



**ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes – February 10, 2015 - 5:30 p.m.**  
**Leawood City Hall – Maple Room**

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

Board members absent: Amy Vlastic, and Julie Cain (Council Liaison)

Council Liaisons present: Lou Rasmussen.

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

Karen Ward Reimer (Chair) called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Dave Coleman made a motion to approve the January 13, 2015 meeting minutes. Lorrie Hamilton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**I. Old Business**

**A. Further Discussion/Explanation of Agility Course at Dog Park**

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that financial documents were distributed roughly two months ago and he noticed an off leash dog park totaling six acres with perimeter fencing, drinking fountain, agility courses, waste receptacles, signage and benches were budgeted and approved unanimously for (\$201,297.00) by the Council in 2014. He reviewed total expenses to date (\$236,946.52) and was informed that the Leawood Foundation had been requested to fund items so it became obvious there wasn't enough money to do what we needed. In his opinion the dog park is lacking at least four benches, two more dog waste receptacles, and one shelter. Looking at the facts and knowing the discussion over a ten year time frame, he requested a meeting with the Mayor and City Administrator and discussed the budget approved by Council as well as reviewed pictures for the agility items. He offered to solicit funds for the approved agility course items with a few conditions, staff has the authority to select, install and determine placement. He suggests installing one plaque recognizing primary donors; the Mayor and City Administrator agreed. The Mayor placed it on the agenda for the next Council meeting and asked him to notify the Foundation of any contributions.

The City Administrator suggested placing a barrel at the dog park to collect donations. He informed the City Administrator that if this is done, he is willing to finance hiring people to distribute brochures. The Mayor advised that a barrel may not be the best option. She prefers keeping the number of contributors down. He and Chris presented cost equipment previously reviewed by the Committee to the Council and after approval he immediately began fundraising and met with a number of people, although restricted in terms of the population he could solicit. He was overwhelmed with the response; most had checks ready to donate. The second donor asked how much money is wanted, and wrote a check for the full amount. The other possible contributors were contacted to inform them that their donation was appreciated but it isn't needed at this time.

Council Liaison Rasmussen suggests Committee members visit the USDAA or the American Kennel websites to review agility courses. Staff has been given the authority to do what they feel the course needs but the timing is up to the Parks and Recreation Director. Although the financing campaign has ended he would appreciate the Committee's support financially, which will help with further requests. He visits the dog park daily and is often asked how people can contribute. He advised them to make checks payable to the Leawood Foundation referencing agility course in the

memo line and forward it to the City Clerk at City Hall. He dreamt of a national championship course but this wasn't discussed by the Committee or the Council. He is pleased that there is a willingness of donors to fund the thousands of dollars needed.

David added that this is awesome; Lou should be commended for reaching out and taking the initiative and understanding what constituents want and making it happen. Kudos to the residents who were able to donate. He is excited about what the community is willing to do to support the dog park . He suggested community sponsors when first discussed a year and a half ago, whether; PetSmart or Petco but Committee members weren't in favor of it at the time. He is uncertain if a small portion can be fenced off to designate a true isolated agility course area.

Chris reported that she has been researching agility course equipment and recently met with Councilman Rasmussen. She and Lou researched different set ups; some were portable and not permanent. She isn't against the pieces but would like to wait longer. She is trying to determine if there is space to cordon off the area and determine how many pieces should be considered with the possibility of having big pieces. If competition is considered in the future, different set ups may be needed.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he doesn't think the City considered a championship agility course. They are national in scope and require a great deal of City wide participation and capability, which wasn't discussed by the City Council or Committee members. It was hard for him to turn down the money but unfortunately this isn't what the conversation is about. He followed the instructions for what was budgeted and the biggest item was the work involved changing over the property. He isn't criticizing but is amazed that the amount was \$40,000.00 and the property was donated but the land required a lot of work. He never imagined this amount for the land transfer only when the dog park budget was determined and Council approved \$300,000. More money is needed than what has been donated so far to get the park in the shape we want it to be.

Dave asked how much money was donated.

Council Liaison Rasmussen replied that he received a total of \$9,000.00.

Amy asked if the amount collected will cover the equipment only or go towards the extra benches and shelters.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that his great fear in the City is when people contribute to a foundation for a specific purpose and that money wanders off into some other area. It needs to be very clear that the money raised so far has been approved by Council strictly for agility equipment and Chris and staff has the authority to identify what is needed.

Amy asked if additional money is available.

Chris replied that additional funds aren't available but the Foundations initiative for the entire year focuses on park facilities, including benches for the dog park.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that doing it this way could pose a problem., So often, this concept can turn out to be never-never land and requires waiting for donations to come in for the Foundation to then determine what project it's distributed to and can become very amorphous; which is why he volunteered to get it done. He is interested in fundraising help from Committee members and is available after the meeting to receive donations or answer questions.

