

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – May 11, 2010
5:30 p.m. – Leawood City Hall – Maple Room

Board members in attendance were Karen Reimer (chair), Amy Vlastic, Bob Wright, and Rod Crawford.

Councilman Lou Rasmussen also attended.

Staff members in attendance were Chris Claxton, Kim Curran, Tonia Morgan, April Bishop and Brian Anderson.

The meeting was called to order at 5:50 p.m.

Bob Wright made a motion to approve the March 9, 2010 meeting minutes. Rod Crawford seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Discuss Off-Leash Dog Park

Bob Wright asked if we are dependent on obtaining additional land to be able to offer this amenity. He would hate for the plan to be totally dependent on space. Is the land owned by Hallbrook coming through or should we continue without it?

Chris reported that he is working with Mel Lavery in discussing possible donation of land. They are willing to discuss it, but are concerned that it may affect their FAR when they develop the additional building on the northwest corner of College and State Line. The biggest issue with dog parks is to find a location that doesn't back up to residential. Other than this property for us, there isn't another area that comes to mind. This area has many benefits; it has parking, granted there will be potential crossover traffic during the soccer season.

Bob reported that he agrees; it can't be backed to residential. If it is over the bridge, you limit the eye sore factor. The only people to see it are those using the trails or the dog park.

Bob reported that his children play soccer and he looked in this area on heavy soccer days and doesn't anticipate a problem. Many additional parking spaces were available.

Brian reported that this is good information to know. He often wondered if there were spare spots available on the weekend during soccer. The only thing that may affect this to some degree is currently, we aren't using field #9. If all fields were used there would be more parking spaces used.

Bob asked if one field is always rested during soccer season.

Brian reported that a one field is rested every season.

Bob reported that if field #1 is rested. The parking lot will be full.

Chris reported that a certain number of spots could be designated for dog park parking only.

Chris reported that if it gets built, the Council will need to determine if it should be for residents only. This will make a big difference.

Amy asked how this will be enforced.

Chris reported that the dog park could be accessed with a swipe card and could be spot-policed. According to some checking that Councilman Rasmussen has done, there is a significant problem with the number dogs we should have in Leawood and the dogs that are actually registered.

Karen reported that Bob brought up a good point regarding which comes first. Do we need to make sure we have the land before we take go any further. We may be looking at spending money we don't have, if we don't acquire the land. This should be step one.

Chris reported that we should still go for the land, whether a dog park is built on it or not. She suggested the Park Board Committee make a recommendation to move forward.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that it is important for the Parks & Recreation Committee to be pre-planning. If a proposal becomes available, the obvious question from the City Council point of view would be do we want to take the land and if so, what do we want to use it for. All steps should be in place before moving forward.

Councilman Rasmussen asked the committee to visit other dog parks in the area such as Stoll Park located on 119th Street. This will give you an idea of what a dog park in Leawood shouldn't look like. There isn't any water provided. There is split rail fencing, and the grass isn't very appealing. The area is large enough but isn't well maintained.

Chris reported that the dog park in Lee Summit has a trail around it for the owners to walk and the dogs play in the middle. There is also an area with dog amenities, such as a tunnel, and agility equipment that allows dogs to run and jump, as well as an area for smaller dogs.

A discussion about the liability of the dog park was raised by Amy.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that there isn't additional liability than any other liability in terms of recreational facilities.

Councilman Rasmussen added that if the area is attained, he will be fighting at the budget sessions; there is \$220,000 laying in the special park fund. He would like to keep the money available for use at the dog park.

Chris reported that money in this fund that isn't spent can be rolled over and is replenished annually through the alcohol tax as long as the state doesn't come for it to address their budget shortages.

Chris asked for a consensus with those attending tonight. If there is a desire to move forward, she is happy to contact Mel to see what the next steps might be.

Rod Crawford made a motion to ask staff to pursue this matter further with the land owner with the intention of having the land as a dog park or other park land.

Bob Wright seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Chris reported that the Park Board has two new Council Liaisons. Councilman Rasmussen and Julie Cain will officially join us in June. Councilman Rawlings and Councilman Gill have been reassigned.

B. Discuss Council Action on Shelter Funding Transfer and Update on Playground, Shelter and Signage

Chris reported that there are many shelter requests coming in for Gezer park. Having one shelter does not appear to be enough to facilitate the park moving forward. She met with the architect to discuss the scope of what should be done for adding another shelter. We need to make sure the money is available within what we have budgeted. Currently there is \$60,000 for the additional shelter that was relocated from Ironwoods. There is \$150,000 for the playground and approximately \$25,000 from donors not obligated to anything specific.

