



**ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes –January 13, 2015 - 5:30 p.m.**  
**Leawood City Hall – Maple Room**

Board members in attendance: Chair Karen Ward Reimer, Lorrie Hamilton, Dave Coleman, and David Harwood.

Board members absent: Bob Wright, Amy Vlastic, and Doug Stevens.

Council Liaisons present: Julie Cain

Council Liaisons absent: Lou Rasmussen

Staff members present: Brian Anderson, Chris Claxton, Tonia Morgan and Scott Gamerl.

Staff members absent: April Bishop and Kim Curran.

Chair Karen Ward Reimer called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Lorrie Hamilton made a motion to approve the November 11, 2014 meeting minutes. Dave Coleman seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chris introduced Scott Gamerl, the new Outdoor Education Supervisor at the Nature Center.

Committee members introduced themselves to Scott

**I. Old Business**

**A. Continued Discussion - Prioritization of Projects – Master Plan**  
*(Tabled from November meeting)*

Chris reported that the only change on the repair/replace section is item 5.3 (Replace playground with inclusive playground); this was originally \$200,000; Council will acknowledge \$50,000 of seed money and the Foundation will raise the rest. The Foundation needs to feel comfortable that they can fundraise knowing there is a commitment from the City. The preliminary numbers regarding ADA access to the soccer fields are double the projected cost but include design fees. Staff continues to work through this.

Brian added that the reason for the price overage is regarding the fill, drainage pipes, and the possibility of retaining walls that may be needed in some areas to meet ADA requirements. He originally anticipated \$5 per square foot but the engineer quoted \$8.

David reported that hopefully the engineer is conservative in his approach; certain things can be eliminated. The City should be able to do the walls and grading.

Chris reported that she and Brian surveyed the area with the engineer recently; significant changes were discussed. The goal is to minimize the impact to green space and place the access path so it doesn't look misplaced; keep it close to the road and eliminate putting asphalt where it isn't necessary.

Brian added that he prefers closer to 8ft. width but for this, 6ft. is fine.

David reported that there are geotextile products that can be used with sand or gravel that can vegetate and provide ADA compliance while still allowing the permeability and maintaining the look of grass. It cost more but maintains the integrity of the park.

Brian reported that this is an option but a concern would be snow removal. He has seen this on parking lots and is aware it can be mowed, but it can be thin in the areas where grass grows through causing it to die.

Chris reported that prioritization of maintenance staff responsibilities in relation to projects needs to be determined while also considering yearly projects such as soccer, the pool opening, etc. The list is lengthy; timing needs to be determined.

Lorrie reported that the trail should have priority.

Chris reported that a Work Session is scheduled for February 2 to discuss only the repair and replace items. She recently met with the City's budget analysis discuss the importance of making sure everything coincides with the Council's short and long term goals. She is uncertain if anything was affected at the Work Session last night.

Council Liaison Cain reported that it was determined that more than \$100k is earmarked for the old police station site, which should allow something being done sooner than anticipated. A site plan is needed to determine what will be done and how much money will be spent. It will be nice to do something fun. The art park that was suggested at a previous meeting would be great. It could be five years before this is brought to fruition.

Dave asked if leveling the area is an option. He would rather have a clean slate of open land to do what we want rather than a structure in the middle of the area.

Council Liaison Cain reported that The Leawood Foundation and Historic Commission are adamant about keeping the old City Hall on the site. The space will be great for bridge classes, museum, etc.

David reported that parking will be an issue if repurposed and spots are lost.

Council Liaison Cain reported that parking spots will be lost anyway because the majority of them were for the police department. Most of the pavement will go away because the police station is gone. The old City Hall is so small; she would be amazed if thirty spaces were needed.

Chris reported that this is similar to the conversation for Brook Beatty. She likes the idea, which brings up another question regarding how far away the playground should be from fire trucks entering and exiting the area. This may be a good question for the Fire Chief..

David reported that regulations and a standard are probably already established.

Chris added that completing a site plan is moving in the right direction.

David suggests using the brick from the old Fire Station to build walls and benches and repurpose it for ADA trails through the park area.

Council Liaison Cain reported that this concept was considered; but the mortar on the bricks made it nearly impossible. She isn't saying it can't be done but it would be difficult and costly.

Chris reported that April requested a souvenir brick for the future museum, which she received today. She is happy to have it.

Council Liaison Cain reported that the Mayor requested developing a program for trail repair and replacement as well as minimal cost additions from the previous list for the additional acreage at Ironwoods Park. This was placed on the goals and objectives list.

Chris stated that the development of the trail maintenance plan is scheduled for this year will address this issue. She received a call today from the developer who purchased the land on the south side of the back of Ironwoods Park requesting a meeting to discuss the development of forty-eight villas and a possible trail connection from the development into the park.

