

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

Regular Meeting – November 3, 2022

Meeting Location: Barn – Lincoln Park

Roll Call

Board Members Present: William Findlay
Cindy Enos-Martinez
Lily Grasifi
Gary Schroen
Austin Solko
Nancy Strippel
Lisa Whalin
Byron Wiehe

Board Members Absent: Kyle Gardner - absent
Abe Herman absent
Phil Pe'a absent

City Staff Present: Ken Sherbenou, Director of Parks and Recreation
Emily Krause, Recreation Superintendent, P&R
Jonathan Wheatley, Recreation Supervisor
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist, P&R

Meeting called to order by Lisa Whalin at 12:01 p.m.

Bill Findlay made a motion to approve the minutes from the October 6 meeting. The motion was seconded by Gary Schroen and approved unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 8 No 0

Supervisor Presentation – Jonathan Wheatley

Ken introduced Jonathan Wheatley to the board, he has been with the department since January and moved here from Florida. Jonathan talked with the board about the staff he supervises, Marlene, Tina and Miranda, and the areas they oversee. Summer camps had a successful 2022 season. With 4 camp styles at 99% enrollment staff served 750 children by employing over 60 seasonal staff. Also offered this summer were camps provided by contractors including Ninja Warrior camp, Wilderness Survival camp, Little Rockers climbing camp, and Challenge Island STEAM camps. Contract camps served more than 300 participants.

Jonathan also talked with the board about year-round general programs. Internal programs run mainly by Tina Ross include Little Artists, Wacky Wednesdays, Kinder Sports, basketball basics and our very popular Youth Basketball program which accommodates 1000 players on 150

teams. Jonathan also over sees contracted programs including Harmony Acres horse programs, piano/music programs, and fencing.

Marlene Godsey also joined the department in January and she coordinates our Arts and Culture programming. The Art Beat Contest, formerly Write On, has been expanded in an effort to incorporate new mediums of photography and videography, she has worked with the Commission on Art and Culture to get the Cultural Strategic Plan adopted as well as produce an Economic Impact study which is currently underway. Three new Riverfront murals have been added to the ten existing Riverfront murals. Additionally, murals at Westlake and Eagle Rim Skate Parks have been installed to help curb the impacts of unwelcome graffiti. A Bear Statue has been installed at the old bandstand in Lincoln Park which includes a new mural below it and a new mural will be installed on the retaining wall at Duck Pond park in Orchard Mesa. Marlene is also hoping to engage the cultural diversity in our community with a number of different programs.

Marlene also handles senior programming. This year's Senior Games hosted 150 participants in a wide variety of activities from pinochle and pickleball to axe throwing. She has coordinated with contractors to provide such as gentle yoga, tai chi, and even goat yoga at the Fairgrounds.

Jonathan updated the board on the new childcare facility. The existing building was renovated and three rooms are open and hosting children. The two room addition is nearing completion and a ribbon cutting is being scheduled for December 6 at 3:00pm. Once fully opened the childcare facility will host kids from 6 weeks old to 5 months. Miranda Cremeens is the Daycare Director. Board members wondered if all the spaces are filled with children of City employees. Jonathan advised the board that once the facility is fully open, staff are considering ways to open up remaining spaces to the community.

Board members also wondered if there have been hiring challenges this year. The City offered some innovative programs, incentivizing retention for seasonal lifeguards, and summer camp staff. A similar program is being offered to basketball staff. Contracted programs are also a great way to beat staffing challenges and may provide a smaller business access to a wide audience through the Parks and Recreation activity guide which creates a successful public/private partnership. The same is true for competitive sports where Parks and Recreation provides exposure to sports and development of fundamentals and other organizations offer more specialized or competitive versions.

Tennis/Pickleball Expansion

Ken Sherbenou updated the board on the progress of the tennis project at Canyon View. A contractor, Renner Sports Surfaces, has been selected for the court construction. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held on November 18 at 10am. Musco Lighting, is working to install lighting on 12 existing courts. The lighting portion of the project should be completed by early December. Lighting extends the playable hours on these courts, especially this time of year. After Musco completes their work at Canyon View they will shift to Lincoln Park to

retrofit the existing courts. There will be a little new installation of lighting to accommodate the expanded footprint once construction begins on the Lincoln Park pickleball courts.

Once lighting is complete at Canyon View, Renner will begin construction of four additional courts. Due to the location of a storm water detention area, the courts will be located north of the existing parking which will also allow for more expansion in the future. The gravel parking area (where the four courts are going) is currently utilized by football, soccer, and baseball participants. Emily Krause did parking counts during a couple of high utilization weekends. Currently, the gravel parking lot, though it feels full, is not being utilized effectively since there are no lines and people park all over the place. Adding structure to the gravel lot will allow for more useful and efficient parking and likely no reduction in the number of cars which can park there during any given weekend.

Unhoused in Park

Ken Sherbenou talked with the board about the increased presence staff have been seeing of the unhoused in the parks over the past couple of years. Staff is working balancing being a service provider (restrooms, access to clean water) for folks experiencing homelessness, with park experiences for other citizens. There is an ordinance preventing overnight camping in the parks and staff has expanded communication with the Police Department and our security company to ensure folks are exiting the parks when they are closed. The City, in response to downtown business owners, is ramping up response to increased overnight presence in Whitman Park, as well as creating a disposal process for abandoned property. Earlier this week, staff winterized the sprinklers, did mowing and trimming, cleaned up litter and trash, installed some shelving so that property found in the future can be placed on the shelving and discarded after 72 hours (as indicated by new signage in the parks).

Board members noted that closing Whitman created increase presence in Riverside. And that ordinances around camping in the parks have not been enforced because Homeward Bound has been closed. Staff are actively working to intentionally activate parks with positive uses which, in turn, will discourage negative uses. The City is working to compassionately address the issue with affordable housing initiatives, support of Homeward Bound, and other support services.

Board members wondered if anyone in the community looking at root causes? Is it affordability, mental health, or something else? Ken Sherbenou noted that there are non-profits working in this space where typically municipalities are not involved. The City has hired a housing manager, Ashley Chambers, who is working to help us understand and address root causes. Affordable housing is a high priority of City Council, and the three ballot initiatives reflect their dedication to finding solutions.

For The Good of the Community

Board members wondered why the Orchard Mesa Pool renovation is on hold. They are concerned it could affect the vote on the Community Recreation Center. Ken Sherbenou reassured board members that the City is committed to making the renovations and is under

contract to do the design renovation. It is a facility that operates with partners and it is important for partners to step up. Board members expressed disappointment and a feeling that Orchard Mesa residents are being overlooked. A recreation center in Matchett is not accessible for low-income folks in that area especially for kids who don't have transportation. Ken reiterated to the board that equitable service is a priority for the City and staff will continue to work to make sure all areas of the community are served.

Board members wondered if blue light/emergency alerts (similar to what is found on the CMU campus) could be installed along the Riverfront Trail. Some parts of the trail are remote and it can feel unsafe to recreate by yourself. While Riverside Parkway doesn't feel particularly safe to ride a bike on, sometimes it feels safer than the trail itself. Ken will reach out to One Riverfront to see if this is an option they have explored.

Board members wondered if the netting on the North Avenue side of the Lincoln Park golf course could be expanded. Lily has had golf balls come over the fence while she has been running by, and also had golfers asking her to shag their balls back from the North Avenue side of the fence.

The election of a Vice Chair will happen at the December meeting.

Adjourn

The board adjourned by acclamation at 1:30 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be December 1, 2022.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Little
Administrative Specialist