



**ADVISORY BOARD**  
**Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2017 - 5:30 p.m.**  
**Maple Room – Community Center**

Board members in attendance: Chair Karen Ward-Reimer, Lorrie Hamilton, Steve McGurren, Doug Stevens, and Gary Swanson

Board Members absent: Bob Wright and Amy Vlasic

Council Liaisons present: Julie Cain, Dr. Steve Kaster

Staff members present: Brian Anderson, Chris Claxton, April Bishop, Joe Johnson, Andrew Hall and Dalnita Holland

Staff member absent: Kim Curran

Residents attending: Bill Moran, Celine Moran, Jan Montague, Wolfgang Trost, Tom Mayer, Alicia Jennings, Tim Yeado, Stephanie Yeado, Susan Trost, Mark McGrory, Chris Ashley, Debra Filla

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

Lorrie made a motion to approve the February 15, 2017 meeting minutes. Doug seconded the motion. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Chair Ward Reimer asked that the Board members and staff introduce themselves and the residents in attendance do the same. She welcomed the residents and stated she was glad they were here.

**I. Special Business**

**A. Discuss Possible Uses for Proposed Land Dedication**

Chris began with the following statement:

“This agenda is somewhat different than those we normally see.

As you may or may not know, a developer has a plan pending in front of the Governing Body with some houses, and some green space in this area that you can see on the map on the wall. It is the horseshoe area behind and below the cul-de-sacs with the orange markings.

The attorney for the developer indicated that the owner might be willing to dedicate this horseshoe area to the City to be open for public use.

The Governing Body has not decided whether or not to accept that offer.

We are here only to discuss if the City were to accept the land as parkland, what improvements, if any, might the Board recommend be made to this land.

There are other issues the neighbors have brought forth to the Council in regards to other parcels of land in the development, but those are not at issue here. Our focus is to be solely on this horseshoe piece of land.”

Chris asked Wolfgang Trost, whom she understands has been designated to speak on behalf of the residents, to come up and make his presentation.

While Mr. Trost was making his way up, Chris stated that following his presentation, the park board would share any ideas they may have. She asked that it not become a question and answer session, unless necessary, so the board could have an uninterrupted discussion.

Mr. Trost opened by thanking the park board for allowing him to speak. He stated that the main focus from their group tonight is to be able to ask questions and answer any questions the board may have. The residents would love the Park Board to accept the land that is being suggested to be donated by the developer. Objective is to have residents to have access to a bit of nature. Residents in the area of the proposed development have been enjoying this green space for many years. North Leawood continues to lose green space due to some school closings, etc. There has been a long and hard effort to hold the developer to the original plan of keeping the green space. The new developer is changing the plan. We are still short of green space. North Leawood to South Leawood is a vast discrepancy. North Leawood is short on green space and this is an opportunity. We are asking for a way to accept this land from the developer. Many generations can enjoy the space in the future.

Mr. Trost went on to state that more young families are moving into the area and their young children could play in this nature park. The residents are not asking for anything vertical. We want to be able to walk our dogs and watch the flowers, the birds, etc. We are asking you to inventory this land for parkland as a nature preserve. Wildflowers could be planted and there could perhaps be some educational opportunities. The residents would like to have public access. The path shown is fine, but we are not asking for a 10 foot wide path. This is where you come in, where you will guide and maybe advise us on what to fight for and ask the developer in regards to stipulations and what the residents want. We don't need pavilions, endless swings; we don't want none of that. As far as this as a park, we want to help, contribute and continue to listen to what you have in mind. When the old Leawood Country Club closed, there was no masterplan in place to grab this land. This is a chance to do this. Six and seven/tenths of an acre is good for North Leawood. The developer can dress this land up for you but there are no specifications on this yet.

Mr. Trost passed out some schematics that were shared during his presentation to the Planning Commission. Everyone here is willing to answer questions. What do you need, want and like to know about the project. We are willing to discuss but would rather answer your questions. I know we are not here to discuss the upper piece, or pocket park tonight so please don't be confused by this graphic. *The documents were left for the board to review now or at a later date.* We have been left to fight for this flood plain, green space for our families.

