



ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – May 10, 2011 -5:30 p.m.
Leawood City Hall – Maple Room

Board members in attendance: Karen Ward Reimer (chair), Mark Mergen, Doug Stevens, Bob Wright, Amy Vlastic, and Jacquie McKinney.

Council Liaison attending: Lou Rasmussen

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

Chair Reimer called the meeting to order at 5:42 p.m.

Amy Vlastic made a motion to approve the April 12, 2011 minutes. Jacquie McKinney seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Gezer Park Construction Update

Brian reported that all of the playground components are installed. He has a meeting tomorrow morning to discuss options regarding a mix-up with the baby swing. Several contractors are working on this project. Two different contractors are installing the playground, and the general contractor is in charge of the grading and the under drain installation. The general contractor will work on the final grading soon. Tomorrow is the goal to construct the landscape area inside the playground, weather dependent.

Brian added that the company installing the mulch is also setting the shade umbrellas. The fittings were poured today and will cure within one week. Shelter components should arrive this week. The stone as well, as the laminated beams for the open air shelter coming shortly. The imported stone may cause a slight delay; the estimated time of delivery is expected May 24.

Brian added that the mason is half finished with the fire pit. The burners are installed. It should be complete tomorrow.

The garden and beds landscaping will be completed in house to save money. The garden plants for the Havdalah garden were grown in our green house.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if the shelter is a Sukkah. Is there any interest in renting it. He heard the existing shelter has been reserved for weddings- true?

Chris reported that she knows of one wedding so far that was held at the shelter.

Tonia added that the shelter has been reserved for numerous events.

Brian added that it was recently used for the really large walk for pancreatic cancer. There were 700 people in attendance.

Chris added that the run was held the day before Easter with 1,000 participants. Committee member Rod Crawford participated.

Brian reported that he has received positive feedback regarding the potential playground. The children are looking forward to the opening.

Chris reported that a celebration for the playground will be held on a weekday in the afternoon in the near future.

Chris reported that The Jewish Federation will host a huge event May 22 in honor of a special Jewish celebration called a Lag B'omer. They are expecting about 300 people. They will use the fire pit for this celebration.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if completion of the shelter, fire pit, and playground will complete the park.

Chris added that the Foundation is still fundraising.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked what they are fundraising for.

Chris added that additional work is needed around the tablet (fountain) to protect it. There also wasn't enough money to do the climbing boulders. There is a space for them once the money is raised. This is what the Foundation is focusing on.

B. Discuss Progress with Legends Soccer Partnership

Kim reported that they are moving forward as the partnership was approved by the City Council. The Legends will host try-outs June 4, 5, 11 and 12th at City Park. We are working with them regarding their Happy Feet program for younger children that are too young for our recreational league play. These will be held indoors. We have also discussed hosting some of the Happy Feet 3 - 4 year old leagues on Sunday afternoons, depending on field space and availability.

The Legends will host a kick-off event the last weekend of the Leawood soccer season to promote the partnership. Legends staff and Parks and Recreation Staff will be present to answer questions.

Chair Karen Reimer asked if they have been working with Dan.

Kim reported that they have been working with her and Dan. The communication has been daily.

Chair Karen Reimer asked if the Legends hired an additional person to work with us as they stated during their proposal.

Kim reported that she is uncertain if they've hired anyone. Kyle from the Legends recently spent an entire afternoon with Dan looking at each of the facilities. Each Legends staff has a certain program that they are responsible for.

Bob reported that he has received a lot of questions from parents inquiring about what the partnership means. The press release only announced the relationship and that it was approved by Council. People are wondering if we are still having a recreational league.

Bob suggested creating a FAQ sheet to answer questions and explain the partnership. People are in the process of making plans for the fall.

Chris replied that this is a great idea. Staff will prepare one to put on the website and to hand out at the kick-off.

Bob added that it is important to preserve the ability for the recreational teams to survive. People are reacting to the partnership because in most cases the premier teams are growing and certain age groups of the recreation teams are shrinking.

Bob suggested that the first question on the FAQ should be “My daughter/son is currently on a rec team in 2nd grade, are they required to disband and play premier”. Several parents are under the assumption that the partnership with the Legends means they have to pay a lot of fees and play premier. This isn’t accurate but until they are informed, most parents may not understand.

