

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

Regular Meeting – January 5, 2023

Meeting Location: Barn – Lincoln Park

Roll Call

Board Members Present: William Findlay
Kyle Gardner
Lily Grasifi
Gary Schroen
Austin Solko
Nancy Strippel
Lisa Whalin
Phil Pe'a

Board Members Absent: Cindy Enos-Martinez
Byron Wiehe
Abe Herman

City Staff Present: Ken Sherbenou, Director of Parks and Recreation
Trent Prall, Director of Public Works
Kris Ashbeck, Principal Planner
Emily Krause, Recreation Superintendent
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist

Meeting called to order by Lisa Whalin at 12:00 p.m.

It was noted that there were 8 voting members present for every motion except the last one, which passed with a vote of 7 – 0. Kyle Gardner made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 1, 2022 meeting as amended. The motion was seconded by Bill Findlay and carried unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 7 No 0

Plaza Urrutia Fronton Historic Designation

Ken Sherbenou introduced Kristen Ashbeck to the Board. Kris also serves as a staff liaison to the the historic preservation board. History Colorado is interested in pursuing a historic designation of the Plaza Urrutia Fronton. In September a handball tournament was hosted at the plaza with world class players from the North American Basque Association, representing many states, in attendance. This is the only true Basque Fronton in Colorado. This structure is culturally significant to the Basque people and, though not yet 50 years old, would qualify for the register because of that cultural significance and as representation of an under-represented group.

The group has put together a preliminary evaluation which was reviewed by the Historic Preservation board at the end of December. City support is important, though not required.

Putting the Fronton on the local list of historic designation (via Council resolution) would show strong City support of placing this on the State of Colorado historic designation list. The designation will describe just the area of the fronton so that the historic designation rules/restrictions will not apply to other areas of the park.

Board members wondered if this would impact the work for the roundabout. Trent explained that all the work has been done and this structure doesn't impact any of those plans, or future development. Playability is also not affected by the designation. A historical designation would open up particular grant funding that supports interpretive signage, and maintenance to keep the facility in good repair. Staff supports seeking this designation to acknowledge the cultural significance of this court and the Basque people.

Kyle Gardner made a motion to support an application to the City Historic Preservation Board and City Council for the Historic designation of the Plaza in the City register of historic sites as well as supporting an application to the State of Colorado Historic Register. The motion was seconded by Austin Solko and carried unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 7 No 0

A more detailed letter of support may be provided to the Historic Preservation Board in advance of their next meeting the first week of February.

Redlands Tail Race

Ken Sherbenou introduced Trent Prall, the City's Director of Public Works, to the Board. Trent talked with the board about the tail race which exists after the Redlands Water and Power hydroelectric plant and could provide consistent flows in a man-made canal for 51 weeks per year. The idea to utilize and upgrade this channel came up in 2012-13 when the local Lions Club approached the City about improvements at this location as well as around Las Colonias.

A preliminary design calls for five waves (which could be constructed in a phased approach), to utilize the consistent flow for kayakers. At the end you could get out of the tail race, walk a short distance and then put back in at Connected Lakes and (after some improvements) paddle back to the start (parking) on flat water. Additionally, you could catch an eddyline to the existing boat ramp or continue in the river channel towards Fruita. In 2013 the cost estimates were \$1.3M. Today staff estimates the project will cost around \$2.1M.

Other elements proposed, include a slalom course (which may be more utilized with consistent flows than they are in other places where flow varies), changing screens (similar to what exists at Lunch Loop and the Las Colonias River Park), accessible submerged ramps at the top and bottom, timber step river access at all 5 of the waves for spectators, soft trail river access, boulder step access at the first feature, and slab stone terrace for exiting at the last feature.

Trent shared with the board that this project stalled before due to strong community support for a very focused approach to developing Las Colonias Park and the amenity which has evolved to the River Park feature we have today. This is still an extremely attractive amenity due to the consistent waves it would provide for kayakers. Board members wondered if there would be conflict between swimmers and kayakers. Staff feels that this feature would very obviously be a kayak feature, and unattractive to swimmers. Not many towns have both of these options even available. Board members also wondered what other issues might exist with parking, land impacts, emergency access, etc. Trent reminded the board that this was a preliminary design and those are considerations that would be more closely examined once the project was funded and moving forward. The current timeline includes intentional discussion with partners in 2023, capital funding request for design proposed in the 2024 budget, permitting in 2025 with construction anticipated in 2028. Board members wondered what other issues were anticipated. Trent advised the Board that partner discussions continuing throughout 2023 would be intended to identify any issues and impacts that should be considered. Board members mentioned including the Audubon Society in the discussions as the increased traffic might impact the areas which they are focused on downstream.

Winter Park Hours

Ken Sherbenou talked with the Board about continued issues with overnight camping in the parks. One way staff is considering mitigating these issues would be to change park hours. Currently parks with sports facilities (Columbine, Canyon View, and Lincoln Park) are open until 11 p.m., all other parks close at 10 p.m. Due to the increased darkness and the cold there is a significant decrease in the use of parks after dark, so staff proposes shifting open hours from November through March (coinciding with the end of Daylight Savings time). The proposal would close parks 2 hours earlier (9 p.m. for sports facilities and 8 p.m. for all others) than their current time. Staff are also working on a grant to increase lighting at some of the parks where historically there have been issues with vandalism and other undesirable activity after dark.

Board members wondered if this would really change behavior or make a difference. Ken Sherbenou advised the board that a change in posted park hours does give the police department the ability to remove folks when the parks are closed. Board members also wondered how this coincides with check-in at the shelter. Since shelter check-in begins at 6 p.m., the proposed change in park hours would not have an impact.

Ken Sherbenou reminded the board that the City remains committed to a multi-faceted approach to alleviating the issues around housing in the Grand Junction Area. Housing Manager, Ashley Chambers, is very plugged in to the services available and working on ways to connect folks with different service providers.

Lily Grasifi made a motion to support the proposed change in park hours from November 1 to March 1. The motion was seconded by Gary Schroen and carried unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 7 No 0

Bylaws Discussion

Chair Lisa Whalin reminded the board that it is important members be familiar with the bylaws of the board. Gary Schroen reminded that boards have certain protections which are only in place if bylaws are followed.

For The Good of the Community

Bill Findlay talked with the board about the Tree Canopy Survey that's out. Ken Sherbenou advised the board that it will be most helpful if a wide variety of responses are received. This is separate from the tree discussions that happened as a part of the landscape code update though the Forestry Board was pleased with the compromises reached as a part of that update.

Lily Grasifi shared with the board that during the Bicycle and Pedestrian master plan committee meeting a concern was raised about a lack of trail etiquette signage in the area of Las Colonias, especially as different uses increase, so that it can continue to be used harmoniously. Ken Sherbenou shared with the board that trail etiquette is already a part of the education that staff undertakes as a part of the River Park information and staff expect there will be other takeaways as the Bicycle and Pedestrian plan is completed.

Board members reminded everyone that the Community Recreation Center Committee is hosting a fundraising 5K this weekend at Matchett Park.

Adjourn

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

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be February 2, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Little
Administrative Specialist