Council Liaison Cain asked how far the property is from the edge of the trail.

Brian reported that approximately 30 to 40 ft. is our property. The barbwire fence adjacent to the field defines the property line.

Chris asked if there is any opposition to the proposed list. She believes Council Liaison Rasmussen isn't on board about the low water crossing. It is a maintenance nightmare, and dangerous. The trail has to be closed during heavy rains/flooding; it is near the parking area and requires cleaning out of the drainage pipe as well.

Lorrie added that it definitely needs repair. The issue is the run-off. She doesn't feel Council Liaison Rasmussen wasn't on board.

Brian reported that it will be replaced with a bridge that would raise it and come across instead of going down the slope.

David added that there are oval boxes that can be installed that give broader capacity, easier clean out, access and lower profile to maintain grade without much issue. Backwater study analysis will be needed.

Chris reported that Council Liaison Rasmussen feels strongly that it overlays/ road improvements should be done and that the parking lot should be expanded at the same time. It is a hefty item that isn't included on this list. Although there would be value, the numbers need revisiting if this is done. The cost is \$450,000.

Council Liaison Cain agreed that Lou felt strongly about this.

Lorrie agreed. Lou has been consistent with this at Work Sessions and Committee meetings.

Brian reported that if done, parking would be more convenient for the Nature Center.

Scott Gamerl reported that it would be better if parking is installed between the Lodge and Nature Center.

Chris replied that this is impossible due to the utilities and ingress/egress to the back of the Lodge and the cabins..

Chris added that a recommendation is needed for the portion of the prioritization list discussed tonight. It can be amended if necessary.

Council Liaison Cain agreed. Nothing is engraved in stone. A recommendation is needed from this body to move forward.

Chris reported that although we are seeing good revenues from the special park fund, it is impossible to fund everything from that fund. Often it is a combination of this fund and the Capital Improvement Fund.

Scott reported that when it comes to the parking and the retaining wall, we would have to tie into that because the common enemy of water will change when done.

Chris reported that this is a good point. She agrees but can't remember the details discussed with the engineer, but he looked at this area when he provided preliminary numbers for fixing the drainage issues.

David suggested rounding the three budget numbers to \$1,000,000 to allow flexibility of other projects and potential cost overruns.

Dave reported that this amount is already in there. These are estimates.

Chris agreed. This has been done.

Lorrie made a motion to recommend the prioritized list as presented to Council for their action.

Dave seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **B. Resident Requests [Continued Discussion -Tabled from November meeting]**

### **1. Pickle Ball on Tennis Courts**

Chris asked Committee members their thoughts regarding developing criteria to consider new facilities and/or amenities..

Lorrie reported that this is the second time Pickle Ball has been brought up with two requests. It isn't worth the time to pursue it if only minimal requests are received. Is it possible to send a survey that can be accessed from our website to determine interest. A criteria does need to be established. This is similar to the addition of dog park amenities. To her knowledge two people have donated money and want amenities but two people shouldn't determine this. A much bigger survey of participants or users is needed before taxpayer dollars should be spent for activities. Most dog parks don't offer agility items with the exception of Lee's Summit and none in our surrounding area have them.

Chris reported that she isn't opposed to surveys but the question should pertain to asking if there are services or amenities in Leawood that a patron would like to participate in that we don't have. Listing multiple items may not be wise. A discussion was had regarding how long a sponsorship last in regards to the dog park. She would rather be proactive than reactive. A pet spa has inquired about participating with us. The criteria for determining amenities would be a means to validate why we can't or should do it.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that three people contacted her to express an interest in Pickle Ball.

David added that this is a great topic that needs to be addressed but it should be tabled for discussion at the next meeting to have time to think about the criteria.

Chair Ward Reimer agrees. Something needs to be put in place to determine interest. . She reminded the committee that the same concerns were felt when the dog park was first discussed; a lot of Committee members were unsure if this was a great need for the City.

Scott asked what the burden is to quantify the need for the land. Is it the responsibility of the Board to figure out what the citizens need or should the citizens tell the City what they want.

Chris reported that it is a disconnect; resident concerns should definitely be considered but less than five people expressing interest isn't enough.

Council Liaison Cain would like to know how other Parks and Rec Departments handle this.

Dave reported that New York City Government Parks has criteria.

Chris reported that she will research other agencies and send information to the Committee ahead of time.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that this will be an agenda item for next meeting. Committee members should bring ideas regarding what each person feels a criteria is and how it should be established.

## 2. Exercise Stations on Trail

This topic will also be tabled until the next meeting.

### II. New Business

#### A. Discuss Addition of Dog Amenities/Agility Course at Leawoof Dog Park

Chris stated that it is hard to report what Council Liaison Rasmussen promised the donors in terms of specific amenities and the timeframe.

