

MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
CITY COMMISSION ROOM
July 6, 2015 - 4:30 P.M.

Present were the following members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Mr. Ed Klimek, Ms. Marcia Rozell, Mr. Bruce McMillan, Mr. Dave Schafer, Ms. Pat Hudgins, and Mr. Mark Bachamp.

Absent: Ms. Linda Teener.

Employees present: Mr. Eddie Eastes, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mr. Casey Smithson, Park Superintendent; Mr. Wyatt Thompson, Park Planner; Mr. Scott Shoemaker, Sunset Zoo Director; and Ms. Angie Sutton, Community Relations Director.

Visitors: Mr. Jeff Hancock, SMH Consultants; Mr. Bruce Snead, Mr. Mitchell Brenn, Ms. Barbara Anderson, and Mr. Thomas Krause.

MINUTES

Mr. Klimek called the meeting to order. Mr. Bruce McMillan asked that minutes be amended to show that he was absent from June 1, 2015 meeting. It was moved by Mr. Bachamp, seconded by Ms. Rozell to approve the minutes as amended of the regular meeting held on June 1, 2015. On vote, motion carried 5-0.

Pat Hudgins joined the meeting.

HARTFORD HILL MASTER PLAN

Mr. Jeff Hancock, SMH Consultants, presented the Hartford Hill Master Plan, a 320 acre project to the north of Grand Mere. He would like the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to recommend approval of the parkland and open space proposed in the master plan to the Manhattan Urban Area Planning Board and the City Commission. The owner has envisioned a ring road that will surround the property with bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides, similar to Grand Mere Parkway. The Plan proposes a 35-acre "bike park," and a neighborhood park adjacent to the detention basin in Development Area A. Ms. Rozell asked questions about the potential school site. Mr. Hancock responded that Riley County School District will be looking for an area for an elementary school closer to Manhattan. Mr. McMillan asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the detention basins. Mr. Hancock indicated that the maintenance will be minimal as the basins will be left in a natural state. He explained that it would be similar to a detention basin on Vanesta Drive, which many residents may not realize is a stormwater basin. Mr. McMillan asked Mr. Eastes if it would be similar to other detention basins that had been a problem for the City in the past. Mr. Eastes indicated that there is a need for the detention basins on this development, that park space is needed, and it would be good to recommend the approval of the Hartford Hills Master Plan as it provides open green space and park space. Mr. Bachamp indicated that he would look for Mr. Thompson and Mr. Eastes comments for the usability of the space. Mr. Thompson indicated that the bike park would be similar to the trails at Wildcat Creek Linear Park behind Sunset Zoo and that sustainable trail building techniques could be employed in the development of the park. The City requested a neighborhood park in the master plan and the developer proposed an area near the detention pond in development area A. Mr. Thompson stated that the area is beautiful and has a lot of park potential. Mr. Eastes indicated that he appreciated the developers' consideration of parkland as part of the plan. Mr. McMillan reiterated the Board's concern for the long term maintenance of the parkland. Mr. McMillan moved to recommend acceptance of the Hartford Hills Master Plan to the City Commission and Mr. Bachamp seconded. On 6-0 vote, motion carried.

STRATEGIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – STEERING COMMITTEE PRESENTATION

Mr. Eastes introduced Mr. Bruce Snead, Steering Committee Chair, to present the final draft of the Strategic Facility Improvement Plan from RDG Consulting. Mr. Snead indicated that this was one of the most participatory processes because of the statistically valid survey, 187 groups, and community meetings. Mr. Snead believes that the consultants have captured the consensus of the Steering Committee, the input received in the process, and the needs of the community. Mr. Snead is here to present the plan and ask for a recommendation to the City Commission to approve the plan. The committee identified the first priority as new indoor facilities, geographically located to serve the entire community, and recommends a neighborhood recreation center feasibility study as the next step. The second priority is safety and playability of sports fields. Mr. Snead discussed the improvements already being presented to the City Commission for Anneberg Park. The study identified City Park, CiCo Park, and Anneberg Park as the three most utilized parks and prioritizes improvements to those parks. The third priority identifies the need to improve the availability and condition of community parks, trails, and small neighborhood parks. The fourth priority is the development of an indoor aquatic facility: the community recognizes our great outdoor aquatic facilities, but we need an indoor facility. The steering committee recommends further studies to develop solutions to the priorities identified. Mr. Eastes indicated that the Board will need to accept the final plan, provide a recommendation to the City Commission on the final plan and a recommendation for a feasibility study to include indoor recreation facilities and indoor aquatics.

