

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

April 3, 2008

Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Dennis Teeters at 12:11 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members Present:

Dennis Teeters
Jack Scott
Tawny Espinoza
Dr. William Findlay
Bruce Hill (Ex-Officio)

Board Members Absent:

Lenna Watson
Reford Theobald
Nick Adams

Parks & Recreation Staff Present:

Joe Stevens, Director
Don Hobbs, Assistant Director
Tressa Fisher, Administrative Specialist
Traci Altergott, Recreation Superintendent
Shawn Cooper, Parks Planner

Guests:

Terri Troutner
29 Burkey Park neighbors (See attached sign up sheet)

Item 2: Approve Minutes

Jack Scott moved to approve the February 21, 2008 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board minutes. Dr. William Findlay seconded.

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

Item 3: Burkey Park

Joe Stevens reported on February 10, 2008 letter Terri Troutner had sent to Tim Moore, Public Works and Planning Director, regarding her inquiry on the status of park improvements in several City parks. Mr. Stevens stated, in addition to his written response, he and Terri Troutner had recently had a phone conversation which focused primarily on the development of Burkey Park. Mr. Stevens discussed the history of Burkey Park, stating the property was a gift from the Burkey family in 1965, at which time the property was not in City limits. Joe Stevens stated the gift did not include any conditions and/or time requirements for development, other than the stipulation the property had to be used for park purposes. Mr. Stevens said the Burkey property is included in the comprehensive Parks and Recreation master plan, and that a conceptual plan has been completed specifically for Burkey Park; however, funding has not been identified or dedicated to the park at this time.

Joe Stevens introduced Terri Troutner, who stated she was in attendance to represent the Burkey Park neighborhood. Ms. Troutner read a letter she had prepared to present to the Board. (See attached) Terri Troutner discussed the numerous reasons she and her neighbors would like to see the development of

Burkey Park become a higher priority. Ms. Troutner stated the residents in the Burkey Park area feel the development of the park is long overdue, and that they would be willing to volunteer to help with its development.

Jack Scott reported the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board had formed a sub-committee last year to review and prioritize park development. Joe Stevens stated the sub-committee reviewed the prioritizations during the budget process, as it related to the Capital Improvement Program, prioritizing the parks within the context of funding. Mr. Stevens stated the prioritizing process plays a big role in determining the feasibility of development, especially with regards to obtaining GOCO grants. Joe Stevens stated another large impact in the determination of prioritization, is the opportunity to partner with other organizations. (Example: Mesa County School District 51) Mr. Stevens discussed their thought process, stating the sub-committee's perspective was that the recently developed Long's Family Memorial Park was serving the needs of the East end of the valley. Several of the guests disagreed, stating Long's Family Memorial Park is too far away for their young children. Joe Stevens stated the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board must also prioritize the parks on a city wide basis, using Stocker Stadium's recent artificial turf project as an example, as it effected citizens living in the "entire valley".

Jack Scott asked Shawn Cooper for the estimated cost of installing irrigation and grass at Burkey Park. Mr. Cooper responded the average cost for a typical park is approximately \$100,000/acre for irrigation and grass only. Mr. Cooper said, without actual numbers in front of him, he estimated the cost of a grass field at Burkey Park to be approximately \$2 million. Joe Stevens said price goes up considerably when adding in a playground, shelters, restrooms, parking, etc., as well as the cost of maintaining the park. Terri Troutner said the neighborhood group was not asking for any major amenities, stating they would be happy with just a grass field. Discussion ensued regarding the fact that the neighbors are currently using the property as is, regardless of the existing conditions (high weeds, etc.).

Councilman Bruce Hill stated he is a non-voting member of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, and expressed to the guests the importance of understanding the prioritization is truly based on the lack of funding, and that the Board has to make recommendations in accordance to the financial limitations. Mr. Hill said he was happy too see such great attendance from the neighborhood, expressing appreciation for their passion, and stated the group had made some very good points. Bruce Hill stated the City is very lucky to have such a significant amount of acreage dedicated for park purposes; however, has limited resources for development, especially with the current Tabor restrictions. In addition, City Council had to reduce the Capital Improvements budget by \$30 million two years ago due to inflation. Mr. Hill said, historically, parks tend to get developed when partners come forward. (Examples: JUCO assisting with the development of the baseball field at Canyon View Park, Mesa County School District 51's partnership in the development of Wingate Park, Mesa County Jr. Youth Football Association contributing to the additional multi-purpose fields at Canyon View Park, etc.) Bruce Hill expressed the importance of keeping the Burkey property as usable as is, for the time being, and stated the presentation today will not go unnoticed.