Council Liaison Cain reported that she too, is unaware what he promised.

Brian added that they met recently at the dog park and he expressed that he raised the money through private donations and is anxious to get the amenities installed, but doesn't have definite ideas regarding how this should be handled. He would rather staff and/or the Committee determine the best fit.

Lorrie reported that the dog park has been extremely busy but has only been open for a short time. Amenities are expensive. Bless the donors who gave the \$9,000, but they shouldn't dictate what is placed in the park for a lot of people to use and shouldn't have more input than regular users because they were fortunate to be able to donate money.

Chris reported that Lou expressed wanting more benches and shade structures too, but the shade structures cost \$7,000 each. If we move forward with the agility pieces, we want good quality items; not something that may not hold up. She isn't sure if she agrees with adding more shelters of this type.. We have had some problems with people picking up after their dogs. There aren't many people who follow their dog to the far corner of the park and therefore the dog waste is left..

Lorrie reported that she agrees. She visits the area within two hours of each other daily and notices that it is a social time for the adults. The turf is gone where they congregate around the trees. These amenities will diminish the size of the open space considerably. We need to question how much space we are willing to give up. The dog park hasn't been open long enough to spend more money or know how the turf will hold up or; how users will take the reality that it will need to close down to reseed the area to continue looking decent. This should be considered.

Council Liaison Cain asked if the amenities are set in concrete. How removable are they. She isn't opposed to adding a few amenities that aren't permanently based in concrete along the trail portion towards the far west area of the park. She agrees with both Chris and Lorrie's comment regarding their definitely being a more busy section of the park. More benches are definitely needed but she agrees that two people shouldn't dictate what is purchased.

Chris reported that Council Member Rasmussen was asked by people if agility training by others will be allowed and he explained that it will not be. The agility items will be for dog park users with their dogs, not trainers.

Chris reported that she would like to wait a little longer to complete one operational season and avoid rushing into it without a strategy. We are still planning a grand opening in the spring inclusive with the Bark in the Park, event which would provide an opportunity to talk to users if that is the direction desired.

Chair Ward Reimer suggested working on a priority list of what should be installed.

Scott reported that he has a strong background in animal training and behaviorism and when an animal is being trained, and there are other dogs distracting them, it causes the animal to break from training and irritate its owner. This usually works best in a separate, partitioned area away from others. Is the City planning to follow the American Agility Dog Standards.

Brian reported that we aren't building a separate agility training course. It is not intended for a dog show.

Council Liaison Cain reported that the amenities will be more like a playground for dogs.

Scott reported that it needs to be determined if it will be used. Certain types of dogs require different type courses or it will not be used.

Council Liaison Cain reported that she is certain the agility/amenities will be heavily used.

David suggested meeting with the City Attorney to research liability issues relative to dog injuries. Although people enter at their own risk, he guarantees as soon as a dog jumps on, through or over something we've placed in the park and it's injured, we will face a challenge.

Council Liaison Cain reported that this is a valid point but what is the difference between this or the risk the City assumes with playground equipment if a child breaks an arm or injured on our property.

David reported that there may be no difference but it is something to think about when introducing a new liability into a space intended to allow guardians and their pets to work together in a free environment.

Council Liaison Cain reported that the purpose of the dog park is supposed to be fun and get people and dogs moving. The equipment will be enjoyment for the dogs. She and her dog are looking forward to it. The dog park shouldn't be elevated to a level where people will start training. Amenities are nice, especially if someone other than the City is paying for them.

Chris reported that she took note of David's point.

Brian reported that it may be important to install the amenities in an area where everyone doesn't congregate. Most who utilize the park may want a more secluded area for the amenities so they can play.

Chris reported that she agrees. Installing a couple of pieces won't be costly to remove if needed.

Chris reported that it was clear when going through the Foundation for Gezer Park. Some donors weren't opposed to what their donation was used for and some were specific about exactly how their donation was to be spent. She isn't opposed to it but doesn't want to do it as soon as the weather breaks. It will be best to wait and host an event to be able to speak with people. Most comments are positive and people are enjoying it.

Chris reported that Amy sent an e-mail in her absence regarding her thoughts on the agility amenities. She questioned if agility structures in the dog park are needed; it is so pretty and serene there, she hates to clutter it up but isn't against it totally. She suggests we should be very picky on the placement if done.

Brian asked if there any playground type equipment for dogs other than agility items.

Chris reported that she hasn't seen any; most people bring their own ball or chucker similar when dogs attend the dog event at the pool.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that this item will be tabled for discussion at the next meeting.

## **B. Staff Reports**

Brian reported the following.

- Council approved the agreement for the replacement of the pump station at City Park. He approved the design work today which requires six week of manufacturing time. The completion date is scheduled for April.
- The overflow pipe has been replaced at the South Lake. There is a 30ft. piece of trail that will be patched by our staff with concrete once the weather allows.

