



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

Board members in attendance: Karen Ward Reimer (Chair), Amy Vlastic, Lorrie Hamilton, Dave Coleman, and Doug Stevens.

Board Members absent: Bob Wright and David Harwood.

Council Liaisons present: Julie Cain and 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 5:38 p.m.

Amy Vlastic made a motion to approve the February 10, 2015 meeting minutes. Lorrie Hamilton seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

**I. Old Business**

**A. Further Discussion/ Dog Park Entrance**

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he would like to discuss possible solutions regarding the condition of the terrain and thoughts on preserving its natural condition. It was a unanimous decision early on what the surface should be like, and that it should be kept rural, rustic and as natural as possible. Recent experience has shown that we are in a unique position that the park is being utilized heavily but it's causing certain areas to retain water and mud where staff has tried to grow grass. He isn't being critical but this isn't unexpected. He suggests restricting the use to Leawood license holders only; anyone interested in using the dog park should purchase one. He recently spoke with a representative from the Ft. Dodge dog park and found that they use bermuda and buffalo grass, which may be a solution for us. He also spoke with a farmer who suggests sectioning off a portion of the dog park and letting it recover.

Amy reported that staff has worked hard but unfortunately due to rain daily when it first opened in October it could never catch up.

Brian reported that the traffic destroys it. It will be tough to keep grass thriving with the level of visitation we receive. Staff recently over-seeded but it didn't have enough time to grow or fill in. He is afraid if done again now, it would wear away. It will be aerated again this week. If left as is, weeds may come in soon and take over. He has considered mulch for ground cover but it too, is a mess.

Chris added that snow fencing was considered to be put around a portion of the soon to be seeded area so it can grow in. Grass will never grow if people continue to congregate in the same areas.

Brian reported that the only concern with separating half the area is the people who were standing in the problem spot will move to the other side while the other side regenerates.

Chris reported that most dog parks shut down one section at a time, while the new seed grows in. We should consider shutting down either an east to west or north to south section to force them into the other area. The area in the far east section of the field isn't used often. Many dogs tend to dig after doing their business and that also causes turf damage.

Brian added that this is an option. New sod for the area would cost \$110,000.

Lorrie reported the park is heavily used; she is certain new sod won't last anyway.

Chris said that new sod would be a waste of money and is not practical.

Council Liaison Cain asked if the damaged areas or the entire park is being reseeded.

Brian added that it would be the square footage of the fenced area. If an aeration and topdressing program with soil amendments were implemented, it would help keep the ground from getting compacted and over time the conditions of the surface would improve. Installing calcined clay would cost \$32,000 for the product alone and require seeding the area twice yearly for at least five years and cost an additional \$7,000 yearly. He is uncertain that even this would work.

Lorrie added that reseeding is the best option. The area would need to be partitioned off and traffic free for at least six-eight weeks to establish the grass. If not, it is a waste of time and money. Will the public allow this?

Amy reported that she is certain people will be in favor of this.

Chris added that this is how it is done in Lees Summit. Signs are posted a couple of weeks ahead of time and information regarding closed dates is included on their website.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked the unofficial opening date and the visitor count to date.

Brian added that the beginning recording date was October 18<sup>th</sup> 2014. There had been slightly less than 35,000 visits, through January 26, when the last count was taken. He will receive another official count tomorrow.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that maintenance costs are important. Staff is usually put through the ringer in June regarding what percentage of department expenditures is being recovered. He would like to be able to control access by the use of a card or similar system and increase the dog license fee from its current \$5 to \$20 for residents and \$25 for non-residents. It is difficult to know what will hold up with 35,000 visitors in roughly three months.

Lorrie added that her neighbors commented that the only thing that hasn't increased in the thirty years they've resided in Leawood is the \$5.00 dog fee. Would it help or deter visitors if the fee is raised. Should we consider also raising the resident registration fee?

Amy added that a lot of unregistered people use the park. The numbers will decline if the fees are raised.

Chris reported that if she were a resident and fees were raised based on a large number of non-residents using it, it wouldn't be well received.

Dave reported that if the decision is to raise the fee, it should be done in combination. Anyone using the dog park would be required to have a Leawood license – resident or non-resident.

Lorrie reported that doing so would require full time supervision or the use of a card system. Utilizing Animal Control may be the best option.