Chair Karen Reimer reported that they can actually do both. A child has the option to play on a rec team with their friends and if they are serious and would like additional coaching they can do this too. She can see where the questions and confusion are coming from.

Bob reported that everyone that has approached him thinks partnering with the Legends is the end of Leawood recreation teams.

Chris replied that the press release didn’t read this way, but a clarification is in order.

Bob reported that this may not have been the intent but why would you hook up with a premier team unless you are outsourcing the league to a premier establishment.

Chris reported that she understands that this could be a concern. When she met with the Legends in the beginning, she stressed that her number one concern was keeping a balance. The Legends agreed. Staff’s job will be to keep an eye on the process and the outcomes.

Our program does not have an age group for Happy Feet (under 5) so they will start with the Legends and be sent to us and then back to the Legends for premier if they choose to do so. Sometimes parents make unrealistic choices when deciding to participate in “premier”.

Bob also reported that he is worried about the accessibility factor for people who spend a large amount of money per month per child. It’s a lot of money, especially if you have several children.

We have to make sure that we promote Leawood recreation equally as much as we are promoting the partnership. This is important for parents who have children who don’t want to play premier but only want to be an active child and have fun.

Kim reported that they are also discussing the option of bringing the Legends academy to Leawood, which is practice for the premier players who cannot make the scheduled practices. They pay a monthly fee. Leawood recreation players can also take advantage of this program. This will give them the option to see if they want to devote the time and energy to playing premier. This is good for the active children who play rec and continue to work on their skills.

Kim asked Bob to notify her if he continues to receive feedback. She will add the questions to the FAQ.

Chair Reimer reported that she sees us changing the face of premier soccer with this partnership. In the past there wasn’t a place to go without playing level six and paying the expensive prices. This gives everyone a place to go and have fun.

Kim added that the partnership also gives siblings a chance to play under the same facility.

II. New Business

A. Project List

Chris reported that a project list is submitted each year in June. The list will be updated soon and presented at the June meeting. She will e-mail the list with the minutes prior to the June meeting. Once received, please e-mail her with any questions.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if the project list is prioritized.

Chris replied that it is not at this time.

Karen Reimer reported that the list was prioritized in the past. Is the list new since this was done.

Chris reported that this is correct. She will make sure a new list is sent out in the future as soon as it is revised.

B. Staff Reports

Brian reported that the Bike Committee met last week. He is pleased to report that the Complete Street Resolution has been reviewed by the legal department, planning staff and recommended by the planning commission. This will be considered by the City Council May 16. If approved the committee will recommend that we apply for a bicycle friendly city status again. He will meet with Chris to see if Council approval is needed. The due date for the application is July 22, 2011.

Jacquie McKinney asked if they told Brian why he must reapply.

Brian reported that he received a large document feedback explaining why. The number one item was the Complete Street Resolution. They always provide a feedback report to encourage progression.

Chris reported that this will not need Council approval. It isn't a grant and there aren't any attachments related to it.

Chair Karen Reimer reported that Council approval wasn't needed when applied before.

Brian added that May 16 – May 22 is bike to work week. A Cycle Smarts 101 course is being offered for new cyclist as a kick-off to the week. It will be taught by a certified League of American Bicycle instructor.

The Leawood bicycle officers are also offering a Family Bicycle Festival in City Park on Friday, May 20. The event is free. Pre-registration is required by contacting the police department. The event will provide training for families who would like to learn more about riding together in a group.

There will also be a Tour De Brew event that will go through Leawood. We don't have anything to do with the event but they reserved the North Lake shelter. They will tour all of the historic brewing locations throughout the metro.

Brian reported that the Arbor Day event was held last week at Ironwoods Park. The Lions Club assisted with stuffing the seedlings.

Brian reported that the pool was filled this week.

The pond at Gezer Park was cleaned earlier this month. All of the rocks were removed and everything was pressure washed. His staff will continue to monitor the chlorine level in the pond. It was good to drain it, clean it and replace rocks where they belong.

Brian added that Ironwoods pond has lot of algae and water primrose developing along the outer perimeter. He contacted the pond management company to look at it. He had them treated in the past but not on a yearly maintenance schedule like other ponds. It may be time to schedule this on a consistent basis.

