



**ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes – June 14, 2011**  
**5:30 p.m. – Gezer Park – Shelter House 13251 Mission Road, Leawood Kansas**

Board members in attendance: Karen Ward Reimer (chair), Doug Stevens, Lorrie Hamilton, and Amy Vlasic.

Board members absent: Rod Crawford, Jacquie McKinney and Bob Wright.

Council Liaisons attending: Julie Cain and Lou Rasmussen

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

Chair Karen Ward-Reimer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Amy Vlasic made a motion to approve the May 10, 2011 minutes. Doug Stevens seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**I. Introduction of New Park Board Member (Lorrie Hamilton)**

Lorrie introduced herself to the board. She inquired about getting involved because she is active in our parks and her children grew up playing Leawood soccer and using the city pool. She is anxious to be involved and appreciates the opportunity to serve on the committee.

**II. Old Business**

**A. Gezer Park Construction Update**

Brian reported that the mason will return soon to install the cinder blocks around the columns for the new shelter. The face stone is being imported from Israel and should arrive soon. The sod was installed today. The Havdalah garden was also completed today.

Council Liaison Cain replied that she was told basil was also planted. Will it be used or snipped back.

Brian replied that his staff snips it back routinely. It also has a nice flower on it if left alone for awhile.

Brian reported that the retaining wall around the fire pit was built by the contractor but the surrounding landscaping was done in-house.

Chris reported that the new shelter is slightly different than the existing one. The stone is 6ft high which is lower the current shelter. The shelter is also open air.

Chair Ward-Reimer asked if the location of the rock is known.

Brian reported that he is uncertain where it is but will check.

Council Liaison Cain asked if the Jewish Federation will reschedule their event with the fire pit.

Chris reported that since the holiday has passed they will not have it. They have discussed possibly doing an event of some kind in September. She asked the Mayor to discuss it with Alan Edelman of the Jewish Federation and Alice Hawk from the Leawood Foundation This will be a good time to recognize the donors.

Council Liaison Cain asked if a signage will be posted to inform patrons that the use of the fire pit is by permit only.

Chris reported that signage may be posted, however; it will remain locked. The gas is only accessible by key.

Chris reported that the Foundation continues to fundraise in hopes to raise money to purchase the climbing boulders. They are meeting Thursday. She will provide them with updated pricing information.

Amy Vlasic asked if the benches will arrive soon for the shaded area.

Chris reported that two square tables like the current model types have been ordered.

Chair Ward-Reimer reported that the park looks really nice.

Council Liaison Cain reported that the display case needs attention. She visits the park often and the literature isn't mounted correctly, and often comes lose.

Chris replied that the cork board holding the literature isn't very thick. She will research other options to hold the material.

Council Liaison Cain suggested laminating the information on one large sheet and mounting it to a cork board.

Chris agreed that laminating it on one piece would be a better option. She will get this done soon.

## **B. Pricing Policy for Fees and Charges**

Chris passed a DRAFT copy of the pricing policy to the Committee members. She made a few revisions since being e-mailed to the Committee last week. Council Liaison Rasmussen provided word smithing which was necessary.

Chris reported that in 2006 when going through the budget there was a desire by the Council to review cost recovery. The Parks and Recreation has the most variety of fees and charges. At that time the City was using PFC, an outside consulting firm to help build their budget model. There was work done that showed all of the operations from the Parks & Recreation Department and a work session was held with the Council.

Chris added that the City has a general policy within their budget documents that states staffs should try to recover as much as possible. Staff felt that there wasn't a clear directive on how much should be recovered. The work session did not resolve the questions or formulate a defined policy.

It was decided by staff to transcribe what we were already doing so that the Park Board can review it, make comments, and a recommendation before the Council reviews it. Another work session is currently scheduled for September 19th.

Chris added that she would like the Advisory Board to review the policy and offer any suggestions or comments, or ask questions. There are several new Council members who may not understand the way we operate in establishing fees.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that the Leawood City Council has financial policies that cover all of the operations of the City in terms of debt issuance, cash flow, investments of cash, and fees and charges. This is a very broad range.