Mr. McGrory stated that this is a onetime opportunity. There are no other tracts like this north of 435. If it does not get grabbed now, it never will be. This will always be green space because it is in the flood plain and it's not developable. At the end of the day, can we get public access; what are the limitations in terms of trade off for the capital expense as opposed to just leaving it as it is. Our number one priority is to preserve public access as to the extent the city values the land and has the capital to do it. I understand there are costs to mow it. Let's take the opportunity now.

Mr. Trost stated that he is not certain what limitations may be incurred by the developer to vertical elements, nor what the definition is. There might be some smart, fun things like

benches made out of large stones that could not be washed away during floods. Before you know it, there will be million dollar homes and there above this green space. We are asking you to accept it, please.

Chris thanked Mr. Trost for his presentation. She stated a point of clarification needed to be made in that the Park Board's charge this evening is not to accept the land but rather; to identify any use of the land. The acceptance of the land is totally up to the Governing Body and they will make that decision. She stated she wants to make sure everyone is on the same page on this.

Andy Hall referred to the map on the wall that shows the development. He referenced the upper piece, currently showing 3-4 lots, and stated it is not on the table tonight. The only piece being considered is the horseshoe shape. He re-emphasized what Chris said that this is about what you might want to put in the space if the Council was to accept it. He reminded the park board that they do not have the power to accept it or; to put any stipulations on it, but it would be good to hear your opinions about what might be nice up there if we had it. Once again, the other piece is not part of the discussion tonight. Only this horseshoe piece. Just want to be sure, that as you look at the packets that are being passed around, which piece might be dedicated.

Debra Filla asked that Andy clarify the path on the north side, the yellow line.

Chris stated that this is a stipulation by the Planning Commission. It is a 10-foot wide asphalt trail that will connect to the existing bridge.

Joe Johnson stated that what is highlighted in yellow is what is to be built by the developer. What is highlighted in orange is a potential layout for a walking trail in that area if the council decides to accept it as parkland.

Lorrie asked if the yellow line would be on private property.

Joe and Chris said no, it would be public.

Andy explained how the stipulations from the Planning Commission are conveyed and that this would give access to the pedestrian bridge within the easement.

*It was asked who would maintain the trail.*

Joe responded that the City would maintain it.

April asked how access by the neighbors to the space and the trail would occur.

Joe stated that there would be sidewalk connections that would include an ADA ramp.

Steve asked about parking.

Joe stated that there is no designated parking area planned.

Andy concurred that there were no stipulations from the Planning Commission on parking.

Doug asked who has proposed the orange on the map.

Andy stated that the developer, at the planning commission, proposed dedicating the land to the City.

Joe stated that staff was asked to go out and look at land. The developer originally proposed a trail that just dead-ended. Staff was asked to go out and see if you did some sort of a loop trail, what would it look like. We marked the area with flags then camp back and placed that on the map to show what it might potentially look like. It would take you as close to the creek as you could and keep you far away enough from the walls so that future maintenance could be done. This is how the layout was determined.

Steve asked what is on the other side of the bridge.

Joe stated that it is commercial development leading out to State Line.

Steve asked if people could park in those lots to access the land.

Joe said it is private property. There is no public parking.

Debra Filla shared that she has observed quite a few people from Select Quote, who occupies the building, that actual walk in the space and do business on the trail on their cell phones. She has also seen folks biking through there.

Doug said that he heard that the orange would be the same as the yellow.

Joe explained that it as shown as 10 foot wide because that it what our standard is. It could be less. This is the worst case scenario with dollar amount to construct. It would be concrete in order to hold up better to flooding.

Alicia Jennings stated that there is a long range plan to connect State Line Road to Mission Road, as part of the City's Bike/Ped Plan. This is part of the trail to go from the bridge out to State Line.

Brian stated it is a future link to a ward Parkway/Ranchmart connector.