Ms. Rozell moved to approve the SFIP final draft and forward it to the City Commission, with a second by Ms. Hudgins. On 6-0 vote, motion carried. The board was in favor of Mr. Eastes indicating their general support of recommending the next steps for the process.

SOLICITATION FOR USE OF BLUEMONT CABIN

Mr. Eastes gave a brief summary of the process that led to soliciting uses for the Bluemont Cabin. No responses were received through the solicitation. Mr. Eastes asked that the PRAB provide a recommendation to the City Commission to continue the use of the cabin by the Parks and Recreation Department as we have been in the past. If interested parties would come forward in the future with potential uses, we would consider those at that time. Mr. Bachamp questioned if the department would have to start putting some money into maintaining the property. Mr. Eastes indicated that the Parks and Recreation Department needs to maintain the property to prevent deterioration. Barbara Anderson, president of the Goodnow Park Cabin Coalition, provided a historical reference. In the late 1990s, they put on a new wood shingle roof. Mr. Bachamp moved to recommend that Bluemont Youth Cabin continue to be managed by the Parks and Recreation Department to the City Commission, seconded by Mr. Schaefer. On 6-0 vote, motion carried.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GRANT

Mr. Eastes indicated this grant opportunity could help with the Lee Mill Heights park property. Mr. Thompson provided background on the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program. The grant would provide staff and expertise from the National Park Service for planning and community engagement activities. Mr. Thompson felt the NPS could provide expertise in helping create the kind of park envisioned by the developer, Tim Shultz. Mr. Thompson has been in touch with representatives from NPS and they were positive in their response to his inquiry and description of the project. Mr. Thompson is looking for support from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board in support of pursuing the grant.

Ms. Rozell made a motion to recommend in support of the application for the National Park Service Grant Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program for planning assistance for the new park land in Lee Mill Heights to move forward, seconded by Mr. Bachamp. On 6-0 vote, motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Thomas Krause, Boy Scout, would like to do an Eagle Scout project to put down gravel and help improve a section of trail on the east side of Warner Park. He envisions working on 100 feet of trail to provide adequate access to the bridges. He needs help getting the gravel to the affected area and then he would manage getting the trail set up. Mr. Krause has been working with Mr. Smithson, Park Superintendent, on details of the project. The Board provided their blessing for the project to move forward.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Eastes notified the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board that Mr. Curtis is no longer with the Parks and Recreation Department due to personal reasons.

Angie Sutton reported that July is Park and Recreation Month. The department is hosting an Ice Cream Social at the Wefald Pavilion on July 7, 2015. The Parks and Recreation Department has an activity planned every day in July.

Wyatt Thompson showed the Board an Honor Award the City received for the South End Entertainment from the American Society of Landscape Architects Prairie Gateway Chapter. This award includes Blue Earth Plaza and Flint Hills Discovery Center.

Casey Smithson reported that Furniture Amnesty Day will be July 24, 2015. The tent will be moved to Baker Field parking lot in City Park and parking will be near Miller Field in City Park. The staff is busy with growing season in full swing.

Scott Shoemaker reported that the solar array from the Westar Grant is being installed behind the Nature Exploration Center. Attendance is strong, ahead of last year's numbers and last year was a record year in attendance. Swift fox kits are now on exhibit and open for viewing.

Meeting adjourned.