The water level is down at the south pond. The overflow drain, which is galvanized pipe, rusted through. Hydraulic cement was used to patch it. The pond elevation should come back up soon. ,

Brian reported that a cracked slide (that was under warranty) was replaced at Tomahawk Park. A cargo net at I-Lan is also loose and will be repaired soon. They installed "Cloud Gate" last week with assistance from the artist. The landscaping will be done in the near future.

Kim reported that Lindsay Hart accepted the Recreation Superintendent position with the City of Lenexa. This is a great promotion for Lindsay although she will be missed. The posting for her position closes tomorrow. Interviews will be scheduled within the next couple of weeks.

Pool passes went on sale May 2. The individual pass sale comments received have been favorable for the most part. The smaller families are appreciative of the change. Evening and weekend hours begin this Saturday. The pool opens May 28th.

Kim added that we are again participating in the Passport to Adventure Program. The Oxford School and the Nature Center are both featured. This is a great promotional tool with a lot of visitors.

Kim reported that "Jaws" will be shown on the big screen at 8:30p.m., Friday, June 3, in front of the pool building. This is a free community event. The east concession will be open.

Kim added that National Trails Day will be held at Ironwoods Park, June 4 at 9:00 am.

Kim reported that June 6th will kick off swim team and swim lessons, as well as all the day camps.

April reported that a reception will be held for "Cloud Gate" on May 19th at 6:00 p.m. at I-Lan Park. The artist will be available to ask questions.

April added that the schoolhouse has been busy fulfilling end of year badge requirements.

April reported that the Medicine on the Trail event was very well attended.

April added that the Oxford "School Master" will begin the second week of June. The hours will be the same as the Nature Center.

April passed around invitations for the Oxford Territory park sign dedication event that will be held soon. The scouts who participated in building the structure will be present. Cookies will be served.

April reported that the first art show of the year will be held at the Ava Reynolds Gallery, 134th & Roe Avenue on Friday night June 17, at 6:00 p.m. They will continue to tour local galleries this summer.

Jacquie added that receptions held there are usually nice.

April added that there are a lot of fun family events coming up. There are several kids concerts, a bird show (Wings of Love), and a puppet show (StoneLion Puppets).

April reported that the Prairie Book Club will begin July 8 and last throughout the summer.

Chris reported that they are in the process of finalizing the details with the Chamber for Taste of Leawood. The event will be held June 11th at City Park.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked how they will monitor the ticket procedure.

Chris replied that there will be a check-in area.

Chris reported that the department's fall Program Guide will be delivered the first week in August. Deadline for submittal of information is June 21st.

Chris added that a Large Item Recirculation Day has been scheduled for June 4. It will be advertised in the Sun newspaper. Town & Country has been contracted to remove items (not recirculated on Saturday) on Sunday morning. The flyer will be sent to all HOA's to notify everyone of this event via a blast e-mail.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if the City supports recirculation day financially.

Chris reported that the City supports the cost for picking up the remaining items. It is usually \$600 per truckload.

Brian added that in the past one truckload was used. It comes out of the SAB budget.

Chris added that the Lodge was featured in the Star today for "good deals" on where to host a wedding reception. We are still not showing any decline for the weekend rentals.

Amy reported that she hopes the prices aren't raised. It is nice to have something affordable in Leawood.

Chair Karen Reimer agreed.

Chris reported that it is nice to have the free advertisement.

Misc.

Karen asked when is the last time we looked at our programming and evaluated if we are reaching all age groups. The Johnson County Parks & Recreation District has a large senior section of things they do. She isn't suggesting adding any additional programming but she is aware that they haven't been well attended in years past. She is wondering if enough time has elapsed that we can reevaluate them again.

Chris reported that this is a good comment but Johnson County has three senior centers to host events with a division just for that population.

Amy reported that she remembers discussing increasing senior activities if a Community Center is built.

Chris added that she and Kim discussed that we may have more opportunity once the Justice Center is built. The Oak room receives a lot of use with City events, which makes it difficult to host repetitive classes. They are often interrupted and moved around. This causes frustration. It will help if our department moves upstairs. Perhaps we can reconfigure some space.