Amy asked if any feedback has been received regarding the need for more benches.

Chris reported that it is noticeable on a busy day. People often stand by the trees where it's shady. Most benches and shade structures are located towards the front near the forward half of the dog park at this point. It would be good to have more in the back to encourage owners to go with their dogs in hopes they will pick up their dog waste.

Chris added that she has worked with Alice on different donations. Some donors designate exactly how their money should be distributed but others don't. An invoice is sent to the Foundation for record keeping.

Dave asked if there are funds available for additional items that may be wanted in the near future. Has a wish list been established?

Chris reported that the only items needed are the benches, possibly another shade structure and a few more waste receptacles. The additional items could total \$12,000-\$13,000.

Lorrie asked if the money raised by Council Liaison Rasmussen can go towards these purchases.

Chris replied that they cannot due to raising the funds strictly for agility course items only.

Dave reported that people love their dogs and if one person donated \$9,000, he is certain additional funds will be donated. Are ongoing fundraising options being discussed with the Foundation.

Chris reported that the Foundation is good about keeping the initiative alive and staying in touch with people. Alice is aware of the needs; she and Chris often communicate frequently.

Brian reported that the turf is taking a beating as expected and some areas are bare ground. The City is also absorbing an increase in pet waste bags. Twenty thousand bags are ordered every other month, averaging a yearly cost of \$12,000. The dog park has been busy with 39,000 people already visiting October - January with an average of 390 daily visits.

Chris reported that these costs are typically absorbed in the operating budget.

Lorrie asked if additional funds for the other amenities can be solicited at the grand opening.

Chris added that a grand opening will be held as soon as the specifics can be determined. The Mayor may do an official ribbon cutting and Alice can speak on behalf of the Foundation. The double-sided information kiosk sign will be moved from Gezer Park to the dog park to be used as an information piece. The key is to get people in touch with the Foundation.

David asked if it would be helpful for the Committee to develop something more formal such as a guidance document referencing plans and action items. Not for broad distribution, but for this group to say what we are going to do since there are so many different topics and ideas floating around. Most information is verbal from one meeting to the next. It would be great to outline plans with the Foundation for the playground area, the fundraising that has already taken place and evaluating long term operating and maintenance, as well as improvements in the park and how that fits in the budget.

Chris replied that this can certainly be done but these objectives have already been developed in the Foundations initiative and were previously shared with the Committee. They are working on this but the biggest thing is if there are other amenities other than the ones discussed that we want to have strategy to go after. The operating expense is what it is; it isn't a revenue producing facility. There are no charges to cover cost.

Dave asked if we can move forward tonight with the agility items Lou collected the \$9,000 for.

Chris added that it is up to us to determine what we want to put in there. She pulled minutes from a previous Council meeting and Lou had it correct. She needs to work with park maintenance to determine location and if permanent or temporary pieces will be used. . She thinks people will use the equipment.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that to his knowledge Wichita, Hutchison and St. Louis are the only cities with competitive, television comparable agility courses. He expressed to Chris when they met that if we think about how the pieces are positioned and located, as well as the quality,

whether permanent or moveable is a decision when picking the layout. A championship course has 24 different challenges; a lower set would need 14 pieces. This option was never discussed nor contemplated, which is why he assured donors that the money is for a limited number of pieces.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he would guess eight at the very most. A couple pieces may be placed in the little dog area as an option. He made sure that the end result is that the staff is in charge of this. He will not interfere nor should the Committee.

Chris reported that there are a lot of options. She would like to focus on David's point; are there more that the Committee wants to discuss regarding staff developing a long range plan. The operating costs are what they are, and we can plan for this moving forward during the budget process. She is uncertain if adding anything else beyond the agility pieces would be viable due to the limited space. Once the pieces are added it will become maintenance based only. Grant options for a trail connection from College Blvd. to the trail at the dog park entrance are being researched. The area has been surveyed.

Bob asked what we believe the citizens want if \$100,000 was raised and money wasn't an issue. Why are competition quality courses being discussed if this isn't wanted nor an option. This can be crossed off the list if this Committee believes this isn't a desire of the citizens.

Chris reported that we don't have the facilities in the dog park area for this. The big championship events have tents etc.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he is uncertain if it is a desire of the citizens or not, but he had a donor willing to fund it.

David reported that the Committee needs to think a little broader than just the dog park. He is not a dog person but in his opinion there is no reason a championship agility competition can't be hosted at City Park, on a weekend with tents, in a fenced in area other than the actual dog park designated specifically for the course, with agility pieces and additional pieces can be acquired if needed to create a temporary course. The draw for our citizens is having a first class dog park with appropriate amenities and the flexibility to be able to host dog events. We already built a name with Leawood and to tie it in within the arts or other type activities in the City will be opportunities for Leawood. Having a strategy or guidance document that says what we want to do in the Dog Park, and options for plans down the road, and checkpoints moving forward. For example, revisiting the topic in June 2015 to determine if the right number of amenities were added or things to consider in 2016. Hopefully someone has a memory regarding the needs of the dog park if the information gets lost in the minutes.