Debra Filla asked about the ROW that follows the Dyke's branch.

Joe said it didn't show on AIMS and may have been a separate deed on a different plat.

Lorrie stated that she is for as much green space as we can have. I support residents encouraging the City Council to acquire this property. I also think minimal improvements are the way to go if they do. It isn't enough space to do much. Also based on the shape and the flood plain issue, the concept as presented as just a walking path of some sort is a great starting point.

Gary agreed with this and the concept of improvements to be minimal.

Karen asked how bad it floods.

Residents who had been there since 2004 did not think they had seen it flood. The initial developer however, had brought in about 15 feet of fill and created a dyke in the area.

Debra Filla asked that the outline of the flood plain be removed from the AIMS map being viewed.

Mark McGrory stated that it is like a giant rain garden. It takes on a lot of water but it is not running through there. The Dykes Branch fills up and back up into the land 25-30 feet out of the bank and about 8' vertical.

Debra Filla came to the map and pointed out the area of discussion. You can see the residue of the sticks, brush after it recedes, and it is muddy down there when walkable.

Steve asked what the blue represents.

Joe said that in this case, it represents the floodplain and floodway as prepared by FEMA. Sometimes this happens. This shows the 100 year event. He referenced the memo that he wrote regarding the flooding that was in the packet (attached).

Chris asked Dalnita to pass copies of the memo, with the map attached, out to the residents.

Joe explained the model that FEMA uses and how that relates to the site, and what the restrictions are in the hatched line areas.

Lorrie asked if this is the reason for the high retaining walls.

Joe replied yes, it is and explained the process.

Chris said that she and Joe determined the wall is 12-14 feet high.

Chris said that she would like to back up and respond to the comments made by Lorrie and Gary. Again, the board is not her to talk about accepting the land. She wants to hear about what the board would visualize on the land if the Council were to accept it. She is not sure who had the opportunity to walk the land, but it does make a significant difference to your perspective if you do. She asked the board what they see going on the land, based on what you have seen or what you have heard this evening.

Steve agrees with the logic that it would be wonderful to have 6.7 more acres of land, but he also sees the resident's viewpoint of leaving it as it is with very minor enhancements, with something that will not wash away.

Chris asked if it she should interpret the comments as no significant enhancements are being suggested.

Steve said that yes, and that is what the residents are saying too.

Chris asked if this is what the rest of the board is thinking also- little to no enhancements.

Karen asked if the scenario is the City Council comes back to them and they decide to take the land, what would the board want to see on it.

Chris said no, they are asking input from the board before they make a decision. Do you see a vision of what is beyond what exists now; and if you don't you can say that. This is coming before the Council on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Gary stated that he would like to see the land enhanced based on cost, design rather than leaving it the way it is now.

Lorrie said that the trail to the bridge has already been stipulated so some sort of trail through the property might be in order, as it does get muddy down there. She considers this a minimal enhancement.

Doug said that keeping it as a natural area even minimizing any change to public space would enhance the area. An additional trail may be nice but maybe a smaller, hidden trail would make more sense. Maybe a pull off area would be an idea.

Karen asked the cost of the trail as shown.

Joe said that what is laid out here is a 10-foot wide trail, 5 inches of concrete on a rock base. Cost is estimated at \$193,000.00. Anything you do less will cost less. You can always scare it back.

Chris stated that from the perspective of the City's CIP it would not be considered a minor enhancement. She explained that most of the time in this type of situation, the staff's first job is to gather and report facts to assist the board, council, or other committees in making an informed decision. Alternatively, if you don't have an opinion tonight, that is ok as well. I just want to give each board member a chance to speak tonight. She explained that she would be drafting the minutes tonight or tomorrow so they can be included in the packet for the Council's review. She addressed the residents that their comments will be included in the minutes.

Doug asked if the possible transfer of the property to the City is part of fulfilling the stipulations set by the Planning Commission.

Andy stated that it is an offer that has been made and has not officially been stipulated as the action as the last council meeting was to continue the case for your consideration for the kinds of things you might envision on the land.

