in August. Three courts will remain open during the resurfacing project in case anyone wants to utilize them.

C. Misc.

Amy Vlasic asked when the library will be completed.

April reported that it is scheduled to be complete in October but will probably be finished ahead of schedule. Currently they don't have the funding to staff it and make the move.

April reported that a soft opening will be the beginning of October. The official opening will be Saturday, October 17. This will be an all day event.

Chris reported that if anyone has any suggestions or topics they would like include for next months meeting, please let her know.

Kim reported that City of Lees Summit has a Facebook page and it provides Twitter updates regularly to inform those interested of what is going on. She follows it. It is really nice to be able to receive this updated information.

Chris reported that if we get approval to move forward with any of this in the future, it could be a “follow Lea Woody” type of format.

Mark Mergen asked if there is any new information regarding the community center.

Amy Vlastic asked about the Justice Center.

Councilman Rawlings reported that at this current time, nothing is being done. We are in the process of purchasing the land but are being held up by the owners.

III. Special Business

A. Presentation on Gezer Park (Karen Reimer – Chair)

Chris reported that she received two discs from Julie in the form of a Power Point presentation but neither of them will print nor play. She will ask Julie to provide her with another copy. Once she receives the copy, she will send it out to the board to review it.

Chris reported that it is a tool for people who are recruiting sponsorships and/or to use with the media. They have been aggressively interested in Gezer. We should have good follow up and receive good print about the park as we get closer to opening.

Jacquie McKinney complimented the art piece that was chosen. It is so different and eye catching. She is confident that we will continue to receive interest regarding the park.

Chris asked the board to visit the park and get out and look around. You will be able to see the plant materials, the stone, and the wadi. Once the sod is laid it will be extremely dynamic. Staff is really excited about the end result.

Jacquie McKinney 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