Chris reported that Animal Control will not be there full-time. This is not feasible. Grandview has a card system and charges a fee based on residency. It seems to work well.

Council Liaison Rasmussen added that he is concerned about the condition of the dog park during nice weather considering the cooler months experienced 35,000+ visitors so far.

Council Liaison Cain added that she understands this is a problem. Shawnee Mission Dog Park has a lot of areas where Christmas tree mulch is used and it smells good. She suggests adding thicker consistency mulch to the initial entrance area where it is the worst. Are other options available knowing the grass in the area is never going to be great, and will it be an ongoing problem. Should we contemplate rotating entrances to alleviate traffic at the main entrance for a certain amount of time to help control the problem. She isn't opposed to a card system but prefers trying other options. If implemented it shouldn't be exclusive for residents only as this would send a terrible message.

Dave asked if message boards are available at the conventions or conferences staff attends that may offer suggestions. We are not the first Parks and Recreation Department with the overuse of a dog park.

Chris replied that she attended a three hour session at the NRPA conference in Anaheim two years ago that discussed different applications, but it depends on the part of the country you reside in. She is also part of an online message board.

Council Liaison Rasmussen asked the cost and distance to send a staff member to Dodge City to view their dog park.

Chris reported that she was recently in Dodge planning the 2016 KRPA conference and it is nearly a five hour trip. She will contact their Director to get information. We likely have two options: 1) minimize the use by some means or 1) accept the maintenance costs to reseed the area annually.. The hot summer months will be more impacting due to the lack of irrigation. Options will be researched soon.

Amy suggests establishing a path of mulch from the entrance to the first shelter on the left to encourage a traffic pattern for visitors. This is the social gathering place.

Lorrie agreed. This will force them to go a different route.

Council Liaison Cain asked if the second entrance is locked.

Brian reported that it is locked and the area doesn't have a bull pen. This is the maintenance entrance.

Council Liaison Cain asked why we would care if dogs go in that area as long as it is understood that they are entering at their own risk. Some people may take advantage of the fact that they can access an unlocked second gate that isn't a mud pit as they enter. What is the problem with unlocking this area to help mitigate the problem.

Brian reported that temporary fencing could be run along the current concrete area to bisect the areas if needed and it could be closed off when rested.

Council Liaison Rasmussen is opposed to gravel. It works its way into the dirt and creates the same problem we currently have.

Chris reported that the problem with keeping the other entrance open is this is a maintenance entrance and as Brian stated has no bullpen area where dogs can be unleashed and leashed. This could lead to dogs getting away from their owners. She would prefer installing a secondary bullpen and keeping the maintenance area separate IF this is the direction desired.

Brian reported that by allowing people to enter that way won't give dogs the calm down transition area as the other entrance and we run the risk that if someone lets their dog in they get in a fight or they open the gate and someone's dog gets out and runs off will cause problems.

Council Liaison Cain asked the cost to add a second bull pen. This is will be an ongoing bad problem.; If we are going to spend money we need to know the cost to rotate them.

Chris reported that she is uncertain the exact cost of second bullpen but will get a new estimate.

Brian added that he too is uncertain of the exact cost; it may also require some ADA modifications to the trail over at that entrance. This is unknown.

Council Liaison Cain asked if the requirement is to have one ADA entrance or would both require it.

Chris reported that the area is flat so this shouldn't be a problem

Doug reported that it could pose a problem if only one entrance has ADA access if the other area is closed off for any reason.

Brian and Committee members agreed; this could be an issue.

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

Chris reported that the purpose of the last Work Session was to discuss in further detail about the repair and replace list and the clubhouse expansion. It was a long discussion but a good one with some hard questions being asked. There was a lot of discussion about the Ironhorse clubhouse in the mix of the project list. She told the Council that there wasn't anything on the list that couldn't wait. There were no emergency projects on the list. City Administrator, Scott Lambers, gave several options for the council to consider.

It isn't definite that the expansion will be built but approval was granted to allow us to go out for bid in 2016. If the bids come back in line with what the council will support, we will move forward. . According to our operator, Troon, the course is continuing to turn away a great deal of tournament business due to the size of the clubhouse..

Amy asked the size of the event space.

Chris reported that total square footage is about 5300 square feet and should accommodate 200+.