Chris suggested that this topic falls in the category with agenda item 1B relating to looking at how we determine facilities, programs, events which also includes new amenities.

Dave reported that he would like to finalize this discussion in the current category on the agenda.

Brian reported that there are competition quality portable options that can be easily installed and removed if needed. He would suggest sturdy portable items that can't be moved by dog park users.

Chris reported that it would be nice to have something that can be portable equipment when purchased to extend the options.

## **B. Discuss Criteria for Programs/Events/Facilities (Tabled from November Meeting)**

Chris reported that a lot of agencies she spoke with make decisions about how to consider new events or facilities based on their Master Plan and Capital Improvement Plan.

*Chris passed out a draft of how Leawood might make this determination.*

She listed Governing Body Goals and Objectives first as often these may give initial direction. . Geographic duplication of services was also discussed, I.e.; is it feasible to put a disc golf course at Ironwoods if one is located two miles away.

Lorrie added that this is a very important point of discussion considering the Greater Metropolitan Kansas City area. She researched pickle ball since it's been requested recently and found places nearby that offer it; all are in a reasonable distance from the City Park. Matt Ross is six miles, Lenexa is nine miles, and Tomahawk Ridge Community Center is two and a half miles.

Amy added that unless people can't find a court to play on because they are so crowded.

Lorrie added that sessions cost \$1.00 for two and a half hours.

Dave reported that these are indoor facilities; he thought the inquiries wanted outdoor facilities.

Lorrie added that this is true but outdoor courts aren't available. Is there a need. She doesn't see the need to reline the few tennis courts we have.

Chris reported that in her previous position at another agency for special events there were ten things listed to consider a new event. In order for an event to be pursued at least seven of the criteria had to be met. . The two original inquiries continue to ask her when it will be available.

Lorrie asked how many requests are needed for one specific activity to go.

Chris reported that it might make more sense to classify it as a certain percentage of the population. Although that may require too many people;

Bob suggested putting the information on Facebook requesting feedback once they like our page.

Amy asked if staff ever considered quizzing people on Facebook.

Chris reported that a generalized survey in the program guide could ask for input if wording without promising results.

Kim reported that we can use survey monkey or email the entire data base.

Chris added that there are different options. Survey monkey is quick and clean, and you can only take the survey once.

Chris opened the floor for questions and asked if anything should be added to the report.

Lorrie reported that it is a good start but more than a minimal level of interest should be a factor.

Chris asked Committee members to take the report with them to review. She is uncertain if there is a way to incorporate what David was speaking of. Sponsorship interests have been received from someone who is already working contractually with Kansas City, Missouri and Johnson County Park District at Shawnee Mission to bring their dog food truck and provide healthy snacks, and also a pet spa located in Hawthorne Plaza has also shown interest.

Lorrie asked if the doggie food truck can sell at the park.

Chris reported that they can if they have a food license with the City; but cannot at a special event where we are selling food and other vendors aren't allowed in the park.

Lorrie asked if she can request to see a vendors license if she sees them at the dog park.

Chris reported that a vendor should have their permit displayed.

Chris added that she received a report of pit bulls in the dog park. . Some people often get around this due to the mix of breed of these dogs. She advised them to call dispatch if they have a concern. She hopes once the sign is installed it will help.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that regulations could be confused with other things if a sign is put up at the dog park. He is unsure if this is the best option.

Amy reported that she too has been approached regarding the confusion with pit bulls.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he has found that both size dogs are using both areas of the dog park. The small dog/big dog division isn't being honored. The rules and regulations were approved by Council but people may be confused by most.

Lorrie reported that common sense should prevail.

Chris reported that our park displays a long list of rules that fall in line with most other facilities.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if it is true there was an accident in the dog park with a person requiring MedAct attention due to being injured by two very large dogs that were playing and ran into her.

Brian and Chris reported that neither of them heard anything about this.

Amy reported that she likes the little dog area. It is good for older people and small dogs can enjoy it and be away from the larger dogs without the risk of being knocked over.

Chair Ward-Reimer opened the floor for questions or if there are other things to discuss.

David added that he is looking for closure on developing a strategy document for the dog park. We keep discussing all of the things that are out there but he would like finalize this. If the Committee wants it to be left up to staff and it is brought to the Committee as things arise or if we think we should have something,.

Amy asked if the dog park has been opened long enough to know what we need out of it.

David added that he agrees, it hasn't been open long enough, and we could be off base, but haphazardly developing the dog park without stated objectives, checkpoints, and an evaluation timeframe, how it will be done moving forward, and a process in place, is left to chance and memory. These two things don't always create the best environment for achieving consensus.

