

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – July 13, 2010
5:30 p.m. – Leawood City Hall – Maple Room

Board members in attendance were Karen Reimer (chair), Mark Mergen, Bob Wright, Doug Stevens, Amy Vlastic and Jacquie McKinney. Council liaisons Lou Rasmussen and Julie Cain also attended.

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

The meeting was called to order at 5:40 p.m.

Jacquie McKinney made a motion to approve the June 8, 2010 meeting minutes. Amy Wright seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Discuss Off-Leash Dog Park

Chris passed around a photo previously e-mailed to the Committee with the potential dog park area outlined.

Chris reported that she met with Mel Lavery regarding the potential donation of land. The total of the area is 43.3 acres, of that approximately 9 acres is in the flood plain. Mr. Lavery would like to know how much land we are interested in. We need to convey to him that we are willing to go to Council and ask to subtract whatever land is donated from the bigger project on the FAR.

Chris asked the Committee if asking for the entire area in the flood plain is reasonable.

Mark Mergen asked why we wouldn't ask for the entire amount.

Chris reported that it is a possibility that we can do that if that is the recommendation. She told him we are interested in the area for park land regardless even if it is used for a dog park. The main issue on this space is a potential fence for the area as it floods.

Amy asked what a flood will do to the area.

Chris reported that it won't do anything to the land, but a flood could take the fence down. It will be in the best interest to research these options. We have built a lot of things in flood plains when possible because many times the land is donated. It is worth looking into and the committee can discuss the amount of acreage desired.

Chris asked Lou if he visited any additional dog parks while on his last visit and would like to report on them.

Lou added that he doesn't have a report but the advice he received is to get every inch of land we can.

Mark Mergen asked what information has been found regarding dog park maintenance.

Chris reported that it depends on what is used as far as surfacing. When first built a lot of people used only a grassy area and now at certain dog parks, the area is divided between the larger dogs and the smaller dogs which would require more maintenance.

Jacquie asked how many Leawood residents want a dog park. A lot of places are now offering doggie daycares.

Chris reported that she can't answer that question but; in the last five years she's had three people request that we construct one.

Mark Mergen reported that he received several inquiries years ago.

Chris reported that it is hard to say who your users will be. In Lee's Summit, a lot are senior citizens. They take advantage of the dog park because it is hard to actually walk a dog.

Bob reported that he has asked people around the community about the notion of a dog park and he hasn't had anyone say it would be a waste of City funds and isn't a good idea. The response he's received has generally been positive. Some are very enthusiastic and think it is a great idea because there isn't one close by.

Amy reported that she's received one negative. Her concern is to have a space large enough to throw a ball a far distance to really exercise their dog. Something you would normally do at a park in spite of the leash laws that are in the park.

Bob reported that 4.5 acres is definitely adequate.

Julie Cain reported that she lives near Mission and 127th and Leawood needs a dog park bad. She visits dog parks often and would like to travel a shorter distance than Stoll Park or Heritage. After reading previous minutes she talked with a lot of people and discussed the possibility of having a dog park with obstacles and people were very excited about it. Leawood has a lot of park land and a lot of soccer fields. If the statistics were done of all residents who have dogs, it would be a very large amount.

Karen asked if money is available in the budget to do a low cost survey to the citizens of Leawood to receive their input. She has also spoken with her neighbors and although some think it is a good idea, those she's talked to said they wouldn't use it. Are we offering the dog park because we are so close to State Line for Missouri residents to use it, or will it be offered to Leawood residents only? Are we talking about 5% or 20% of people that will use it? It is nice to offer something for everyone from the elderly to the younger children, but she doesn't want to spend a great deal of money for 1% of the population to use it.

Amy reported that she believes 70% of Leawood residents have dogs.

Mark Mergen reported that we didn't take a survey before the soccer program began.

Julie reported that this is absolutely correct; we don't take surveys on all other uses in the parks.

Karen agreed that this is true. Chris agreed and this is a valid question up for discussion.

Amy asked if the dog park will cost a great amount of money. What amenities will be added?

Chris reported that currently it will cost money that we don't have- budgeted. There may be opportunities for funding in the future. We will need to bring in power and water.

April reported that Ironwoods Park is being used as an off leash dog park right now. It will be beneficial to give them a legal space to use. They are currently breaking the law.