Lorrie added that it is a revenue generator and hopefully will move forward.

Amy added that the golf course turned away our own Chamber of Commerce.

Chris reported that this isn't true; if this is the information she received, it is incorrect. The Chamber is however; hosting an event with Ironhorse on April 22.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that she was informed that Chris should be commended for the way she responded at the work session.. The Council should also be commended for supporting the options.

Chris stated that she wants to make sure Committee members understand that the work that was done by the group wasn't wasted. She felt that since the project list did not contain any emergencies, it seemed giving our golf course operator the ability to increase the course revenues by expanding the clubhouse seemed to make sense.

## **C. Discuss Requests for Sponsors and Food Trucks for Dogs**

Chris reported that this was discussed a while ago, with no resolve. She understands it is a Council decision but she's had two very persistent inquiries who want to partner with Leawood via some form of sponsorship at the dog park. She has also received two inquiries about dog food trucks. Is the Committee in favor of moving forward with this or not. One dog food truck company has an agreement with Kansas City, Missouri and Johnson County Park District. The Committee initially talked about not wanting a lot of signs displayed at the dog park and she totally agrees, but if we

agree to allow sponsors and they are giving us money, it is nice to be able to do our best to work with them to somehow promote their business.

Chair Ward Reimer asked Chris if she feels sponsorship money will help us take care of the park.

Chris replied that any money received goes to the general fund and can help some depending on how long the commitment is. When discussed before, David asked a good question. Is the donation in perpetuity, similar to the benches that are donated. If their name is on it and it needs to be replaced ten years later for which we pay for it, how does that work. A decision needs to be made if we want to move forward with accepting sponsorships. Should staff develop a plan of how this may work.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that it is timely that Council Liaison Rasmussen brought this up. A decision needs to be made. Should a sub-committee be formed for this and report recommendations back to the Board.

Chris reported that she prefers the food trucks go through the regular process of obtaining a business license that would allow them to sell in the park on days a special event isn't being held.

Council Liaison Cain added that she isn't opposed to accepting sponsorship out of the kindness of those who want to do so but a process needs to be developed for advertising. A lot of people donate a lot of money but their names are not plastered all over for everyone to see. People need to know where it will be located. For example: it could be located on a discrete board at the dog park or in the Parks and Recreation program guide, but their name will not be displayed on a huge banner at the park. This isn't done anywhere for anything in Leawood. This should remain constant.

Chris reported that names have been placed on tasteful bronze plaques and embedded in the concrete. This was done at the fire pit and Havdalah garden areas of Gezer Park.

Council Liaison Cain reported that benches are different. This is usually done in memory.

Council Liaison Rasmussen reported that he is concerned about the volume of trucks selling in the park during soccer season. Currently the parking lot is full including those parked along every edge of the parking lot. Allowing food trucks to take up multiple parking spots will not go over well on a Saturday or Sunday.

Chris added that she is uncertain but she would suspect the City cannot stop this from happening if a license is issued.

Chris reported that soccer starts again March 21; she anticipates this could be a problem.

Lorrie reported that she is concerned a vendor will enter from the access road and park by the picnic table to be visible to people in the park to gain business until they get caught.

Brian reported that he agrees. This could pose a huge problem for soccer parking.

Chris reported that she will contact the City Clerk's office to discuss license restrictions.

April reported that it will be better if we can control it. Therefore, if they are a sponsor, we would have control over designating times they are allowed to sell, parking, etc. Therefore they can be restricted from selling during soccer. If they can come and go as they please, we have no control.

Lorrie reported that there was a discussion before regarding the information board at Gezer. A specific size should be developed for the dog park that would display recognition of sponsors with a predetermined size. This would prevent non approved advertising from being posted. They can be displayed for a certain amount of time and removed at the duration of their timeframe. She agrees with Parks and Recreation having control. This can probably be done without a sales pitch.

Council Liaison Cain suggested certain levels with a distinct size for their donation as opposed to a 3x5 advertisement.

Chair Ward Reimer reported that a lot of ideas have been discussed tonight that require additional information before a decision can be made and she doesn't feel comfortable pushing this off on staff. She suggests a sub-committee of two staff members and two Committee members. It is important to find out how much sponsors are willing to give and with that money the second part will fall in place on what can be done regarding maintenance. The sub-committee can collect information and present the information to the Board.