Dave reported that there are two different issues 1. Should a motion be made moving forward to have staff report back with recommendations and but the second issue of 2. What needs do we see in the dog park that aren't there and is there a need to develop a list in relation to the \$13,000 that was discussed earlier.

Chris reported that the list was discussed. The additional items needed are two benches, one shelter and two more waste stations, which roughly totals \$13,000.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that he agrees with the shelter but more benches are needed than what was stated.; at least one more in the small dog area and three in the large dog area with two more waste stations. This has been a challenge from the inception as many questioned the necessity of a dog park in Leawood when two other dog parks are in close proximity. But, since we opened, the dog park is heavily used. People are visiting from a lot of surrounding areas, some are even from out of town.

Chair Ward Reimer asked David if this brings closure to his request. Should the minutes reflect that it will be revisited in the future so it doesn't get lost in the minutes.

David reported that he is fine. The Committee has expressed that there isn't a need for this and they are comfortable without this.

Chris reported that this isn't a bad idea but she would hope that staff is already doing this. It may not be obvious but they try very hard to keep the Committee informed. If a strategic plan is needed for the dog park, it can be done. The Capital Improvement Plan is reviewed yearly and can be addressed annually.

David reported that a strategic plan may be too much at this time. He is ok to move on.

## **II. New Business**

### **A. Staff Reports**

Brian reported the following.

- Planning efforts for the ADA field access in City Park is progressing. The park area has been surveyed and a viewing site access area has been determined . Once the design is done it can be bid and a contractor can be hired. They have also reviewed the ADA restroom accommodations on the south end of the pool as well as the concession stand area.

Bob asked if the ADA work will restrict maintenance staff ability to rotate soccer fields. Old field two was field two and three last year and was played hard.

Brian added that it will not interfere. The new area will create a viewing site at every field.

David asked if all open grass is being maintained to not compromise the ability to host other events by adding sidewalks to the broader grass.

- Brian reported that trees were planted as a buffer; the access will go along the tree area. The full use of the park will used as usual.
- The trail was put back together from the South Lake due to the mild weather we experienced and the overflow area was replaced. The area should be reseeded and minor grading to restore it.
- A lot of tree work in the native timber areas at Ironwoods Park has been done recently.
- The creek area has also been cleaned and trash removed.

Kim reported the following:

- Daddy Daughter Date Night was held January 31, the numbers were lower than last year with 62 participants but all had a great time.
- Soccer deadline has past; 1500 participants are enrolled. She is researching on-line registration for soccer. Hopefully it will be operational for fall registration.
- They are in the middle of seasonal staff hiring. The deck attendant position has been closed due to more than 80 applications. This is the only position they can hold at the pool due to age.
- Staff has been busy preparing information for the upcoming summer program guide.
- Staff is working on a possible food truck festival in the late summer.

Chris added that this will be held in place of Freaky Fall Fest. This event is getting harder to manage. People aren't paying as they should and it is not unusual to shelve events and try something new.

Chris reported the following:

- The program guide is usually sent three times per year it has been decided that it will be sent in the summer/fall and winter/spring which will save \$15,000 annually. We are slowly trying to wean people to the website. A lot of agencies utilize online only.

- The City wide Capital Improvements meeting was held February 2. More discussion is forthcoming at the March 2nd Work Session. The repair and replace items may be moved back if the council elects to place the golf course clubhouse back in the plan. Committee members are encouraged to attend.

April reported the following.

- Arti Gras will be held next weekend; 69 artists have entered. \$10 donation is requested for the opening reception on Friday that will help the Foundation fund the inclusive playground at City Park. A side exhibit by Johnson County Developmental Supports, emerging adult art will also be on display. The artists will be there showing their work. Saturday and Sunday the event is free.
- Tea with Shakespeare will be held the end of April. Don't hesitate to reserve your spot if interested in attending. The room is already half full. It will sell out.
- April passed around an informational flyer/ card that was mailed to 10,000 Leawood residents recently listing all of her upcoming events. Some residents have received it which generated calls already.

Chris added that one will also be done in the future for camps, and other classes. It is a colorful flyer that highlights classes and camps. The people we work with, design it, do all of the work and mail it.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked if its odd shape costs more to mail.

April replied that it doesn't. It cost \$.17 per piece to mail, which is less than a standard size.

#### **B. Call for Miscellaneous Items**

Dave reported that he attended the Golf Show this weekend. Ironhorse had a prime location in the middle of the room and they were nicely represented.

Chris added that they made enough money the first day of the event to pay for their booth..

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

The next meeting will be held March 10, 5:30 p.m. at Leawood City Hall in the Maple Room.

Dave Coleman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. David Harwood seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department