If looked at closely the policy doesn't include debt recovery as it shouldn't. The reason is people voted for the parks and when they did so, they voted for a tax to pay for them in the form of property taxes. For example, when Ironwoods was built people were informed of the cost in the bond issue. It seems odd to him that if we are coming up with a fee schedule for utilization of the parks we are double dipping the citizens of Leawood who are already paying in terms of debt so it shouldn't be rolled into the fee calculations again. Essentially the parks never included debt services.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that we need to identify indirect cost, direct cost and administrative cost. Some things are obvious but some should be defined. Class size determination is also questionable. Parks and Recreation has always looked at the demand structure and increased the fees accordingly. The object is to recover more of our cost if there is a huge demand. If the Lodge is busier in certain months, it would be cost effective to increase fees.

There are sections that discuss events free of charge. For example, the Holiday Lighting Ceremony and the July 4th celebration. The fireworks alone cost \$25,000 - \$35,000 without staff cost and additional expenses.

Council members should be able to express their concerns and bring them up for discussion but aren't here to micro manage the department. The Director has the right to establish the fees and decide how much of the direct or indirect administrative cost will be charged. Refunds should be handled the same. The Parks and Recreation Director is paid to do the job. All appeals should be addressed to her and not City Council. Those who don't like how she is running the department can also bring this up for discussion.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that in his opinion this is a very comprehensive document. He hopes everyone takes the time to study it and think about personal experiences from a user point of view.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added also that it is important that we remain cognoscente of what's going on around us regarding the fees and what other municipalities are charging.

Council Liaison Cain asked how new the document is. How long has it be in existence. She recently saw the document for the first time.

Chris replied that it is new to the City Council but not to the Park Board. It has been around since March 2007. Non-residents are charged more than residents because residents are typically paying on the debt of where the classes or events are held or; they are paying property taxes in general, or both.

Chris asked the Committee if there were any questions prior to moving forward with the discussion.

Lorrie asked what percentage of non-resident fees we collect. Is there an average across the board.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the tax payers pay the taxes to build the facilities. The question arose a long time ago if it was unfair. At that point the City Council decided that if a patron isn't paying taxes it was fair to charge slightly higher. We wanted to make sure that it is a degree of fairness in terms of pricing and not restrict non-residents from using Leawood facilities. The draft mentions 10-40%.

Chris reported that she can run the numbers to give an exact percentage but it will be different across the spectrum of activities. Soccer has 26% residents, which is opposite from the pool that has more residents than non residents.

Lorrie reported that there should be some things such as the lodge and rental facilities that appeal to non-residents, which would be a nice source for a higher fee.

Chris reported that the Lodge receives a lot of non-resident use. The City also uses it during its down time. We continue to get more bookings during the week. It has been extremely consistent.

Chair Ward-Reimer reported that she was asked if residents have priority calling when making a reservation.

Chris and Kim both agreed that this is offered for Leawood residents.

Chris asked the Committee to review the policy. It will be discuss at the July meeting. Tonia will mail the policy to the Committee members absent tonight for their review.

Chair Karen Reimer reported that this will be a priority at the July meeting. It is imperative that all attend if possible. This will be a work session meeting to finalize the policy and move forward.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that feedback is needed and appreciated via e-mail if unable to attend the July meeting.

Doug Stevens agreed that this is a good idea.

### **III. New Business**

#### **A. Project List**

Chris reported that she will e-mail the Department's project list to all Committee members. The list consists of projects to be completed whether it's moving the trail, installing signage etc. It will not include minor projects such as mowing the lawn. Please direct all questions to Chris or Brian.

Amy asked if the list will be prioritized.

Chris reported that it is not prioritized at this time but she will work with Brian to prioritize it. Most of the projects are the responsibility of Park Maintenance. They always have and continue to do a good job.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he thought a determination was made by City Council that parks maintenance staff is responsible for maintaining 16.5 acres. It is important to remember this especially because we are contemplating purchasing additional land.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that adding additional acres on top of the eight acres for the potential dog park, and also the Justice Center will all need maintenance. It is nice to have the space but the maintenance staff will need help.

Chris reported that this is a good point. Once the City purchases property whether developed or not it needs maintenance. Recent purchasing include 4.3 acres on the corner of 117<sup>th</sup> & Roe. The maintenance staff is responsible for mowing and keeping the sidewalks clean. The Justice Center parcel that consists of 12.5 acres also need mowing and the sidewalks kept clean per code. A quick claim deed will be received soon for the 10.25 acres at 435 & State Line. The potential 8 acres from Hallbrook for the dog park and the additional 45 – 50 acres would total about 80 more acres the existing maintenance staff will be responsible for maintaining. This will significantly increase the 16.5 acres per maintenance staff.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that we should consider what it takes to maintain the parks if we are budgeting five – ten years out. He receives a lot of compliments about the parks as well as Tomahawk Creek Parkway. The maintenance staff does a good job.