Doug asked about the other property up close, is that part of the stipulation or is that not part of this.

Andy reiterated that it is not part of this in any way. The offer that is in front is area and we are not in a position to make any counter offers.

Steve asked what the developer plans to do with the area.

Andy said he is unsure if that has been decided. Maybe three to four homes but again, we must focus on the horseshoe area. What kind of improvements might the park board see in this orange area?

Steve stated that he assumes the City would do some sort of assessment to determine there is no hidden liability associated with the land.

Andy reiterated the question again: If the City decides to take the land, what do you envision on it. That is what we are driving at. The other issues will be vetted.

Steve asked the board if the question is do we see \$200,000 for trails or less on the land.

Karen asked if this is the consensus based on the comments made by board members. The board acknowledged this to be the case.

Karen asked Chris if she needed any additional information from the board.

Chris said she is hearing that there is no desire to see any major enhancements as reflected in the conversation.

Mr. Trost shared his discussion with a landscaper about having some additional landscaping versus what is there. What does the park department think about how this will be maintained? There are beautiful ways to have nice things added.

Chris explained the different modes of maintenance (from low to high) and how the park department prioritizes the public buildings, parks and trails during floods, snow and general upkeep.

Debra Filla asked a question of staff to the point of suggested plantings. Choosing trees, clearing out trees, natural grasses or prairie grasses. She discussed the space with Larry Rizzo about the possibility of doing this in this space but is unsure of a cost improvement. Is this a hardscape improvement or a capital improvement?

Mr. Trost said that in talking with several neighbors, they said if there were a vision, a plan, they would contribute monies for this nature park.

Brian replied about the plantings, there is still maintenance involved, especially in getting things established. You need to mow it and get plants growing and thriving and discourage the invaders. You can limit it somewhat, but there is still annual maintenance to consider.

*An exchange took place about current staffing levels and added maintenance of this land.*

Brian stated that the flooding and expected level of maintenance, based on improvements, and how much use it would have would have the biggest impact on staff.

Karen asked if there was any more discussion on this topic. Seeing none, she thanked the residents for coming and moved on to the next agenda item.

## **II. Old Business**

### **A. Update on Inclusive Playground Project**

Chris reported postponing the meeting at the playground today with Variety KC due to the snow. The weather is still a determining factor in putting in the poured in place. She and Brian plan to meet later with Deborah Weibrecht and Heath Burch, the board chair, to address a few concerns. One is Variety KC prefers not to use the engineered wood fiber. The other is the desire to have some sort of fence for autistic children. Chris explained to them that the Foundation is finished fundraising and the money will need to come from another source. She is willing to talk with them if they chose to do more fundraising. Overall, they have been very gracious to work with. Variety KC annual fundraising event is planned for April 1st. She is still working on an opening date for the space. The plan is to have a soft opening in the spring.

Chris commented the playground is now very visible from 435. She thanked Brian for doing extra work researching the cochlear implants in relationship to slide material. They were able to trade a metal slide for a plastic one.

Scott Fanning, Brian and Chris went to see the inclusive playground in Independence. They only had the 2-5 age in when Leawood's project started. Now they were able to see all of it. Most of that playground has the poured in place. The cost of the playground surface is about \$20 a square foot. We do have a lot of poured in place but not to that extent. She is confident they will come to some sort of resolution and that it will be amiable. If the meeting today had happened, she would have more information

### **B. Update on Trail Project**

Brian reported he is currently finishing a few things with the contract specs. Legal will then look over the documents. The plans are coming along. David Ley, City Engineer, Brian and

Brett Haugland from Continental Consulting Engineers, met and looked at a few to revisions to the project. We are still on track to open the bidding the 1<sup>st</sup> week of April.

Chris stated she, Brian and Joe and David were in the field and made some modifications to the plans. The changes will drive the cost up some due to the replacement of some corroded storm pipes.