Bob reported that a goal was set to make a proposal by year-end on this topic and to have the position of the board lined up. It is an ongoing discussion contingent on acquiring the land. The committee established and passed a motion to take our position and make a recommendation by the end of the year.

Brian reported that it would be nice to have an access off of State Line if possible. We are limited to how much the bridge can handle. It would be nice to access service vehicles if heavy construction work is needed.

Chris reported that an access easement could be established but an actual road may not be feasible or necessary.

Bob reported that additional handicap parking closer to the potential area would be nice.

Karen reported that it will be nice to get all the land we can whether used for a dog park or not.

Doug reported that the amenities discussed would be attractive beyond just finding a place to let a dog loose. It would draw people with the improvements, water, and possible lighting.

Bob reported that the maintenance should be self-funded. We have to capture the revenue from the dog users. There could be a resident/non-resident fee. We need to create a revenue model that makes it neutral to the budget.

Chris added that just because there are a lot of free dog parks, this one doesn't have to be. A portion of the swipe card, obtained during pet licensing, could go toward the maintenance fund.

Karen asked Chris if she can meet with Mel regarding acquiring the land without a motion to move forward from the Board. Is a motion needed? Does she feel comfortable moving forward with only a recommendation from the Board? We can go from there after it is determined.

Chris reported that she is happy to discuss this with Mel to inform him that there are 9+ acres in the flood plain that we are interested in acquiring. She will contact him soon and bring the information to the next meeting.

B. Discuss Update on Amphitheatre Plan

Tonia provided the committee with a hard copy of the draft minutes for the council work session.

Chris reported that at the meeting, a lot of options were discussed.

Chris added that she reported at the meeting that it depends on your user. If utilizing the theatre, the number one issue is non flushable restrooms. A lot of seniors attend performances at the park, and port-a-potties are nearly impossible to navigate. If you are the Lodge user, particularly on the weekday events when companies travel in multiple cars, additional parking spaces are needed. The way she presented it is this is what the steering committee is recommending because the need is there and the project starting with them. The \$500,000 is the remainder of the 1998 bond initiative.

Chris reported that we can't do both, design fees and construction cost are roughly \$420,000 to \$450,000.

Julie Cain reported that voting was split at the work session, four to four; and the Mayor didn't declare.

Bob and Karen added that referring to the minutes it appears the Mayor supports the restrooms.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that if the staff recalls when Ironhorse was constructed, he suggested fencing the park. At that time, there was a Councilman who thought there should be free access to the park at all times and all hours. This was before Steeplechase was built out.

Chris reported that initially, the residents of Steeplechase approached the city for the trail connection to the neighborhood. We had to pay additional monies via a change order to extend the trail north.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that it seems ironic that those who wanted total access to the park are now complaining because they are parking to get access to the park.

April reported that only a handful of Steeplechase residents are complaining. There are a few people that walk from the neighborhood, but the numbers aren't excessive. For the Guys and Dolls performances she will have people walk the neighborhood to verify that this is happening. Currently there isn't any evidence that support this.

Bob asked how many times per year would additional parking for the Lodge provide relief. Is it more beneficial for additional parking than having more restrooms?

April reported that the Lodge is busy throughout the year with weddings and other events, as well as the Jazz and Kid Series that are held there.

Kim reported that additional parking can always provide relief. Currently the cars are pushed into the North lot and shelter lot if needed.

Mark Mergen asked Kim if she thinks more parking is needed more than restrooms.

Kim reported that she doesn't know. When April has her summer series, there are young children (2-3 years old) trying to use the port a potties.

April added that during each summer series she has hundreds of children trying to use two portable restrooms.

Councilman Rasmussen asked how the physically handicapped manage with the portable units.

April reported that there is an ADA unit available but it is very awkward. They have to ramp up in it to be able to use it. As an example of how upsetting it is for senior citizens; she received a complaint last year from a cast member whose 80 year old father came to the show and got trapped inside the portable restroom because he lost his orientation due to the darkness. He was so upset; he got lost and drove around for two hours before he could find his way home.

Amy asked if people park on the grass.

April reported that they do.

Chris reported that she will check into this. She met with Scott and he feels we are violating our own ordinance if people are allowed to park on the grass due to overflow.

Karen reported that she remembers in the plan when the park was initially designed, it was designed for part of it to have cement parking. This was in the plans.

Chris reported that she hasn't had a chance to research this but does remember this as well.

