

MINUTES
PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
CITY COMMISSION ROOM
August 7, 2017 - 4:30 P.M.

Present were the following members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Mr. Ed Klimek, Mr. Mark Bachamp, Mr. Dave Schafer, Mr. Brian Thomason, and Ms. Linda Teener.

Absent: Mr. Darrell Edie, and Ms. Leah Fliter.

Employees present: Mr. Eddie Eastes, Director of Parks and Recreation; Mr. Randi Clifford, Recreation Director; Mr. Scott Shoemaker, Director of Sunset Zoo; Mr. Wyatt Thompson, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation; and Mr. Casey Smithson, Park Superintendent.

MINUTES

Mr. Klimek called the meeting to order. It was moved by Ms. Teener, seconded by Mr. Bachamp, to approve the minutes of the special meeting held on July 10, 2017. On vote, motion carried 5-0.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

LEE MILL HEIGHTS UPDATE

Mr. Wyatt Thompson, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, shared an update with the board about the master plan process at Lee Mill Heights. The trail is not yet officially open, but the trail that has been constructed is being utilized. Mr. Thompson indicated that a final master plan report is being put together with the National Park Service. Mr. Thompson provided an overview of the process including: site analysis; community engagement; community feedback; concept development for trails, scenic overlooks, prairie restoration and woodland preservation, Miller Parkway, nature play path, and LedgeStone. To finalize the Master Plan, Mr. Thompson will meet with the park service to prepare a final concept, complete the draft report, publish the draft report for final round of public feedback, and adopt the plan to develop the parkland. Mr. Thompson asked the board for questions or comments on the presentation.

Mr. Thomason stated that the plant life and the wild life in this park is impressive. He asked what plans were in place to maintain the nature and wild life in the park as we move to open the area. Mr. Thompson indicated that it would be important to have a minimal footprint on the area or use the areas that are already disturbed. It is proposed to use the area that has invasive tree species to develop for the more intense usage. Not using concrete trail to develop all the trails in the park will also minimize the footprint on the park. Mr. Thomason also commented on the proposed educational programs with the Flint Hills Discovery Center and asked how that would be developed. Mr. Thompson shared the educational opportunities that would be available with construction of facilities at the park.

Mr. Schafer asked about the natural gas easement that runs through the parkland. Mr. Thompson shared that the same gas line runs through Anneberg Park. There are two gas lines that are transmission and distribution lines buried in the parkland. The park has been planned around the easement area. Ms. Teener indicated that the natural play area was a great idea that would help get kids more engaged with the outdoors.

Mr. Bachamp asked if Mr. Thompson was asking for feedback from the advisory board on the concepts that were presented. Mr. Thompson asked for the board to provide feedback on the concepts shared. Mr. Eastes shared that he wanted the board to know what process has been used to determine what amenities would and would not be included in the design. Mr. Klimek asked Mr. Thompson if he would be using

these types of design elements for the Warner Park Master Plan. Mr. Thompson indicated that he felt the same processes would be engaged in with the Warner Park plan. Mr. Schafer asked about funding sources for the parking, play structures, and trails. Mr. Thompson indicated that would be part of the final plan.

SALES TAX EDUCATION CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Mr. Eastes shared the website that has been developed for the educational campaign for the sales tax initiative. The proposed trail project info graphic has been updated to show the gaps that currently exist in the loop. Mr. Eastes encouraged the board to continue to review the information on the website and direct people in the community to the site as well. Mr. Eastes indicated that a private group is forming to support the initiative. He also shared with the board that increased community education was ramping up to discuss the initiative with educational groups, rotary groups, realtors and a number of other groups. Mr. Klimek asked if the city would be developing a marketing plan for media and social media. Mr. Eastes indicated that the information was being shared online, through social media, and also through the school distribution channels. Mr. Schafer asked if a listing of events was being posted on the website. Mr. Eastes pointed out that in addition to a potential list of events, the request of the public to provide information about opportunities to share the information could also be developed. Mr. Klimek indicated that the public use component was key to the success of to this process. Mr. Klimek also pointed out that cost for operations of the facilities should be highlighted in our educational campaign as well.