Chris added that once the plans are complete, we can officially move forward with taking it to the council. Playground manufactures are offering great deals at this time. The structure will be bid out to various manufacturers using the layout that we have been showing. This will allow us to get the best pricing.

Amy asked what style equipment was decided upon.

Chris reported that the structure with multiple play opportunities, the climbing boulders with the connecting ropes, two belt swings, two tot swings, along with a dig area that would contain fossilized boulders.

Chris reported that since the shelter will be located near the garden in the ceremonial area, they discussed bringing the roof down and trying to obtain as much shade as possible.

Karen Reimer asked the amount of money donated for the garden area.

Chris reported it is \$4,000.

Amy asked the timeline for the project.

Chris reported that if everything moves along and funding is available, the goal is to begin the first of August.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that a lot of money was spent at Gezer. He questions why a playground is needed with a play area across the street at the Elementary school.

Councilman Rasmussen added that a great concern is money. A great deal of money was spent at Gezer. He agrees that money should go in the park, but if you spend too much and go over budget, it isn't good. There are other parks that have needs as well.

Amy reported that outside patrons aren't allowed to use the school playground equipment while school is in session during the school year.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that the shelter was supposed to be a replica of a shelter in Israel called a "shooka" which is a ceremonial place where they celebrate historically. Are we getting away from this design?

Chris reported that we are not. The shelter will be open air as close to the original theme as possible.

Chris added that the Rabbi, who is David Liechman's wife, visited last Friday, along with The Chronicle and members of the Foundation. Both were pleased with the park.

C. Discuss Update On The Amphitheatre Plan

April reported that the area is currently staked where the amphitheatre building will be. The restroom facility will be a part of Phase I and are marked with green stakes.

April reported that Continental is in the process of putting together cost estimates. They've also discussed fixing the road that leads to the area. If a large truck tries to make a sharp left turn, it is nearly impossible. This definitely needs to be included in Phase I.

April also reported that the fundraising campaign kicked off with a Gala. It was a really fun event. Some dressed up like guys and dolls. Everyone had a good time. The objective was to start the buzz and although they did not make a large amount of money, the word is out. It was nice to have press coverage for this event. They are researching other means for donations.

Chris reported that she spoke with Brett from Continental Engineers today. He will have the estimate for the restroom to her by Friday. He and the architect feel confident that we will have the money. He knows we are on a fast track.

Chris added that of the \$500,000, there is \$391,000 remaining. There may be more design fees, but that can't be determined at this time.

Chris reported that she e-mail the PDF version of the latest schematic Brett sent her to all Committee members. This will help understand the orientation better.

Karen asked the timeline to start securing bids.

Chris reported that it will be in the near future.

April reported that construction won't begin until after September.

April passed a schedule of upcoming events to the Committee members.

II. New Business

A. Staff Reports

Kim reported that she is working with a company to resurface the exterior of the pool slide. Originally the price was \$25,000 but after review of what was needing to be done; the cost will be closer to \$7,000.

Chris reported that the bond payment for the pool renovation will be paid off in 2011.

Chris reported that the golf course is receiving a lot of positive comments. Troon is doing a great job thus far.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he received some positive e-mails today from some of the patrons who were previously very unhappy.

Brian reported that his staff has been busy. They helped pour the footing and set a new piece of public art on the corner of College and Mission. The piece entitled "My Mind" has also been installed by the artist. They will landscape and clean the area soon.

Brian reported that the pool is full of water. The pool plants have been planted in baskets and crews will be working to clean up the landscaping soon.

Brian also reported that they re-landscaped the Vietnam Memorial at Tomahawk Park near the playground. The area has been upgraded. The plants had been trampled and were overgrown. It looks much better now.

Brian reported that the next project is setting the pavers that have popped loose from the recreation entrance/ north side of City Hall. They will remove all of them and reset them to make them look nice.

Brian reported that will be working with Blue Valley labs on weed control in Ironwoods lake. There is a plant growth and algae around the edges which is common for several of the ponds. The cost is \$600. It will be monitored on a monthly basis after the first initial cleanup is completed. If a touchup treatment is needed, it will cost \$200.00. This should help improve the fishery, and also improve the look of the lake.

Brian reported they recently helped Public Works with a storm water improvement project in the 97th and State Line area. They are redoing the storm water lines in the area. The line goes through the front yards. There are a lot of trees because the yards are so deep. His staff provided a procedure to help the trees recover when there is root damage. Some homeowners were concerned about their trees because the storm lines were coming in close.