- The Tree City U.S.A. award application has been submitted. This is the nineteenth year.
- Staff has been busy working on benches near the amphitheater restroom to comply with ADA issues.

Council Liaison Cain asked about lights leading from the restroom to the amphitheater. It is very dark leading to the restroom.

Chris replied that this needs to be done as well as the area near the fire pit before the season starts.

- A cyclecross event was held adjacent to City Park, December 26. It was an all-day event with 110 cyclists participating. The race organizer and bike shop were pleased as this was the highest attendance they've ever had. Brian facilitated communication with the Johnson County Wastewater Department, as it was on their property, to assist in bringing the bike event to Leewood. The County gave permission to use the area, which was a mile and a half long course. Being affiliated with this type of event is good for Bicycle Friendly applications in the future.

Lorrie reported that she received complaints that the road should have been closed anticipating the heavy bike traffic.

Brian replied that they anticipated participants would park at Mission Farms and ride the trail to the event, but many didn't. This will be controlled next year.

Chris reported the following:

- Spring soccer deadline is January 28.
- Daddy Daughter Date Night is January 31.
- Applications are being accepted for summer employment. Tony had a hiring fair for the Aquatic Center recently. Nearly forty applicants attended. Interviews have begun.
- Staff is working on summer program guide information. It is due February 11.
- The Lodge grossed \$224,000 in revenue, an increase of \$15,000 over 2013. Advertising was done in *435 Magazine* as well as another publication to promote the Oak Room. It is a nice venue for those who don't need a big space.
- April is working on the Kansas Day event.
- The musical productions this year are sixties related. Auditions for *Promises Promises* will be held soon.
- A vintage Valentine's Day craft event will be held February 14 at the Oxford School. .
- Auditions for *Oliver*, the summer musical will be held at the end of February/early March. The production will be held at Ironwoods.

Scott reported the following:

- The Nature Center is doing well and he hopes to draw more people this year. His goal is close to zero cancellation and more interesting activities to inform people that the Nature Center is there for them. The trail needs work and the interactive signage is degraded. He has been reevaluating it to see what can be done to refresh it. The continuity is missing from the Nature Center and doesn't tell a story. Patrons should walk in and hear a story and go through a journey.
- The Nature Center has a lot of cold blooded animals, such as reptiles and snakes, but kids want to see fuzzy, furry animals. He is working with the Kansas Department of Conservation ie., the Black Footed Ferret Project. Thirty years ago a rancher came home with an animal in its mouth and the owner was unaware what it was but discovered it was a black footed ferret and it was written off as being extinct and he found that he had a colony of them on his sections. The project began and is doing really well. He is researching the possibility of having a display.

David asked if he can bring a lesser prairie chicken to the Nature Center.

Scott researched this but the conservation work is being done in Texas. He is researching friendlier animals. The snakes are fine but require more coaxing for a child to open up to it.. It is best for a child to show an interest and want to interact on their own. He is researching species that are indigenous, whether that be a possum, prairie dogs, badgers, possums and skunks for example.

- He removed the static exhibitory located at the front display cases and will soon add new animals. A new tarantula was recently added.

Chris added that it is awesome and eye level with children.

Scott stated that he is interested in people immediately seeing an animal as they enter the Nature Center. The idea is if I didn't stop to look I wouldn't see it. . He wants opportunities where people are walking on the trail or in the Nature Center, on the prairie in the woods to have a moment of pause and stop to look and learn. . Visiting a zoos large exhibit is great, but if there is a pool of fish at eye level for children, it shows that every last detail was thought of.

Chris asked if tee-pees can be done.

Scott shared that April informed him that the Nelson Art Museum is giving away their tee-pees, he will follow up with her soon. He could do a Native American site, a knit-in, charcoal pit and stone work with broken arrow heads for kids walking the trail to see. Inexpensive things that can bring new attractions and discover the Nature Center.

- The birthday parties will also be retooled to the interest of the child instead of the current themes of just birds or insects.
- He is working on a daily surprise for kids who visit.
- A future activity would be to use his resources and bring a mother cheetah with cubs to the Lodge and invite families to the event and take pictures with the animals. The cost is \$4,000-\$5,000 and would require a resident angel to bring this to fruition.

Council Liaison Cain reported that it isn't her decision but the Foundation has \$150,000 in reserves and could possibly be a contact to research this further.

Chris suggested marketing exchanges with other facilities to assist in promoting this type of event and we can do the same for them in advertisement for some of their programs.

David added that the Facebook page will receive a lot of "likes" when these types of events are incorporated at the Nature Center.

### **C. Next Scheduled Meeting Date – Tuesday, February 10, 2015**

Lorrie Hamilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dave Coleman seconded the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department