Brian reported that when looking at the past project list a lot of things are completed. This is a testament to staff.

## **B. Staff Reports**

Brian reported that Saturday was the first Spoke 'n Art ride. There were twenty riders. This was a perfect number for a first time event. It was well received with perfect weather. He was very appreciative of April and the Arts staff. Presentations were given at the art pieces. He has received positive feedback.

Council Liaison Cain reported that Council Liaison Deb Fila participated and really enjoyed it.

Tonia added that Chuck Sipple of the Ironhorse Golf Committee also rode in the event and enjoyed it as well. He learned a lot about the art pieces near his home and invited others to participate when the event is held again.

Brian added that a man who resides in Manhattan also participated. He saw it on a Kansas Cyclist website.

Brian reported that they are in the process of trimming the brush back on the trail. They will apply fungicide to the soccer fields soon.

Brian also reported that the shelters have been extremely busy. The staff has an hour window to jump in after one party ends to wash the shelter down and clean it for the next rental. It takes time to keep everything clean.

Brian reported that Large Item Recirculation Day was held recently. It was held in a new area (199<sup>th</sup> south to 135<sup>th</sup> street), which was also a new area for the contractor picking up the items. He received a few calls regarding items that weren't picked up. There was more calls time than the last recirculation day. Some were items people didn't understand shouldn't be picked up such as construction debris. He also received a lot of positive comments.

Council Liaison Cain reported that there were five trucks instead of one as in the past. We are faced with \$600.00 per truck for a total of \$3,000. The Green Committee only has an annual budget of \$10,000. She is not happy with this and will discuss this at the budget session. The Committee has hard workers who do amazing things.

Council Liaison Cain also reported that the area south of 135<sup>th</sup> Street will be done in the fall.

Chris reported that half of what was put out was taken by someone else prior to Town & Country arriving.

Brian reported that he and Chris met with the leader of Scout Troop 10 and an Eagle Scout (Nick) who is interested in adopting Gezer Park as a litter and general cleanup project. He is excited to have an organized group of boy scouts who would assist with clean up once a week on a rotation basis. This would be helpful to have them wipe off the signs where the birds enjoy perching as well as the bollard lights in addition to what blows and grows in the wadi.

Chris added that the young man in charge of helping to organize the park adoption is from Blue Valley North. It is nice that young people are getting involved with their community.

Chris also reported that Jack Goldsborough, Captain of the Blue Valley North swim team, was riding on the trail recently and noticed a lot of trash in the stream and along the banks. He contacted the Parks and Recreation Department and expressed an interest in organizing the swim team to adopt a portion of the trail to keep it clean.

Chris added that the maintenance staff removes the trash but it returns quickly if it rains, so additional help would be greatly appreciated. One group will start working on the trail and the other will begin the park adoption. They can both work under the same adoption criteria. Once this is started more groups will likely want to participate. Our goal is to have people being able to adopt all, or even portions of, each park and the trails. Even if it is only picking up trash, it will allow the parks maintenance staff to work on other projects such as tree trimming or cleaning the busy shelters. This will be an exciting partnership.

April added that the nice part about both groups is they have a perpetual influx of new people. If it goes well it should continue for years.

Tonia reported that she would like to reiterate what Brian reported earlier. The shelters have been extremely busy. The shelters are reserved in five hour blocks of time and most days both time slots are taken.

Brian reported that Tonia makes the reservations. He sends numerous inquiries her way when people contact him.

Council Liaison Cain asked if a fee is charged for the use of a shelter.

Tonia reported that the shelters are reserved by charging a resident/non resident fee. The cost varies depending on the size of the shelter.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if anyone will inform the Jewish Community when the new shelter at Gezer is available for rent. It was designed to replicate, as close as possible, agricultural celebrations they have. This was the intent when it was built.

Chris reported that the panels to replicate the Sukkah will be placed for them to see during the activity in September. A lot of people from the Jewish community should attend. It will be advertised in The Jewish Chronicle as well.

