

ADVISORY BOARD
Meeting Minutes – July10, 2012 - 5:30 p.m.
Leawood City Hall – Maple Room

Board members in attendance: Karen Ward Reimer (chair), Lorrie Hamilton, David Harwood, Dave Coleman and Bob Wright.

Board members absent: Doug Stevens and Amy Vlastic.

Council Liaison attending: Lou Rasmussen.

Council Liaison absent: Julie Cain

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

Chair Ward Reimer called the meeting to order at 5:57p.m.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that there is a correction to the June 12, meeting minutes. On page 4 he reported about the land from Hallbrook. He intended to report that the City of Leawood had “*accepted*” the land, not “*purchased*” the land.

Tonia reported that she will make the corrections as reported.

David Harwood made a motion to approve the June 12, 2012 minutes with the correction as noted. Lorrie Hamilton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

I. Old Business

A. Discuss new steps for Ironwoods Park Development

Chris reported that she will be working on putting together packets within the next couple of days (including DVD’s that consists of minutes from the public forum) for distribution. Minutes and e-mails received by the City Administrator prior to the forum, from those unable to attend, will also be included. Also included will be the sign-in sheets of those in attendance and a copy of the public notice and flyer.

Chris reported that all ideas submitted will be compiled into a spreadsheet. Once received, the information should be ranked with a 1, 2, or 3 with 1 being the highest. An instruction sheet will be included to clarify the ranking process.

Chair Ward – Reimer reported that it may be best to rank the top three instead of individually.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that the Mayor had a work session concerning what questions would be asked. At that time a question arose about having a master plan for all City Parks. Council approved the concept for funding; 85k for 2013. He, the Mayor and City Administrator, along with Chris, will meet Friday to determine if a work session with City Council is the next step to develop a Master Plan (scope) for request for proposal or whether it will start at the Committee level. The concern is if the input is better received from the

Committee up or from the Council down. Hopefully the Mayor will decide on Friday the direction she would like to go.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he is elated to have funding. This has been in the works for years. Committee members also expressed their excitement for a new plan.

David Harwood reported that in the past what he has done with similar groups is invited a consultant to help develop a scope. It is so hard internally to know what should be there. You will go back and forth several times with consultants to try to get the scope right for the fee but he found that including the consultants in the process of developing the scope is beneficial and reduces a lot of back and forth discussions and gets a scope that will match better with the budget.

Council Liaison Rasmussen appreciated the suggestions.

Chris reported that we've had the advantage of Overland Park in the beginning stages and Lenexa recently completed their plans. She has their scopes. It will be helpful to define clarity of staff's vision and to be able to share their information. Looking at all facilities, land (developed and undeveloped) we have, all the programs and opportunities we offer, deficiencies in programming and trying to determine suggestions they might have and a snapshot of what's been done over the last twenty-five years.

Chris added that twenty plus years is a long time. The deficiency may be the gap in time. It will be nice to see what other municipalities are doing.

Chair Ward Reimer added that all will intertwine as we move ahead.

Chris reported that there will be a timeframe to return the information. The packet will be distributed to the Planning Commission, Council and Park Board. Another Work Session will be held afterwards.

Dave Coleman reported that he has an issue with ranking at this time due to not knowing the scope of the future of the parks. He will have a different ranking if this is the only thing the City will approach, from a parks standpoint, in the next ten years. If he knows there is a more complex plan with land designated for fields etc. it might determine his ranking.

Dave stated that he would feel comfortable putting the project on hold until the master plan is complete. If expected to vote now, he would like to leave it alone to develop a comprehensive plan. Moving forward isn't wise if the wrong choice is added for that location.

Chair Ward-Reimer reported that this might be putting the cart before the horse.

Chris added that Dave makes a good point and is also a question for the playground addition to Brook Beatty Park. This will be discussed at the Council meeting on the 16th. The question is if the improvement should be taken through the process, which would be designing, going through the Planning Commission etc. or wait until the Master Plan is done to see if the need for the area is valid.

Lorrie asked if there is a process of recommendation that the Committee can request to slow down across the board with Brook Beatty and Ironwoods parks until the master plan is complete. Things could potentially change if done before the master plan. This should be number one.

David Harwood asked how far into 2013 will it be before budget dollars will be available to potentially have a consultant on board. The process could potentially take 12-18 months before we have a revised master plan. If there are opportunities to enhance some of the areas now, and

there may be things that could be done that wouldn't be wasteful, we could to try to identify what they might be to consider moving forward on.

Dave suggested putting the entire process on hold until we have a master plan.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that it may not be a priority to do Brook Beatty first. It is ready to go and wouldn't be a big issue on a smaller scale but the Committee may find that the \$100K may be spent elsewhere. How will Council feel if we decide to put things on hold and wait until the master plan is done?