Brian also reported that the Bike Committee has been very busy. Bike to Work Week was last week and was a very successful event. He received an e-mail from Jill Payton, a Bike Committee member who mentioned it went over really well at Corinth Elementary with 168 children participating. They received certificates from the Bike Committee. They were really enthusiastic about it and would like to participate for two weeks next year.

Brian reported that they had a booth at Party in the Park trying to improve the awareness of bicycling. Elite Cycling located in Mission Farms provided a tent with information and

bicycles to demo. They brought a lot of merchandise and offered to tune up bikes free of charge.

Officer Chudik from the Police Department was also there and sold bike helmets and provided an obstacle course. The event went over really well.

Brian reported that he's also been busy working on the complete streets policy. The committee would like to see a draft to review at their next meeting in June.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if there are any maintenance troubles at I-Lan Park.

Brian reported that there haven't been any issues other than children throwing the rocks and damaging the shingles. They are researching a different type of shingle that looks similar to slate but will be more durable.

Councilman Rasmussen asked what the Arts Council is doing in reference to I-Lan.

April reported that they have a selection committee in place to research a sculpture to go into the park. They've examined a lot of options, but so far have been unsuccessful. They would like an Asian artist, but it has been difficult. They will continue to move forward.

Kim reported that trail clean up was at the end of March with over 200 people participating. They walked the trails from I-Lan to City Park. It was the same day as Eggstravanganza, which turned out great. The volunteers were able to pick up the excess left from that event. It was amazing that 200+ bags were collected from the clean up. Jeff does a nice job promoting and organizing this event.

Bob Wright added that he and his children participated and filled six trash bags easily. It was a good exercise for his children to realize how much trash was out there.

Kim reported that Jeff attended Passport to Adventure through the Interpretive Site Coalition. The Oxford School and the Nature Center are both featured in the stamp book. Visitation has increased as you can receive two stamps for visiting both places.

Chris added that it is a great program. It exposes a lot of new people to our facilities.

Kim reported that at Party in the Park, 55 people utilized the climbing wall and many participated in the scavenger hunt the Nature Center provided. It was a good time. A lot of people have inquired about team building events for the Challenge Course.

Kim reported that soccer ends in the next few weeks. The t-ball deadline has passed and will begin soon.

Kim also reported that the Junior Tennis League has 77 participants. This program continues to grow.

Kim reported that The Lodge is busy. There is a wedding reception Monday. People are booking dates whenever they can get in.

Chris reported that it is a rarity but at a recent wedding, a Leawood officer was assaulted by an uncooperative patron. The officer is fine. The person who assaulted the officer spent the night in jail.

Kim reported that pool passes went on sale May 3. Due to the weather, 15 family passes have been sold so far but of those sold, 5 have signed up for the Super Pass program. Basically 1/3 participants are taking advantage of this option.

Kim reported that the first movie night is Friday at Park Place. This should be a fun family event. "Back to the Future" will be shown. The movie will begin as soon as the sun goes down.

Kim also reported that The First Tee is finishing its fall program. There were nearly 80 participants. The first levels of summer sessions are already full.

Kim reported that the seasonal staff reports for work next week. They are all on payroll.

April reported that the promotion with UMKC that was hosted at the Lodge went well. The Leawood Stage Company received all the donations made at the door. UMKC students did all of the work. It was a fabulous production. The Blue Valley Quilters Guild placed their quilts around the performance area. It was an exciting and very beautiful.

April reported that Tea with Shakespeare was a big success as always.

April also reported that the schoolhouse participated at Party in the Park. There was a Dixie Land Jazz concert at the end of the event. It was well received.

April reported that the school will be open full hours starting in June. There are several events scheduled for the summer.

April asked if Committee members want to assist the stage company raise money, please eat at On the Border Monday, they will donate 10% to the stage company.

April reported that Marlene Katz, who resides in Leawood and does first person presentation of famous women, will do Clara Stover and provides Russell Stover chocolate for all who attend the presentation.

Karen reported that this is nice. She actually knew Clara Stover; she was one of her friend's great aunt.

April reported that the dedication of "My Mind" will be at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 27. Refreshment will be served. The artist will be there for a meet and greet session.

Chris reported that she and Brian are on the Sustainability Advisory Board, formerly the Green Initiative Task Force. The next initiative will be a large item recirculation day. The trial event will be in northern Leawood in hopes to add more areas in the future. An ad will be in The Sun newspaper next week. Town and Country will pick up the remaining items.

Chris reported letters were sent to all who reside on water in Leawood to come to a meeting that will be held soon. If you are interested in attending, please send Chris an e-mail to add your name to the list.