Chris reported that she isn't opposed to this but the issue is timing with the turf issue at the dog park.; Whatever will be done from staffs' perspective needs to be done quickly. We are getting into the growing season.

Chair Ward Reimer added that she understands this but the topic has been discussed for nearly an hour with no resolve. A motion needs to be brought forth by the next meeting.

Amy suggests over seeding as they scheduled for next week and see how this goes. We haven't had a spring yet.

Chris reported that this really isn't any different than any other land we take care of. But, soccer and baseball fields receive a fee to offset the cost but this isn't the case with the dog park. It becomes a matter of how much we are willing to spend. Staff will research other options such as how far out we have to go with the seeding, and mulch options. Some of, the suggestions made tonight are very good.

Brian reported that he will also research options.

Amy asked if mulch paths s can be added leading to the benches and shade areas for human traffic. This would keep people out of the mud.

Brian agreed that this is a great suggestion and can be done. If not mulch, any material would be helpful.

Lorrie asked if sponsorship money also goes to the general fund. Can it be designated specifically for the dog park. This is important to assure people that their money is being used for the dog park. This could be a sales pitch that the money is needed for the maintenance and upkeep of the far more use than we expected dog park.

Chris reported that this is a good point.

Chair Ward Reimer asked if the final decision will be made by staff without the need of a subcommittee.

Chris stated that a report will be given of what was done at the next meeting and what they are going to do. The seeding should be done by the next meeting and possibly the mulch.

Chair Ward Reimer asked if staff will research recommendations on sponsorships and licensing.

Brian reported that he is open to the suggestion of a sub-committee if there are Committee members who like to become involved and meet to discuss the maintenance plan and options regarding fencing, and the location of the mulch path, etc.

Amy reported that it is best to wait until spring to see how the things go.

Dave asked if a grand opening date has been determined.

Chris added that a date hasn't been determined. We would like to plan an event with Animal Control to incorporate Barks in the Park.

Lorrie reported that if she were someone buying a sponsorship for the dog park it would need to be visible at the dog park. Listing their name in the program guide or on the website isn't visible to the person going to the dog park. A sign board that staff controls is needed at the dog park that indicates who the sponsors are.

Chris reported that same size, uniform cards can be made by staff. The upsell could be this is the minimum and if they want the program guide it is additional as well as the website. This is a common "tiered" type of sponsorship. The number of sponsors we decide to allow can be limited to the space inside the message board. Maybe 10-12.

Doug asked if it can be combined with the dog park rules and it all becomes one side board.

Chris reported that the current sign board doesn't have room, nor is it configured, to combine information but the board currently located at Gezer Park is front/back and will be moved to the dog park soon.

Chair Ward Reimer asked Chris and Brian to verify that staff will have enough information to bring back to the Committee so that a decision can be made at the next meeting on what direction to go without forming as sub-committee at this time.

Chris reported that this is correct with the knowledge that staff will go ahead with the seeding since the time is right. They have dealt with sponsorship before; usually a package outlining different tiers is given dependent on levels. She proposes putting out a packet that can be sent to those who inquire so everyone receives the same information.

*Committee members agreed that this will be handled by staff and reported back next month.*

## **II. New Business**

### **A. Staff Reports**

April reported the following.

- Arti Gras was very successful. The Foundation didn't make a lot of money but it was a good event. The weather didn't cooperate opening night but it was well attended anyway.
- Auditions were held for *Oliver* this past weekend. The cast is great. The roles of Oliver and Dodger were double cast.
- There are five tables remaining for Tea with Shakespeare. Contact her this week if interested.
- The senior barn players will be doing a portion of a "Delicate Balance" by Edward Alby March 21, and 22.
- *Promises, Promises* is an upcoming small show with a phenomenal cast. Tickets are on sale. Twenty-five tickets were sold to one person this morning. It will be held in the Oak Room on April- 16-, 19, with 2:00 matinees on Saturday and Sunday.

Brian reported the following

- His staff is busy working on trail repair and will continue next week.
- They have been busy getting soccer fields ready.; Practices began this week.
- Seed work at the dog park will occur next week and the old police station was done last week.
- Staff removed the steel edging in the Taiwanese garden at I-Lan and installed cobblestone edging to match the edging by the art piece..