Amy reported that she also remembers this. It was discussed at the time to keep the area greener because it would only be used a few times a year.

Julie Cain asked will there be additional parking on the grass if the amphitheatre gets totally built out.

April reported that an additional lot above the amphitheatre was in the original plan.

Bob reported that it is important to remember that it is a park not a parking lot.

Chris reported that sixty-five additional spots will be added in this plan.

Mark asked how large the potential bathroom facility is.

Chris reported that it is fourteen stalls total between men/women restrooms and also a family change area. It will accommodate five-hundred people. This will come before the Council for action August 16th. Park Board will meet again before then.

Jacquie asked if the Park Board should make a recommendation before it goes to Council.

Chris advised that it will be beneficial if they do so. Funding is being raised for the future development of the amphitheatre by the Leawood Stage Company steering committee. They see an amenity like the restrooms as a real catalyst for this purpose.

Jacquie made a motion that the money available be used for restrooms at the amphitheatre.

Doug seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

C. Discuss Location of “My Mind” Art Piece

Karen asked if anyone read the article by Amy Brown (a neighbor of hers) regarding some of the negative art pieces in the greater Kansas City area, including “My Mind”. She does not agree with the location of the piece.

Tonia passed out a copy of the article to the Committee members to read if they haven’t had a chance to do so.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if everyone is familiar with the art piece for a quarter million dollars in the North Lake. Houston currently has the same “Splash” art piece.

Doug reported that he too noticed this while he was in the Houston. He thinks there is a little difference in them. It is a similar look but theirs is lit and on a larger scale.

Karen reported that she is aware; Doug sent pictures of it. It is almost an exact replica.

Amy reported that her daughter informed her that there is a “Pastoral Dreamer” in Oklahoma.

Chris reported that she is aware of this. She is aware that artists have similar pieces in other areas of the world. While not always “preferred” it is not unusual, according to Carl McCaffree of the Arts Council.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if this bothers anyone. He doesn’t look at pieces of art as an investment but as uniqueness to our City. We have tried to create an appreciation for art. Are we getting away from being unique?

April reported that this is a valid discussion.

Chris reported that she agrees.

Councilman Rasmussen asked if the contract has been signed for the “Splash” art piece. The crucial decision will be with the Council.

Jacquie inquired why the North Lake was chosen instead of the South Lake.

Chris reported that it is because the development cost were double or triple that of the South Lake. There are plans and a budget to excavate the silt from the north lake, so the two projects could go hand-in-hand.

Chris reported that she put the “My Mind” location on the agenda for discussion purposes because some concern has been raised.

April asked who will pay for moving the art piece, if and when it happens. It won’t cost a fortune, but it is not in the C.I. P. to pay to move it.

Julie Cain reported that she was at the dedication and heard the artist speak and explain the piece. It was very interesting. What was in the newspaper regarding dyslexia is inaccurate.

She spoke with the artist and he explained to her that he doesn't know where that came from.

April reported that Todd Hamish wrote that piece.

Julie added that it would be a nice addition to add a plaque with the vision behind it.

Chris reported that she and April both understand that they need to aggressively work to get the literature piece completed regarding public art. It will help to educate people about each art piece.

April reported that Brian had a great suggestion to do a Bicycle Tour of Art in Leawood. It will be nice to get literature printed and out as a kickoff at the same time of the bike tour.

Chris reported that this is a great idea. She praised Brian for a great suggestion.

Chris added that further discussion on the location of "My Mind will be tabled until a future meeting.

II. New Business

A. Staff Reports

April reported that Guys and Dolls will begin on Thursday. Contact her if you would like V.I.P. seating. She hopes everyone has the opportunity to see the show. Chris McCoy, the Director, is also working as the School Master at the Oxford School this summer. He is doing a wonderful job. Numbers are definitely up this summer.

April reported that the jazz series will begin as soon. Auditions for "Sunday in the Park with George" are Saturday and Sunday of this week.

Chris reported that security was hired for the performances of Guys & Dolls. The first night he was parked by the gate so he didn't see someone steal five lights totaling \$3,000.00. However, they were found by the bushes near the creek. This is the first year we've experienced any problems.

April reported that because of the disagreements they've had with the neighbors, they anticipated vandalism, which is why security was hired. We don't know that who did this but security was parked at the front gate and they didn't enter there.

