

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

Regular Meeting – August 15, 2024

Meeting Location: Hospitality Suite – Lincoln Park Stadium

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Cindy Enos-Martinez
William Findlay
Kyle Gardner
Lilly Simonds
Abe Herman
Austin Solko
Chandler Smith
Nancy Strippel
Byron Wiehe

Board Members Absent: Lisa Whalin - absent

Guests Present: Greg White, DTJ
James Palmer, DTJ

City Staff Present: Ken Sherbenou, Director of Parks and Recreation
Emily Krause, Recreation Superintendent
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist

Called to Order 12:00pm

Approval of Minutes

Austin Solko made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular July meeting. The motion was seconded by Abe Herman and carried unanimously.

Yes 9 No 0

Whitman Design Update

Ken introduced staff from DTJ to talk through the final design presentation for Whitman Park and reminded board members about the history of the park, and the decision to close it to events only which was made in September of 2023. In conjunction with that design there has been a holistic approach to offering services for the unhoused residents of Grand Junction and a steady increase in services which Whitman was never adequate to contain. The resource center offers a central location for showers and to provide meals. Homeward Bound is seeing around 105 people a day. In addition there are numerous changes to downtown, including additions of residences, the Mother Teresa building, the repurposing of the Greyhound Terminal, and the changes to 4th and 5th street which make improving that green space a welcome and dramatic and needed change for downtown.

Ken Sherbenou shared with board members that, as always, there are a lot of projects vying for money and staff are working on a plan to phase development of Whitman, so that some improvements can be proposed for the 2025 budget year.

James Palmer, DTJ, shared the schematic design proposal for Whitman Park. The community engagement was the best they have seen for a community of our size. The public preferred concept was Grand Valley landforms options with a desire to incorporate some of the forms and connections to downtown.

The design includes creation of distinct areas with screening intended to mitigate the road noise and buffer groups of users from each other (dogs from rec court, etc.). The food trucks would be intended to stay on the street, and the four corners would include waterwise planting, pollinator gardens and is intended to be more decorative and polished in nature.

Board members wondered about parking and traffic flow. The intention is that, much like the rest of downtown, folks would park a short distance away in any of the public parking lots that already exist, and walk to the park. In June of 2022 a parking survey determined that only 50% of the available parking was being utilized.

Board members also wondered about the staff burden created by some of the amenities. Ken shared that it will require different staff efforts than other parks, and a synthetic rink is going to be less staff burden than a traditional frozen rink, though it does require storage of the materials in the off season.

Board members shared that they still have some concerns about fencing/barriers to keep kids away from the busy streets that surround the park.

Bill Findlay made a motion that the Parks and Recreation Advisory board approve this plan and recommend adoption by Council including pursuing funding in the near term. The motion was seconded by Byron Wiehe and carried unanimously.

Yes 8 No 0

(Board Member Nancy Strippel had to leave the meeting before this vote.)

The Board will meet in Emerson in October. Long pants and closed toed shoes are required. There will not be a virtual option for that meeting

Officer Elections

This item tabled until September.

Ken Sherbenou shared that staff are still working through challenges, in advance of a formal opening celebration of the Dos Rios Splash Pad. As this is an unstaffed park amenity not a pool style splash pad, it will shut off for water quality adjustments if there is too much debris, or too many bathers. It is equipped with underground water quality sensors that will shut it down automatically.

Board members wondered about signage specifically stating dogs are not allowed. Shade shelters footers have been poured and the shelters are on order and will be installed when they arrive. We'll also install sprinklers to cool the artificial turf, on the hour. The splash pad and the turf areas use domestic water.

Adjourn:

The meeting adjourned by acclamation at 1:27 pm.

Next Meeting

The September meeting is rescheduled to September 19 to accommodate some extra time for FCI to collect bids for the GMP.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Little
Administrative Specialist