

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes September 4, 2008

Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Chair Lenna Watson at 12:03 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Jack Scott
 Lenna Watson
 Reford Theobold
 Dr. William Findlay

Board Members Absent: Tawny Espinoza
 Bruce Hill (Ex-Officio)

Parks & Recreation Staff Present: Mike Vendegna, Interim Director
 Jessica Norman, Administrative Assistant
 Ron Felt, Parks Supervisor
 Traci Wieland, Interim Parks Superintendent

Item 2: Approve Minutes

Lenna Watson moved to approve the August 7, 2008 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board minutes. Jack Scott seconded.

Motion adopted by Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 4 No 0

Item 3: Burkey Park Update

Mike Vendegna reported on the Burkey Park neighborhood work day, consisting of only eight community members and staff members Eddie Mort and Wayne Krabbe. Mr. Vendegna stated a 4–5 ft soft trail has been graded and loads of bark chips brought in. Mike Vendegna said the Department is currently obtaining fencing bids and will also be meeting with a contractor regarding the decorative rock area. In addition, trash cans and pet pick-ups have been placed on the property. Jack Scott stated he has seen people working on moving the wood chips and said the neighborhood is already using the new trail.

Mike Vendegna reported he had recently attended a County Commissioner’s meeting, at which they discussed the “how are the children” segment. The topic consists of various speakers who present on the available programs for the children in our community. Mr. Vendegna stated the Recreation Division presented on the City’s programs and said that Commissioner Steve Acquafresca brought up Burkey Park, stating the property is high on the County’s agenda to work with the City on developing the park. Lenna Watson thanked the Parks and Recreation staff for working so diligently with the Burkey neighborhood. Jack Scott also thanked the staff, and expressed the importance of continuing the improvements, even if it has to be “a little at a time”. Mike Vendegna stated his intentions were to compile the comment cards distributed at the July 19, 2008 neighborhood meeting, along with Terri

Troutner's comments, then share the information at the next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting.

Item 4: Super Rad Art Jam: August 30th Event

Mike Vendegna reported on the successful Super Rad Art Jam held on August 30, 2008 at Eagle Rim Park, stating the people who organized the event were extremely professional. Mr. Vendegna said there were 4'x8' sheets of plywood hung up along the fence line for the artists to paint on. Mike Vendegna expressed how unbelievable it was to watch the artists develop their pictures throughout the day. Unfortunately, the artwork was gone before Mr. Vendegna was able to take pictures. Traci Wieland said the artists were actually hoping for people to take their pictures. Mrs. Wieland said the artists wanted the art to disappear, as they intend to come back and do it again at a later date. Mike Vendegna said he will attempt to take pictures of the next event to share with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Item 5: Budget Update

Mike Vendegna reported the 2009 budget process was moving along smoothly and is currently in the "balancing" stage. Mr. Vendegna stated the operating budget will be presented to City Council in November for final approval. Lenna Watson asked if the budget had increased since last year. Mike Vendegna responded the operating budget was insignificantly "up", mainly due to items out of the Department's control, such as fuel, water, electricity, etc. Reford Theobald asked about the status of the capital budget. Mike Vendegna responded the capital budget was still in the process of being balanced, as it is dependent upon the public safety initiative. Mr. Vendegna said if the initiative does not pass, the budget will be much tighter than anticipated; however, if it does pass, it will free up funds to complete numerous capital projects. Mike Vendegna stated the Department carefully reviewed the 2009 capital budget and have only requested the projects that were absolutely necessary, such as safety related projects, irrigation system updates, and a new playground and restrooms at Melrose Park. Mr. Vendegna reported Traci Wieland has done an excellent job in obtaining grant funding from the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for the Melrose Park improvements. Traci Wieland reported CDBG is granting \$108,000 to be used towards the restrooms. Traci Wieland briefly discussed the playground plans, stating the original rocket will somehow remain at the park; however, should no longer serve as a play structure due to safety issues. Discussion ensued regarding the need to "immortalize" the rocket without it remaining a play structure. Mrs. Wieland said the goal is to install a similar "rocket" type play structure in addition to immortalizing the old rocket.

Lenna Watson asked how Melrose Park received its name. Traci Wieland reported Ron Felt had recently researched this question, discovering the park was named after a subdivision. Lenna Watson suggested an unveiling of the new play structure, suggesting the Board members have a picnic in the park. Mrs. Watson also expressed the importance of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board getting out more in order for the community to know they are a vibrant working representation of the citizens of Grand Junction. Traci Wieland agreed, stating it is important for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members to actively show their involvement in the community. Mrs. Wieland reported she will assist the GOCO board by reviewing grants this fall, in efforts to learn more about the application process in preparation for submitting a Melrose Park grant application in the spring. Traci Wieland stated the process now requires the applicant to convince GOCO they have the community's buy-in on the project. The applicants must now prove they have obtained the public's input, conducted surveys, etc. Traci Wieland stated her and Mike Vendegna have been discussing inviting the surrounding neighborhood to a community meeting, and suggested the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members take the lead

role on such a meeting. Lenna Watson agreed, suggesting the Board co-host the meeting along with the Parks and Recreation Department. Mrs. Wieland stated all Parks and Recreation Advisory Board minutes, in which the grant is discussed, will be included in the grant application to help indicate the Board's involvement in the process.