Kim reported that Dennis Jones has been hired as the Outdoor Recreation Specialist. He has been a seasonal on staff since 2006. He has an extensive business/sales background and will bring a lot of new ideas on marketing the course.

Kim added that Shelly Pollock will begin Monday as the new Aquatics and Special Events Supervisor. She is originally from Iowa. She was the Aquatics Director for the YMCA and owned a dance studio for nineteen years. She has been a swim/dive coach and has a very extensive swim background.

Kim reported that the summer kicked off last Monday. The nature camps are full with a waiting list. Jeff has a class size of fifteen.

Kim also reported that the first swim meet is tonight.

Kim added that more than 3000 individual pool passes have been sold so far.

Council Liaison Cain asked if this is more than years past.

Kim reported that it is difficult to determine at this point. With the family pass, they would buy cards for everyone. Passes are sold on an individual basis only this year. We are \$5000.00 lower than we were last year on season passes YTD but this can change and will be compared to daily pass sales.

Kim added that the individual system is working out well. A lot of people are purchasing them for the person that is actually using the pool regularly.

Kim also reported that super pass sales have dropped minimally from where we were at this same time in 2010. This is to be expected. The first year everyone is excited to participate and think it's a great idea. Some have found that they don't use it as often as they thought they would so they decided not to participate this year. The interlocal agreement really helps. A pool pass holder can attend any pool in the agreement with their Leawood pass if the Leawood pool is closed for swim meets. This resolves the issue of the pool closing at 4:00 on swim meet dates. This gives pass holders the opportunity to try the additional pools without having a super pass.

Kim reported that the fourth of July celebration is approximately three weeks away. The Council will receive parking passes in the Council packet being distributed on June 30th.

April passed out flyers for the numerous upcoming events. "Grinnin and Groovin" will be the next event. There were 223 people at the bird show. More than 500 attended the Mr. Stinky Feet performance last week.

April reported that the schoolhouse has been busy. The reading club takes place Wednesday mornings.

April reported that the art show is this Friday. It will be a nice event with food and beverages. It will be held at the Eva Reynolds Gallery. The art shows will travel to new locations each time. They will not be held at M&I Bank as in years past. This will help promote the businesses in Leawood.

April also reported that the History of Legos Lecture will be held on June 18th. It is not an event to build Legos but rather a history of Legos.

April reported that rehearsals have started for "Bye-Bye Birdie". Council Liaison Azeltine will be acting, singing, and dancing. She encouraged all to attend.

Chris asked if everyone's had a chance to see the "Cloud Gate" art piece at I-Lan Park.

April reported that the reception has been rescheduled to Thursday, September 1, 6:00p.m. The artist will attend.

Chris also reported that the deadline for the fall Program Guide is next week the 21st. She is meeting tomorrow with Emergent Care Plus, one of our new sponsors.

Chris reported that the golf course is doing well. Troon has done a good job of increasing daily rounds of golf.

April reported that she is amazed at the popularity of the birthday parties the golf course provides. Very are popular with the children.

Chris reported that this is a new program. The children are taken to the P1, 2 and 3. Jeff said the kids love it. It's new and not being done by any other golf course. They play three holes and receive a package of items. Anyone interested in having a children's party should contact Jeff Thomasson.

April reported that that the rates are also very reasonable.

### **C. Misc.**

Chair Ward-Reimer reported that the City of Mission expressed an interest in attending the next meeting. Four (1 staff and 3 board members) will attend our July meeting.

Chair Ward-Reimer also reported that a group picture of the Park Board members will be taken at the September meeting.

Chris reported that this is a good idea. The picture will featured in the guide that will be distributed late November, early December.

Chair Ward-Reimer added that it would be nice have other recreation staff attend a few meetings per year so all Board members can meet them and they can report what is going on for themselves. The number of meetings they attend can be determined by Chris. She asked Chris to discuss this with staff and notify her when they will attend. She would like to have them attend before the fall.

Chris reported that this is a great idea. She will have the new employees Dennis and Shelly also attend the next meeting.

**D. Next Meeting Date – July 12 (Agenda)**

Amy Vlastic moved to adjourn the meeting. Doug Stevens seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25p.m. A tour of the recent park additions was given by Chris Claxton and Brian Anderson following the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks & Recreation Department