Kim reported that the long standing, and well attended classes, such as Tai Chi and Yoga tie up the Oak room, which conflicts with outside groups who would like to use it. A group recently inquired about using the room Monday – Thursday, 8:00 am to 5:00 pm for a meeting but we were unable to accommodate the request.

April reported that even though we don't have class offerings for the seniors; the history and art events are primarily attended by the senior population. They are receiving the cultural programs. They are not being ignored.

Kim added that she and Brock discussed purchasing a Wii to host leagues, in addition to the monthly senior lunches.

Chris reported that they are doing this in Shawnee and Lenexa as well as other cities. Seniors travel and compete against each other.

Chair Reimer reported that today is Mark Mergen's last meeting. He has contributed a lot over the many years he has served on the Board and she is appreciative of all he has done. He will be missed. *The Committee applauded Mark for his efforts. Cake was served in his honor.*

Chris reported that resident Lorrie Hamilton recently wrote the Mayor inquiring about her interest to serve on the Parks & Recreation Committee. Chris read the e-mail to the Committee. She is confident she will be an asset to the Committee because she has adequate knowledge and personal usage of park facilities.

Jacquie McKinney reported that she sounds like a perfect person to volunteer on the Committee.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked where we are in relation to the project list for the bridge work across the street. Is this on the current project list.

Chris reported that she hasn't received an update on it. She doesn't think anything will happen until the land we own is developed.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked where we are in regards to the report from the consultant with the extension from the trails on 124th Street.

Chris reported that this has been completed for awhile. She spoke with Scott regarding having a work session for this project. Hopefully this will happen in the near future. Both options are expensive. The work session is needed. Members of the Park Board are encouraged to attend the work session when it gets scheduled.

Chair Reimer asked Chris to send an e-mail to Park Board members when the meeting is scheduled.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked where we are regarding the dog park.

Chris reported that we are in waiting for the first transfer of land (acreage at I-435 and State Line) from Hallbrook's attorney, Fred Logan.

Amy asked if there is a timeframe for the dog park if it will happen.

Chris reported that it is unfunded at this time. The first step is to get the land but it will need to be discussed with the council.

Chris reported that in relation to staffing issues, she has been directed that there won't be any new positions in 2012. In relation to the acreage we will maintain; Lou is correct regarding the 16.5 acres per body he mentioned earlier. We currently mow an area that is 7 acres across the street, and the Justice Center site, which is 12.5 acres.

Brian reported that if brought to fruition this will be really intensive. If we own the property and are mowing it as now perhaps one person can do the job. But once landscape is added or anything other than mowing is needed, it is considered high maintenance and additional staff will be needed.

C. Next Meeting Date – June 14 (Agenda)

Chair Karen Reimer reported that the next meeting will is scheduled for June 14, 5:30p.m. She would like to have the meeting at Gezer Park. It will be nice to see all of the new additions.

III. City Council Report – Julie Cain/Lou Rasmussen

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he would like to make sure that the Committee recognizes that the City Council authorized Scott Lambers to enter into negotiations to purchase land east of Ironwoods Park from the present boundary over towards the Kenneth Road extension at the last Council meeting. This is roughly 40 – 50 acres.

We need to make sure that before it is purchased, there is a clean title and that the easement in that area are not totally restricted in terms of park utilization. There is also a railroad that goes through the area.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that he wanted to make sure that this was going to be an active park. He is aware that there is the possibility of people moving in and saying that they weren't notified.

There was a conceptual plan that was handed out that shows soccer fields, a proposed new location for the amphitheatre, which will be interesting due to the fact that we have expended \$400,000 in the existing area. It will be more expensive to move it.

He has sympathy for the maintenance staff in regards to the acreage. In his opinion it is best to hold it to 16.5 acres per maintenance employee.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that it is important for the Committee to understand that it will cost multiple millions of dollars to develop the area. There are roads to build, a lot of which are in the flood plain. Purchasing the property is the beginning.

Amy asked what is currently in the area.

Council Liaison Rasmussen replied that there isn't anything in the area at this current time. It was a proposed trail going east through the property and the flood plain. There are roughly fourteen acres that are subject to flood. This isn't a surprise. Most of the time if cities can attain park land it isn't pristine meadow land. It is going to be a financial challenge to develop the area. There may also be political issues due to some of the roads are considered to be cut straight through the neighborhood.