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that this is the reason there is a Parks & Recreation Committee.

David asked if the \$100K is allocated, can we change it to get a consultant on board for a master plan.

Chris reported that they are both allocated for 2013 but this isn't impossible if the Council decides they favor this option.

Bob reported that he would prefer not spend any money on Ironwoods Park until a clear vision is accomplished. He resides in the northern part of Leawood and favors Brook Beatty. He prefers to wait until there is a comprehensive plan and receive a voice from all citizens before a final decision is made to do anything further south.

Chair Ward Reimer asked if a motion should happen at this point or should the remaining Members of the Committee have the opportunity to speak and table it to a further meeting.

Chris reported that she is uncertain of the time line to get the packet with rankings turned in.

Bob asked if the packets that will be distributed are a brainstorming session to determine levels of interest or will directly result in decisions of what should or should not be out there (Ironwoods). There isn't anything wrong with brainstorming, gauging levels of interest and making limited process of what's worth considering. These aren't bad steps but to imply anything other than this wouldn't be wise at this time. He agrees it is putting the cart before the horse. We have plenty of time; it will take at minimum twenty-four months before any monies are actually available to start developing.

Bob added that getting the master plan done is the main priority. We can make limited progress on other things.

Chris reported that once packets are received everyone will be able to have the information, look at the suggestions and review the DVD containing the citizens input who attended. The twenty-four month timeframe is reasonable because it moves quickly while you are in the process.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that there are obvious things on the list that we might be able to move ahead with that are not making big decisions without totally putting Ironwoods on the back burner- understanding that the master plan is the main priority.

David Harwood reported that with processing the input from Ironwoods it gives us a chance, when a consultant is brought on board, to provide them with input from higher levels in the city to say these are public comments received. They would also have the input from leadership in the City and incorporate what we think, which is also important. It may not all be at Ironwoods. There may be better applications looking at the larger park structure.

Chris reported that she would like to see some methods of understanding there are desires and then there are facts. When looking at facts- as an example, additional shelters are needed as we frequently turn away requests. There needs to be factual information provided rather than people picking what they like but not knowing all the information. As an example in regards to the dog park- people may suggest the need for one in Ironwoods but 99% of them may not know there may be one at City Park. If they knew, would they want two?

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that whatever comes out Friday is crucial. The first decision in terms of the scope definition is when we talk about parks what are we talking about. Are we talking about every park we have, Gezer, I-Lan, City Park, Ironwoods, etc.? Are we talking about the interconnections between them, the greenways or the trails?

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that the first thing that should be considered is what we are asking the consultant to look at. What are the recreational needs of the city? The north end has characteristics that are lacking in his opinion. But, to what extent do you join agencies and communities that may or may not have recreational facilities. If they do, to what extent should mileage between them be considered. It takes a lot of time to get the identification of the recreational needs of the city together.

Council Liaison Rasmussen suggested continuing to receive input. Staff and the committee should concentrate on the response from the public and the necessary uses. The list should not be thought of with the characteristics of the site. The master planner will do this. Obviously permanent structures cannot be added on some of the easements and some uses won't be allowed in the flood plain or flood way. The committee should consider looking at the list to see if it makes sense to include in the overall use of the 45 acres. The list is a major factor. A consultant will need our input. There is a lot to work to be done.

Chris added that the more work staff does on the front side the less money it will cost on the backside. It also helps that we have good records. Nothing will break ground in the next year. We are not talking only geographics but also demographics. A consultant will look at what's being done for seniors, youth, etc. if that is in the scope.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that this will be revisited at the August committee meeting once clarification as how to proceed is received from the Mayor on Friday.

Chris reported that this will be best at that time as input can be received from Amy, Doug and Council liaison Cain who are absent tonight.

B. Discuss Approval of Revised City-wide Master Plan Funding 2013

Chair Ward Reimer and Chris agreed that this was discussed in Agenda Item A.

C. Discuss Council Action – Brook Beatty Park

Chair Ward Reimer and Chris also discussed this in Agenda Item A.

D. Project Updates

Brian reported that the contractor is excavating rock out of the north lake. They are getting close to being at the final depth. The trail is close to being at sub-grade. A meeting with the asphalt sub-contractor will be held tomorrow to discuss the final grade.

Brian added that one thing that slowed the asphalt was the notice that we were short with dirt on site, which required digging some out. Some was taken close to the old trail and it was reinforced with rip rap. This will be a better long term erosion control to keep it away from the new trail.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if we are on budget.

Brian reported that we are on budget, yes.

Brian reported that the trail should be open by August 1.

Brian reported that he met with Phelps Engineering and reviewed locations on the piece of trail at 123rd Mission. They will bring a proposal to develop the final construction documents to hire them to do the work.