Brian reported that since the last meeting his facility and office area flooded. There were 3 inches in the office area and 2 ft in the garage and 4 ft in an open area that housed equipment. A lot of equipment was damaged and three park trucks were totaled. He has been busy repairing the damages. It really sets things back when the resources normally used in a department to deal with damages are now inoperable.

Chris complimented and thanked Brian and his staff that the trail was only down one day. She received compliments from people who use the trail.

Brian reported that we lost 46 feet of trail leading to the bridge that goes across to the potential dog park area. The concrete lifted and moved 8 – 10 feet. It broke in several areas.

Brian reported that they've borrowed the Public Works department's larger dump trucks for hauling off brush and debris.

Chris reported this is the worst flooding she's seen along the trail. She encouraged Committee members to park in the 117th lot and walk to the bridge area. They will notice how open the area is and the large amount of debris due to the flood.

Brian reported that soccer field #9 has silt building up from multiple floods. This will affect the field over time. Also, the ball field on the south side of 119th & Tomahawk Park was totally washed away. He met with people to check the cost of materials needed to level the field.

Chris reported that all of the \$15,000 worth of trees donated were lost. We are trying to figure how to replace them. We have also been working with the donor in regards to this.

Chris reported that the banks at the golf course got out again. The staff has work constantly on repairing bunkers.

Brian reported that the Bike Committee met and recommended sending the Complete Streets Policy to the Park Board. He understands this was tabled prior to tonight's meeting. It will be discussed at that time. He passed out copies for review by the committee prior to the August meeting.

Brian reported that several members of the Bicycle Committee are going to all Middle and Elementary Schools to discuss the Safe Routes to School Program. They will visit Parent Teacher Back to School Nights to discuss the program.

Brian will meet with the Police to generate a map of the safest route to each school. They will train volunteers at each school and hope they are able to run their own program.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that this was done years ago. It should be in the files from the early 90's.

Chris reported that she will research this information by checking the files.

Councilman Rasmussen asked what happened to the idea of bike racks in commercial areas.

Brian reported that if this becomes a requirement with the LDO, when new shops open bike amenities will be required.

Councilman Rasmussen reported that if a major redevelopment or reconstruction of any commercial property is completed in the City of Leawood, and they are required to provide bicycle accommodations, eventually we will have more and more over time. Lou suggested this change be made like it was for the art impact fee. What will be remaining if we only leave it to new development?

Karen reported that this is a great idea.

Brian reported that the engineers and planning have looked at updating the master plan map in regards to the overlay that has all of the bike trails in regards to speed limits and trying to

set up what they'd recommend as bike routes, with priorities being getting people school, commercial developments and parks.

Kim reported that the fourth of July celebration turned into a two day event this year due to the weather. It worked out well.

Kim reported that Leawood won the dive championships yesterday. This is a first in the history of Leawood.

Kim also reported that the final session of half day camps are approaching fast.

Kim reported that the super pass sales have been a success. We are just under 1,000 visitors from other cities who have visited Leawood pool. The majority come from Prairie Village.

Chris reported that a report will be generated at the end of the year on all the pertinent data from this program.

Kim reported that this will help significantly next year because Leawood is hosting the swim championships and the pool will be closed at that time. When we are closed for swim meets, pool pass holders can visit any pool within the super pass program although they are not super pass holders.

Kim reported that we participated in water garden tours at the nature center this past weekend. Visits were down significantly due to the weather.

Kim also reported that the next movie night is at Ironwoods Park on August 13. It will be shown at the amphitheatre beginning at 8:30 p.m. We will feature the movie *Goonies*.

Kim added that fall soccer deadline is July 28 and the swim championships are next week. The next open climb at the Challenge Course is July 24, from 10:00 to 3:00.

Chris reported that she has to leave early due to a 7:30 p.m. appointment. Kim will take over for the meeting once she gives her report. Please let Chris know if there are any changes or additions for the program guide. The files will be downloaded on July 26. It will go to the mail house on August 4.

Bob reported that he's received complaints that the guide comes out the beginning of August but the deadline for soccer is the end of July. People that aren't already in the loop miss it. It would be nice to consider shifting it by a couple of weeks to assure two weeks of timeframe where the soccer registrations can be completed.

Kim reported that they run into this both times. The fall deadline is in the summer guide.