Council Liaison Rasmussen wants to make sure everyone understands that the plan is conceptual. We are in the beginning stages to try to purchase the property.

Chair Karen Reimer asked who did the conceptual plan.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that Scott Lambers put the plan together.

Council Liaison Rasmussen shared that it is his opinion that the Parks & Recreation Committee should look at the needs of the citizens of Leawood. A question might be if the area will be needed for additional soccer fields, with the Legends coming on board. Or would the area be better utilized for additional playground area on the east side to coincide with the playground areas on the west.

It is important to acquire the land first. Deciding how the land should be developed can be discussed in the future.

Bob asked about the community center financial outlay in lieu of this land and its development.

Council Liaison Rasmussen replied that the *guesstimate* to get the land is \$800,000.

Chair Reimer asked if this is close to the amount paid for Ironwoods Park initially.

Chris reported that it was about \$15,000 per acre.

Bob asked Council Liaison Rasmussen to clarify that fourteen acres are in the flood plain.

Council Liaison Rasmussen replied that at least fourteen acres are in the flood plain.

Chris reported that it is her understanding that we are not paying for the flood plain acreage. When they originally developed the area it was determined that they would deed that to us via stipulations.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he also brought up at the Council meeting that the area was originally residential development. There are homes association restrictions. It will be in the best interest of the City if all of the restrictions are removed before the land is conveyed to us. He wants to be sure it is clean as a whistle if received. This will require a lot of planning in terms of the needs of the City from the point of view of recreation.

Chair Karen Reimer asked if a master plan is needed.

Bob had the same question. Doubling the size of Ironwoods Park at the very far south tip of the City of Leawood may be less attractive than putting a community center in the heart of Leawood accessible to the residents in north and south Leawood.

Bob added that before moving forward with a financial outlay for another park, it would be nice for residents to complete a survey to get the real truth from citizens from each ward.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he is only one Councilman but in his opinion this isn't going to happen.

Bob asked why this wouldn't be done if it was done for the other.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that as of Monday night it was decided that the land would be acquired.

Bob added that it will cost less to purchase the land to develop it. In the long run it may cost more to develop the land than to build a community center.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that another concept is to relocate the amphitheatre.

Amy Vlastic, Jacquie McKinney and Chair Karen Reimer reported that they would never support this. This is not an option.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that if they should express their opinion if they feel strongly about this.

April asked where the estimated \$800,000 come from. Will there be another bond.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the City of Leawood has been conservatively managed for the past two decades that he is aware of. We started with \$50 million dollars in cash. A portion of this is dedicated for the justice center. We purchased land on the corner of Roe and 117th Street for roughly \$5.5 million which leaves \$29 million. If another million is used; there is currently \$28 million remaining.

It is important to watch as a Council that we do not drive the cash position to the point we lose our credit rating which will affect a long term ability to finance long term park improvements.

We need to keep 20% of the annual revenue as a minimum. It also contemplates an increase.

Jacquie McKinney asked who owns the land.

Council Liaison Rasmussen answered that it is foreclosed land owned by the bank. The bank would like to sell the property.

Amy asked if Leawood needs more parks.

Chris reported that she agrees with Lou; we never want to turn down property. It is wise to get the land and develop it later.

Amy reported that our community is missing areas for people to use and have fun; not necessarily a finished park. It will be nice to have a playing field to throw the ball around or for the football teams to practice.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that even if it is an open football field or an area just for play; it will require maintenance.

Bob reported that he would support purchasing the land and having it available but nothing further.

Jacquie McKinney reported that she agrees with Amy; maybe we try to develop a park too much; i.e., shelters and restrooms etc. If we acquire the land it would be nice to have trails, wildlife areas, wet land areas and open fields. She understands they will need to be maintained but it will be nice to have space to roam and throw a picnic blanket.

Bob asked if a concept plan is necessary to move forward and bring this to fruition. He would prefer not having a concept.

Chair Karen Reimer reported that she agrees.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he is merely reporting what was discussed Monday at the Council meeting. If there are any questions, please feel free to ask him. There is also a drawing available of the concept plan if anyone would like to review it.

Amy reported that if a drawing is available; the ideas are there.

Chris passed a copy around for Committee members to review. Chris explained the drawing.

Mark Mergen made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Jacque McKinney seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department