- He has a contract with an architect working on the pool schematics for the exterior bathrooms so they are ADA compliant.. The work will be done this year after the pool closes for the season.
- Continental Engineers has been surveying the field access routes discussed earlier. Everything is on a good schedule. If all the engineering is done, it can be bid in the summer and have plenty of time to find someone to begin the work as soon the pool closes.
- He and Dustin hosted and attended a TRAQ course, (Tree Risk Assessment Qualification); facilitated by Skip Kincaid of The International Society of Arbor Culture.; Certified arborists are qualified to take the examination. It teaches them how to estimate the likelihood of tree failures and gauges the importance of tree failure, and what to do in the event this happens. . This was the first class offered of its type in Kansas. People from various states attended and it was very beneficial.

Chris added that Skip made a point to speak with her at the end of the session and was very complimentary of Brian and Dustin and the facility. They did a great job and everything went perfectly.

Chris reported the following:

- The SAB HOA Summit event was held February. 26 at the Lodge. It was well attended. The booths provided a lot of good information .
- Ironhorse Golf Club will celebrate its 20th anniversary this year. They opened July, 1, 1995. Promotions will be available that day including residents can play for \$20.00. A reception will be held the night before for everyone who was involved with getting the course to come to fruition.

Kim reported the following:

- Swim and Dive registrations are busy. Nonresidents, non-past members can enroll tomorrow.
- Soccer begins March 21. There are over 1500 registered to date. Dan has been busy preparing schedules.
- Eggstravaganza is March 29; 12:30p.m. The Kiwanis will sell hot dogs/chips as a fundraiser. The National Bank of Kansas City will sponsor the event again by purchasing all the eggs.. Volunteers are needed to spread eggs and keep people off the fields until the event starts.
- Staff is pushing to increase summer enrollment. A few staff will attend a Camp Expo on Saturday, March 28, hosted by Macaroni Kid. This is a kid's based website that lists events in the metro.
- The Late Spring/Summer guide will be mailed Friday. Enrollment begins March 18.
- Seasonal workers are being processed
- The platform on the top of the water slide is developing and will need to be replaced after this season.
- She is working with the I.T. Dept. regarding increasing marketing. She is hopeful to get the Parks & Recreation logo added to the front page of the website. People currently have to go to several different pages before they actually reach Parks & Recreation. They get tired of looking for us. .
- She has been watching the Facebook numbers and has noticed a decline. She attended a good social media class at the KRPA conference and learned that Facebook is now choosing what they think you want to see. If a post isn't shared, commented or liked then it stops..

Chris reported that Facebook is moving more to sharing ads instead of people's posts, which is really annoying..

Kim reported that staff would like to add a Twitter account. It is strictly a post not based on comments or views and therefore is strictly informational. She asked Committee members for their thoughts to add a Twitter account.

Amy reported that she agrees; she doesn't like the Facebook changes either. It is full of advertisements.

Lorrie asked if it will be used as Facebook first started as an informational piece to announce closures, activity changes and inclement weather. Would we have to get word out in the same fashion to hope people know this is where they will get the most current information. Sadly the reality is Facebook is for the older crowd and isn't what it once was. She strongly agrees that Twitter will be beneficial but it may be a challenge to get it approved.

Council Liaison Cain reported that Council allowed an expansion of Facebook for Public Works and The Arts Council. It will be important to know specific information and for Mark to provide information as well. She is willing to help present the idea to the City Administrator or the appropriate person if needed.

Chris asked Kim to compile information to present to the Committee at the next meeting.

Kim reported that she will get some information together.

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

Brian reported that he is working on an interactive bicycle map route for the website. A meeting is scheduled this week with the Johnson County Aims Mappers, Mark Andrasik IT Director and Mark Klein from the Planning Department to discuss adding it to the website where the Master Plan maps were. You would be able to click on specific sections of the map and it will display the route system. He hopes to be able to convert it to downloadable files to a GPS or smartphone. The quarterly meeting of Johnson County Trail Managers will be held soon and a topic for discussion is digital maps and hopefully the entire County will get involved.

#### **C. Next Scheduled Meeting Date – April 14, 2015**

The next meeting will be held April 14, 5:30 p.m. at Leawood City Hall in the Maple Room.

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

The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department