Mr. Klimek invited Aaron Apel to speak about the Vote Yes campaign for the sales tax initiative. Mr. Apel indicated that New Boston Creative has been engaged to assist with the marketing for the campaign. There are also several co-chairs who will share the message across the community. Mr. Apel felt it was important to bring in individuals who have been involved in past initiatives and also younger citizens that would be utilizing the facilities. Mr. Apel indicated that they are encouraging a good cross-section of the community to participate with the campaign.

SUNSET ZOO PARKING LOT

Mr. Shoemaker presented an update on the parking lot design for the Sunset Zoo. Mr. Shoemaker shared a site map of the proposed project area which would double the parking capacity. The zoo is engaging with BG Engineering to design the parking lot pending City Commission approval of the contract. The zoo would like to get the project started this Winter 2017 and completed prior to the busy season in Spring 2018. The school has requested use of parking in the dirt lot. We encourage the partnership for shared parking because USD383 allows us to use their parking lots for zoo events as well.

CEMETERY ROAD UPDATE

Casey Smithson, Park Superintendent, provided the historical purpose for the proposed project. Mr. Smithson updated the board on a project to pave existing roadways in Sunrise Cemetery and the plans for creating new burial spaces. The project is expected to bid next month. The City Commission will consider awarding a construction contract on September 19, 2017. Mr. Schafer asked about cremation burial spaces. Mr. Smithson indicated that additional spaces would be available for future development if sections K-O are fully sold.

FUTURE BUSINESS

Mr. Klimek spoke on the Johnny Kaw grass roots committee hoping to improve the plaza around the statue. Mr. Eastes shared that the Whooville group that decorates the Blue Earth Plaza area are interested in decorating the Poyntz area downtown through City Park. Mr. Klimek indicated that an educational component would be developed for the interpretive plaza being proposed. Mr. Klimek shared that a rendering would be shared with the board next month.

MISCELLANEOUS

None.

STAFF UPDATES

Mr. Clifford updated the board on the recreation division summer wrap-up. The Arts in the Park summer series has concluded and had high attendance. The theater program this summer was Beauty and the Beast and it was well attended by the public. The Little Apple Paddle drew over 200 attendees. The Family Fun Night was a success. The triathlon has high attendance with 50+ in the adult race and 150+ in the kids' race. The waterpark end of season staffing is being evaluated to determine which facilities can remain open through Labor Day. Mr. Clifford spoke about the activities guide and the fall programs that will be starting. Mr. Klimek asked for the department to study ways to keep facilities open during the extended season. Mr. Clifford agreed that this could be evaluated during the off season. Mr. Thomason commented that he had received a comment from the public about wage issues. Mr. Clifford responded that it was specifically an end of season issue because we were able to staff all three facilities until mid-August.

Mr. Shoemaker shared the baby boom at the zoo in July to include a Caribbean Flamingo chick and a couple peafowl. July 28th the zoo hosted Zoofari tales in partnership with Manhattan Public Library. The zoo partnered with Flinthills Rotary Club with Water Matters program during the Water Safari event. The weather was not great, but attendance was still good. Summer camps are winding down this week. The Junior Zookeeper program is completed for the summer. August 19th is the Brew at the Zoo event at Sunset Zoo and tickets are on sale now and VIP event is sold out. The zoo will host 16 microbrewery companies this year. All proceeds from the event come back to the zoo through the Friends of the Sunset Zoo organization.

Mr. Smithson mentioned the Furniture Amnesty Day on July 28th. Over 146 households signed up for pickup and many households drop off furniture in the park for the event. The parks crew removed silt from the low water crossing at Linear Trail behind 4 Points. The Animal Shelter event, Petpoolooza, is Sunday at CiCo on August 13th if there were any comments on water still being in the pool.

Mr. Thompson shared that the Douglass Center electrical renovations are nearly complete and the second phase of the project would be starting up. The electrical renovations are a positive safety improvement. The Knox Lane bicycle path is complete and drainage issues are being addressed. The Sunset Cemetery park area will be evaluated by a consultant for the historic preservation. The Aggieville Vision and infrastructure analysis will bring Triangle Park, streetscape and parking issues to the board in the future. Mr. Klimek indicated that the board would need to protect City Park from becoming a parking lot for the neighborhood or Aggieville spillover.

OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Teener shared her appreciation for July and Parks and Recreation month events. She was pleased with the turnout at the events throughout the month of July. Mr. Thomason enjoyed the volunteer board appreciation night. Mr. Klimek asked about solar eclipse planning for parks and watch parties.

Meeting Adjourned.