Chris reported that she asked them to return it by September.

E. Mayors Thank You

Chair Ward Reimer asked Tonia to carry this to the August agenda due to other Committee members being absent. She received a really nice e-mail from the Mayor thanking the Committee for the forum and how well it went. It was well received that the Committee sat together as a whole to receive the citizens input. Many commented positively to her. The Mayor is very happy and asked that the compliment be passed on. She was thankful for the extra time and energy put into the forum.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that Chris has an addition to the agenda under Old Business.

Chris reported that she received a phone call from Hallmark Farms today. She and Patty have a meeting on July 19 with the Project Development Manager to coordinate documentation regarding the land donation at City Park.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that she also has an addition.

Chair Ward Reimer asked where we are on the signage at Gezer Park. This hasn't been brought up lately.

Chris reported that Alice Hawk is spearheading this but has been out of town several weeks. She plans to contact the Professor at Avila the week after the fourth of July. When they originally met, he requested being allowed to get through school and will begin working over the summer.

Chris added that the plaques have been mounted for the fire pit and Havdalah garden and will be installed next week.

Chair Ward Reimer asked Chris to provide an update on the signage at the September meeting.

II. New Business

A. Staff Reports

April reported that she has been busy with *Fiddler on the Roof*. Opening night is Thursday for a total of seven nights of the performance. Seats can be reserved by calling her or emailing the night you would like to attend.

April added that several concerts will begin after the play in August. A string trio will perform at City Hall, in the Oak Room on August 9. The Jazz Series will follow at Ironwoods.

April added that the school house been extremely busy this summer with a lot of programs.

Brian reported that he collected bids to have the cabins repainted in the near future.

Brian reported that it has been so hot, one-third of his staff have been assigned to watering trees and flowers.

Brian reported that they did a fungicide treatment to all soccer fields recently. It turned out really well. They do a preventative program that keeps the fungus at bay but keeps the grass growing.

Lorrie and Chair Ward Reimer agreed. The fields look really good. Lorrie added that the fields are “a sea of green” when all other grass is dead.

Brian added that they resumed working on a small sidewalk/trail project around the north side of the pool. They are making the area wider with budgeted trail money.

Brian reported that the Bike Committee met with several members of council as well as other staff and committee members who are interested in the bike plan. It was a positive meeting and we received positive feedback on what the staff has done with the map. They recommended we have a complete streets study done. It would look at linkage, sidewalks, where bike lanes are needed etc. The staff is interested in having a consultant that could help with the engineering and planning side, and justify what a certain design may be on a given intersection and helping prioritize what they may be. Having a master plan moving forward would be advantageous.

Chris asked if they are mainly talking about the corridor which they are calling the Town Center area.

Brian replied that the recommendation is the entire city focusing on the Town Center area. They will have a brainstorming session in the near future and invite the Police and Public Works Department.

Brian added that he has been working on trail destination signage. .

Kim reported that the July 4 event was very hot but a success from the fireworks standpoint. Activity band sales were down this year. The park was sparse until after 9:15 p.m. It was the hottest 4th of July in Kansas City since 1954.

David expressed that this was one of the best experiences his family’s had since moving to Kansas. The fireworks display was first class, as well as the activities.

Kim added that the dive team won the MoKan dive championships yesterday. This concluded the dive team season.

Kim reported that camps are winding down. There are a few more opportunities for camps such as tennis and challenger soccer camp beginning next week.

Kim added that swim team championships are next week.

Kim reported that the fall soccer deadline is July 25. Dan will be busy scheduling and placing kids on teams.

Kim also reported that she has been working on the holiday lighting bid for the event next year.

Bob asked if we are limited to the number of children allowed on swim team. He has friends who were unable to get on because they didn't sign up by 10a.m. the first day of sign-ups.

Kim replied that we are allowed a certain number by water space. We have 210 on the swim team. There are eighty children on the 11 and older swim team and 65 in each practice for 10 and under, which is the maximum. Space is tight. The demand for water space in the morning, opening at noon, and with dive/swim lessons, the pool is maxed from 7a.m. until we open at noon.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked how staff is getting along at the pool.

Kim reported that there is always attrition a little after mid-way through the year. They are in the process of hiring additional deck attendants.

Council Rasmussen Liaison reported that the Council accepted the policy in determining the fee schedule. This took six years. This is a long term achievement and very important.

Chris added that this is an accomplishment. It will be revisited every year including a work session later this fall.