### III. New Business

#### A. Staff Reports

Brian reported the following:

- Steve Lamb, a 30 year veteran from Parks, is retiring this Friday. He was the turf maintenance supervisor overseeing playground inspections, mowing and soccer field management. He will be missed.
- Need to hire 7 seasonal maintenance positions
- One full-time facility position is still open
- Crews are busy working on soccer fields for the upcoming season.
- Working on the Justice Center landscaping for the April 18 artwork dedication

Council Liaison Cain The “Weight of Your Heart” artwork has such symbolism. It was thought if a man was innocent; the weight of his heart was compared to the weight of a feather. The feathery texture of chestnut leaves is a botanical symbol of justice. An upside down cone is the centerpiece of the scales. She asked if the benches are going to be flipped since they are backwards. She did notice that some black-eyed susan’s had been planted and wondered what other vegetation was going in.

Brian responded yes, the benches are going to be changed. He had taken pictures and given them to Councilmember Jim Rawlings. The plan is to plant Oak trees whose leaves are similar to the leaves of the American Chestnut seen in the art piece. Unfortunately, chestnut trees are prone to disease.

Council Liaison Cain added they want to encourage pedestrian interaction. It is beautiful how the light goes through it at night.

Doug commented that it really looks good at night.

Brian continued reporting:

- Amphitheater decking material was approved to purchase; crew will start installing concrete on the sides to set trailers and musicians in a dry space.
- Preparing a list of improvements for I-lan Park to complete before the delegation arrives. They are coming on May 11<sup>th</sup> thru May 15<sup>th</sup>
- Community Garden Plots have 11 remaining out of 32 plots. The deadline for Leawood residents is coming up.

April reported the following:

- Rehearsals for *Bonnie and Clyde* are underway. It will be the Kansas City Premier of the new musical. Tickets are now on sale at the community center.
- A lecture about the true history of the outlaws’ life in the depression will be at the school house at 10:00 am on March 25<sup>th</sup>
- Sold three-quarters of the tickets for Tea with Shakespeare. The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary will take place in the Oak Room. The Heart of America Shakespeare Company is doing *Hamlet* and thought it was too grim for the tea. Instead the performance will be a snippet of *Midnight Summer Nights Dream*

- The cast for *Annie* is posted. There are some incredibly talented kids with several mother and daughter teams performing together. Councilmember Jim Azeltine is also in the cast in the music ensemble.
- Oxford School House is now open on the weekends.
- Arti Gras was a great success with over 96 participates and 150 works of art. There is an amazing amount of locally talented artists. Twenty-four were Leawood residents including a friend of Lorrie Hamilton. The weekend was beautiful with many people dropping in after enjoying park to see the art.

Chris thanked Council Liaison Cain for helping with the bartending duties. The Foundation decided to raise the price from \$10 to \$15 this year to help recover some of the food and beverage cost. Next year, the plan is to include two drink tickets with the admission price, with the option of buying additional tickets. The focus on the sale of art will be enhanced. Everyone was busy since both Dick Fuller, John Murphy were sick. The event didn't lose money. The risk and rewards were divided between the Arts Council, the Stage Company and The Leawood Foundation. Attendance was up, and the Lodge was a more desirable place with ample parking and interior space to more around.

Chris reported the following:

- Kim is at a Kansas Leadership Conference in Wichita this week
- Construction meetings at Ironhorse continue.
- Clubhouse construction company wants to be completed and the crews out of the building by May 12<sup>th</sup>
- UMKC Law School has the first golf outing on May 19<sup>th</sup>
- Three wedding receptions are booked beginning on August 9th
- The front desk coordinator, Chris Pruitt, delivered a baby girl last Wednesday. The 6 lbs. 14oz. baby is named Riley Rose. A temporary worker (Sarah) is filling in during her absence.
- Soccer will be starting soon; numbers are up from last year.
- Registration for all summer programs is going on now.
- A few minor positions need to be filled for the Aquatic Center.

#### **IV. Misc.**

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 11 at 5:30 p.m.

Lorrie Hamilton made a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Steve McGurren seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Claxton, Director  
Parks and Recreation Department