Dr. William Findlay suggested the sign be changed at Melrose Park to include "Rocket Park" in the name. Traci Wieland stated the name change could be a good issue to discuss with the neighborhood at the community meeting. Mrs. Wieland stated the Department will investigate the name further before making such a suggestion, to ensure there is not a more significant reason for the name "Melrose Park". Lenna Watson expressed her desire for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to get out in the community more, suggesting future Board meetings be held at the numerous park locations.

Dr. William Findlay recommended the Board begin discussing park land acquisitions, expressing the need to determine when to continue developing the existing land before purchasing additional park property. Mr. Findlay requested the Board start planning ahead of the land acquisitions and work on determining the future needs of the community. Mike Vendegna agreed, discussing the importance of combining the comprehensive plan with the parks master plan. Mr. Vendegna discussed the impact Clifton may have on the park system, stating, should they decide to join the City of Grand Junction, it could open up more regional parks and free up money for developing neighborhood parks. Dr. William Findlay discussed the increase of condensed housing with smaller yards, which only increases the needs for neighborhood parks. Jack Scott asked if there was much land available for the City to acquire. Reford Theobold reported on a parcel of approximately 20 acres located at 31 and F ½ Roads, stating the property will soon be for sale for an estimated \$50,000/acre. Mr. Theobold stated the property is currently surrounded by homes, and said the closest neighborhood park is Long's Family Memorial Park. Mike Vendegna stated there were not many parcels of land like this one available any longer. Dr. William Findlay expressed the community tends to be more in favor of smaller neighborhood parks versus regional parks. Reford Theobold stated the City would not necessarily have to develop the entire 20 acres into a park, stating the property could be effective in many ways. The Board agreed the property would sell very quickly. Mr. Theobold stated he had sent an email to Park Planner Shawn Cooper regarding the property. Lenna Watson asked Mike Vendegna to follow-up with Mr. Cooper and report back to the Board.

Item 6: Project Update

Mike Vendegna reported the new Lincoln Park-Moyer Pool waterslide opened and closed in the same weekend. Mr. Vendegna said the opening, although short, was very successful.

Item 7: Other Business

Dr. William Findlay discussed some very popular water features in Seattle that are holes approximately 20'x40' and six inches deep. Mr. Findlay said the features are tremendously used and expressed what a neat idea it is to have holes of water the public can dip and play in. Reford Theobold asked what had happened to the water fountain on 3rd and Main Street. Mike Vendegna responded the fountain was not designed properly and eventually shifted and sunk, leaving it inoperable. Mr. Vendegna said the City does not own the property any longer, including the fountain. Traci Wieland said the property now belongs to the owners of the hotels, who plan to replace it with some type of art (something that will require less maintenance than a fountain). Reford Theobold said the fountain was originally copied from a popular fountain in Greeley and that he had played a major role in getting it built in Grand Junction.

Mike Vendegna stated the fountain was a great concept and would still be operating today if it had been engineered properly.

Lenna Watson asked for an update on the Canyon View dog park. Traci Wieland reported the Parks Department has received some concerns regarding the quality of water in the pond, along with information that some of the dogs have been getting sick. Mrs. Wieland stated Persigo has recently tested the pond and found the E. coli level is a little higher than the other two ponds at Canyon View; however, it is typical for the level to be higher since it is a sedimentation pond used heavily by dogs. Traci Wieland stated the Department has received various views on whether or not the pond is safe, and have not found a good basis of what to do at this point. Mrs. Wieland said the majority of the dog park users have expressed the pond needs to remain open, as that was one of the original requests they made when the dog park was being developed. Traci Wieland stated the water in the pond is irrigation water and it would be very expensive to treat the water. Mrs. Wieland said, while the Department continues to explore multiple options, including the possibility of installing bubblers, they are currently planning to split the dog park into three separate sections, allowing the owners to choose whether or not their dogs have access to the pond. Traci Wieland stated there is also a sign posted informing the dog owners they are using the pond “at their own risk” and to consult a veterinarian if they have any concerns. Reford Theobald suggested the Department research the possibility of installing a solar powered bubbler. Jack Scott asked how many dogs are using the dog park. Traci Wieland responded the park is currently being used by hundreds of dogs. Lenna Watson asked if animal control is patrolling the dog park. Traci Wieland said Animal Control spends more time patrolling the other two ponds at Canyon View Park than they do at the dog park. While on the canine topic, Mrs. Wieland also mentioned the “Dog Days” event at Lincoln Park-Moyer Pool on Saturday, suggesting the Board members drive by to see the popular event.

Mike Vendegna distributed a letter documenting the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board’s support for the upcoming Public Safety initiative. Lenna Watson stated she intends to sign the letter on behalf of the Board and would like to list all five existing Board members as being in support. The Board unanimously agreed.

Item 8: Future Meetings Agenda

The next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting will be on October 2, 2008 at the Orchard Mesa Cemetery. Mike Vendegna said it is a great time of year to meet at the cemetery, as they are in the process of planning for a new facility.

Item 9: Adjourn

Lenna Watson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Jack Scott moved to adjourn and Dr. William Findlay seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 12:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Norman
Administrative Assistant