Chris reported that the deadline for submittal for the fall program guide is June 19. The guide will be out the first week of August. The winter/spring guide will come out in December.

Tonia reported that the shelters have been extremely busy. She's received numerous calls for the same date/same shelter on many occasions. She's finding that she's had to turn people away because many dates are already booked. Most weekends are booked through the summer. A lot of people have resulted to weekday rentals due to availability. There has been a lot of interest for Gezer Park. A wedding is planned there in June.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that if you run into any State Representative ask them to support the city's efforts to obtain a liquor license. Currently, a cash bar is used or alcohol has to be donated. At Ironhorse Golf course a contractor has to get the license rather than the City. A City should be able to obtain a license for its own facilities.

Chris complimented staff for the summer camp handout they put together and distributed to area schools. Marica did a really good job designing it. Committee members received a copy. It is a nice piece to give people information about the prominent programs Leawood offers.

Bob reported that the picture of the soccer team on the front is his team that he coaches. He added that he's received a lot of positive feedback about the Park Board picture Marica took for the website. Marica did a really good job.

Chris added that another picture will be taken at the next meeting with the new Council liaisons.

C. Misc.

Karen Reimer reported that she would like for the Committee to revisit what happened with the art piece that went in on College and Mission. As a Committee, we need to make sure situations don't arise in the future where we are pushed against a wall.

Karen, April and Councilman Rasmussen all reported that they've received e-mails and phone calls concerning the art piece and its location.

Karen asked for clarification of how this was and should have been handled.

April reported that it was donated. The Arts Council was approached by Todd Haenish about a couple of pieces he wanted to donate. One was rejected.

Chris reported that the piece was initially accepted without having a location in mind.

April reported that initially it was scheduled to be placed in a garden area but the City Administrator felt that there were many art pieces already in this area of Ironwoods Park. At that point, a new location had to be determined.

Karen Reimer reported that she's received feedback from many who are concerned about its current location- it is very prominent and sticks out.

Karen asked for clarification if the Arts Council always needs a location in mind before accepting donated pieces. In her opinion, this was handled incorrectly.

April reported that they, the Arts Council, went through the correct process. It received proper approval. It was voted upon at a past Park Board meeting, but staff changed the location.

Karen asked how we can avoid this happening again.

Chris reported that there are currently two pieces that have been purchased, one is “X” and one is “Feathers”, and neither have a permanent home. One is located at the Lodge and one is in the lower level of City hall.

Chris added that when “My Mind” was first voted upon, she thought it was going in the triangle area down the trail. It would have been visible from the road, but not directly on the corner. Did the Arts Council feel this wasn’t a good location?

April reported that they thought about that area, but felt it wasn’t as accessible. There were several reasons it wasn’t placed in that location. It would be difficult to add lighting etc. in the future if needed. From a maintenance standpoint, they would have to mow around it if it were placed in that area. They don’t have to do this in its existing location. From the Arts Council point of view it wouldn’t have been a prominent location as the area chosen.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that he was very supportive of the \$5,000 allotted year to purchase temporary art but in his opinion it has been abused. What is happening in some cases is the City Council is propositioned to purchase temporary pieces and then it becomes permanent. In his judgment from a policy point of view, when we have a temporary art budget it should be used for that purpose only. The art pieces should be transitioned and then move on. If not, the pieces will continue to sit as many of them have done for years.

Chris asked April if they still have an annual retreat where these items can be discussed.

April reported that there isn’t really a vehicle to get all of them together. The Art in Public Places group has a core group. It would be nice for them to address some of these issues.

Chris reported that based on the comments received there will be more discussion in the near future.

Chris reported that the Arts Council has requested to bring to the next meeting, June 8, a new art piece “Splash” for the Park Board to consider, in regards to location.

Amy reported that she would rather have fewer pieces with quality than quantity.

Rod reported that as a Committee member, if the art piece “My Mind” is not placed in the location approved by the Committee, this is a problem.

April reported that the Committee approved where it is.

Rod reported that if we’ve received complaints. Does Park Board have the authority to have it moved?

Chris asked if a real difference will be made if it's moved 100 feet. Or is it just the general location?

Bob reported that in his opinion it is the placement.

Chris reported that the Committee makes recommendations. They can always be overruled by City Council or City Staff.

Chris reported that she will review the previous minutes and the procedure will be discussed at the next meeting.

Karen reported that something should be put in place so if the first original place isn't approved, there is other recourse.

D. Next Meeting Date/Agenda

The next meeting will be held at City Park, June 8, 2010 to review the dog park area.

Bob Wright made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Amy Vlasic seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:43p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department