Chris reported there are a few programs that overlap in each guide. You will always see something in the summer guide for fall and something in the fall guide for winter. It may not be as big for the appropriate issue, but we are trying to make them aware. In addition, it is on our website and is put out to the public via press releases. We could however, flip the promotion and focus more in the guide before the deadline.

Bob reported that he isn't asking to push back the deadline, it would be better to send the guide out a couple of weeks early.

Chris reported that she can make it a focal point of the summer guide instead of the fall guide.

Bob reported that he agrees the fall guide is for fall activities but he doesn't want anyone to miss out who is interested in playing fall soccer at Leawood.

Kim reported that a good example is swim team is in the winter guide because enrollment is in March.

Bob reported that as a parent it is very frustrating to schedule activities five months out.

Amy reported that all recreation leagues do this.

Chris said staff will be happy to look into all options for improving communication about soccer registration dates and deadlines.

Chris reported that staff met with the editor from Leawood Lifestyle magazine and their marketing staff regarding developing a relationship. They had a very productive meeting of how to pull advertisers and work for educating the community about activities. We discussed some target events, which they will go back and consider options for.

Brian reported that since we started recycling in the park in 2009, he recently found that twelve tons of recycled materials have been recycled.

Chris reported that she wrote an article that will be distributed in the next issue of KRPA Magazine. All member agencies in the state will receive a copy. It is about recycling in parks.

B. Mission Statement

Karen reported that she wanted to discuss if the Committee is interested in having a separate mission statement other than the paid Parks and Recreation staff, as listed in the front of the program guide. In general if this is something we want to do we can move ahead and keep it on the agenda moving forward. Prior to the meeting she sent Committee members an electronic copy of the existing mission statement to review.

Bob reported that he read it and has no objections to it. He doesn't feel the need to spend time trying to define what we do. We are an advisory committee to represent the voice of Parks and Recreation.

Karen reported that we've been an advisory board for years and this hasn't come up before.

Jacquie reported that if Committee members are going to spend as much time as we do, we should be able to make recommendations as a group. If committee members are going to spend time doing it, we should be able to do it.

C. Approve Recommendation of Steve Hassler to Bicycle Friendly Committee

Brian reported that there is an opening on the Bike Committee. Steve Hassler turned in a bio and has expressed interest to serve on the committee.

Chris forwarded it to the Mayor for her comments. The Mayor would like the recommendation of the Park Board first since the Bike Committee is under their umbrella.

Brian gave a brief description of Steve. He is interested in cycling, he rides his bike often. Brian doesn't know him personally but his wife is on the Sustainability Committee.

Julie reported that he is her next door neighbor. He works for Yellow Freight. They are a very nice family. He is a definitely a recreation biker. She doesn't notice him riding his bike daily to work.

Mark asked if he would be a nice addition to the group because of this.

Bob asked if there are any alternative recommendations.

Brian reported that there were two others but they both declined due to conflicts when he informed them of the meeting schedule.

Julie reported that her son Matt, who was recently on the Committee, informed her that there are some serious bikers on the Committee so it may be beneficial to have a recreational biker to balance it out.

Brian reported that there are currently four members on the Committee and agrees they are avid cyclists. Chair Rod Crawford does triathlons, and is into training. Pete Stover rides his bike to work daily and also to the Committee meetings. Jill is a teacher and rides her bike to school and is active promoting bike riding within the school. Alicia is an avid cyclist. She is a Physical Therapist and promotes walking as well as riding.

Bob made a motion to approve the recommendation of Steve Hassler to the Bicycle Friendly Committee. Jacquie seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

D. Next Meeting Date/Agenda

The next meeting will be held at August 10th at City Hall in the Maple Room.

E. Committee Photo

Karen reported that the photo was scheduled for tonight but due to Rods absence, it will be postponed to the August meeting.

Karen asked Tonia to send a reminder with the minutes.

F. Misc.

Karen complimented the Park Staff for the Fourth of July Celebration. The park looked wonderful. It was by far the best it's ever looked, especially what has gone on this year. The vendors and programming were fantastic. She thanked the staff for their hard work and a job well done.

Amy reported that she also wants to thank Dan Mahanke for informing her to go to her car at 8:45 p.m., as the fireworks were going to be delayed. They were relaxing on their blankets and just as she made it to her car, it started raining.

View Proposed Dog Park Area

Karen asked the Committee to please view the proposed dog park area on their own as time permits.

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:44p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department