III. Misc.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he represents the second Ward and he visits several areas of his ward walking his four legged friend. Recently one night, while walking in the rear of Mission Farms, there was a group of little children practicing soccer with a large number of parents watching. He asked a group of them why they were there instead of using our parks. He received a response that there isn't any room to practice in the park.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that there has to be something wrong when children have to use private property with the consent of the developer because we can't accommodate them in the parks. In his opinion this isn't right for them to scrounge around to find land to use. This is what we are all about. Why don't we have practice availability for this age group? This isn't the first time this has happened in his ward.

Council Liaison Rasmussen suggested to them that they call Chris and get information about utilizing our fields. This can't be a problem only in the North end. Lou asked Chris if she had received any calls.

Chris reported that she had not gotten any calls on this matter to date.

Lorrie reported that this issue is Johnson County wide. Soccer is a huge sport and there always more teams than practice fields available.

Bob reported that it cost \$55.00 per hour to rent the field. Renting the field is required if you aren't a part of the Leawood soccer, or an organized City of Leawood activity. If a developer or another area allows you practice for free this is where most practice. His church is heavily used for practice. Even if field space were made available he is uncertain if they would pay to use it.

Chris added that this is done because of a space issue. We take care of those teams registered in our leagues first. Once all practice times are filled space may be limited. The best thing to do is refer them to her.

Kim reported that when fields are rented they are done so on a two day per week basis per group. This is fair so one group doesn't dominate the fields.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that it was brought up in a recent Council meeting that 70% of the children playing soccer are non residents and 30% Leawood residents. This will have a huge impact if Leawood residents holler loud enough. This can't continue. He is speaking as one of eight Council members. Something is wrong with this.

Chris reported that she doesn't disagree but non residents are needed in order to field competitive play over a 7-8 week league period due to having different age groups. If not, we wouldn't be able to play. There aren't enough teams in Leawood alone. We aren't turning teams away.

Bob reported that when the park was built 4,000 kids played Leawood recreational soccer. Every single field was booked constantly. Currently, 2,000 kids play rec soccer, give or take. There is availability but not enough to allow anyone outside of the rec league to come in and satisfy their needs. A lot of players have been told that they need to be in competitive soccer league (true or not) and not recreational leagues. The competitive leagues have grown exponentially. There are five times as many now versus ten years ago.

Bob added that that we may be the minority but we have the fields, very nice fields, which is why the Legends wanted to partner with us for practices only. There is such a demand for field use. He recently met someone affiliated with The Legends and was told they need thirty practice fields due to the vast demand they are experiencing. If allowed to use our fields, it would run them down.

Lorrie reported that the non-residents are paying their fair share to play in our soccer league. They have as much right as the residents to use the fields if they are willing to pay the higher price.

Chris reported that all the points brought up are well taken.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if this is the same situation where the kids were playing football at Brookwood and asked to leave.

Chris reported that she is not aware of this. The issue is not black/white. She isn't going to restrict people from using the parks for general open space play but it is a different situation if she sees teams in full pads playing against each other. That might be a concern.

Chris reported that a decision was made in the beginning after renovating the park to baby the fields as they would primarily be used for games. This is what we've done. It is not just availability; it is also the amount and type of traffic on certain fields. Certain fields are rested periodically so they can recover. The more used it will get will get damaged. Lorrie is right; the lack of field space for practicing is a problem everywhere.

Brian reported that if the usage was increased it would cost the City more money. Currently there is a good balance. Research has shown when more events are allowed it can cause damage by being overused.

Chris added that something is better than nothing. Having more multi use practice fields would be good at Ironwoods, even in the flood plain.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that she would like to discuss the 40th year celebration for next year at the August meeting and requested it be added to the agenda.

David reported that he would also like to add an item to the August agenda. He would like to discuss any further developments regarding Facebook and/or Twitter that was brought up at a previous meeting.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that progress is being made in this regard. The City Council instructed the City Administrator to begin researching this. Mark Andrasik, Director of I.T. is also working on this. A follow up at the next meeting would be a good idea.

David added that a follow up would be nice at the next meeting.

David reported that he would also like to discuss the possibility of the capability of getting wireless, at some point, in all rooms at the City of Leawood. This will be critical moving forward due to the dynamic nature of what the Parks & Recreation Department does. Accessing information readily or receiving updated agenda items would be important. It would be beneficial to do so electronically.

IV. Next Scheduled Meeting Date – August 14, 2012

Chair Ward Reimer reported that she would like to discuss having the September meeting at one of the park shelters. Hopefully the weather will be much cooler. It will be great to have an outdoor meeting and beneficial for the new Committee members to see a different facility.

Dave asked about an overnight meeting at the cabins.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that this was discussed when the park was opened. It never happened but can be revisited in the future.

David reported that it would be nice to coordinate this with an activity at the challenge course or the amphitheatre.

Amy Vlasic made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave Coleman seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director
Parks and Recreation Department