Terri Troutner asked what the neighborhood group can do to make their feelings more known, stating today's turnout was a very small representation of who has contacted her in support of developing Burkey Park. Dr William Findlay asked how West Lake Park was developed, stating it was his recollection it was a similar process that included much involvement and volunteering from the surrounding neighborhood. Joe Stevens agreed, stating the park was developed because the neighbors got involved and wanted to see improvements. Mr. Stevens said it tends to build a sense of community when park improvements are initiated by the citizens. Joe Stevens suggested the Parks and Recreation

Advisory Board establish a sub-committee to identify and implement minimal improvements to the Burkey property, on a short term basis, as well as pursue forming a partnership for future development. Mr. Stevens stated there are several small improvements that could be made that would not disrupt the long term plans for development. Members of the neighborhood group expressed they would just like to see a “family park” that is safer for their children to play in, and said it would not have to include large amenities such as restrooms. Joe Stevens responded, stating a 19 acre park will have to have restrooms installed at some point.

A member of the neighborhood group asked why the park has not been elevated on the priority list, since the property was donated for park purposes over 40 years ago. Councilman Hill responded, stating prior to the development of Long’s Family Memorial Park, Burkey Park was higher on the priority list. The City of Grand Junction determined at that time, it was not a top priority to develop another park so close in proximity. Jack Scott asked what the neighborhood could do to get Burkey Park moved higher on the priority list. Another member of the neighborhood group expressed concern that, should the park not be made into a park, it could potentially be developed into housing. Dennis Teeters responded, stating once land is dedicated to a park, it has to go back to the voters before the property could be used for any other purpose. Councilman Hill agreed, stating, by charter, the City of Grand Junction cannot dispose of park property without the vote of the people, referring to Lilac Park as an example.

Terri Troutner expressed concern that, regardless of the group’s suggestions, no action was going to be taken until some type of financing is identified. Terri Troutner stated the neighbors are striving to make some type of progress, and while they can’t affect the finance situation, they would like City Council to make Burkey Park a higher priority. Bruce Hill responded by explaining the necessary steps, stating Joe Stevens and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board are charged with the task of identifying a park priority list to present to City Council during the budget cycle. Mr. Hill stated this was a good first step for the neighborhood group, and encouraged the group to engage in discussions regarding a “phasing” approach, focusing on what can be done now with limited funding. Mr. Hill said, in order to get the park into the ten year Capital Improvement Plan, conversations will need to continue to see what fundamental improvements can take place. Joe Stevens stated he was aware of the group’s frustrations, and assured them that if they work together with the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, they should be able to make some short term improvements. Mr. Stevens discussed the ability to control the weeds, and the possibility of a small trail, using wood chips from the City’s Forestry Division. Joe Stevens suggested the possibility of scheduling a neighborhood work day, in which the neighbors could assist in the improvements.

A member of the neighborhood group asked if they needed to become a “squeaky wheel” in order to see any progress. Jack Scott stated, approximately 25 years ago, the Burkey Park neighborhood told the City they would be willing to annex if the City would build them a park. Mr. Scott said the City’s response was that, if the neighborhood annexed, the City would build the park. Jack Scott expressed, if the zoning is the main issue for the park not being a priority, the neighborhood is still willing to annex. Mr. Scott stated it was a disgrace the park has not been developed in over 40 years and that the City should be very ashamed of themselves. Councilman Hill responded, saying the issue is the “funding” and has nothing to do with the zoning. Mr. Hill thanked the Terri Troutner and the entire neighborhood group for their attendance, assuring them they were taking the appropriate steps.

Dennis Teeters also thanked the group and clarified with Ms. Troutner that she will be in contact with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for further discussions regarding Burkey Park.

Item 4: Projects UpdateRestrooms (Duck Pond and Sherwood Parks)

Shawn Cooper reported the restrooms at Duck Pond and Sherwood Parks have both been demolished. Mr. Cooper said the building permits should be in place as of today and that Tusca II has been awarded both contracts. Shawn Cooper stated the City has been trying to build the new restrooms since 2002, and through combining the funding over the years and the good graces of the construction industry, the project is finally underway. Mr. Cooper stated the construction has a 65 day window and should be complete by the middle of summer. The design for both restrooms is very similar to the new restrooms at Columbine and Riverside Parks. Dr. Findlay asked if the new restrooms would be open during the winter months. Don Hobbs responded the restrooms at Duck Pond and Sherwood Parks would be closed in the winter due to maintenance requirements.

Waterslides (Lincoln Park-Moyer and Orchard Mesa Community Center Pools)

Shawn Cooper reported the waterslide at Orchard Mesa Community Center Pool has been installed. Mr. Cooper stated the new slide is a deck landing slide that opens into a separate catch tank at end of slide. The slide is self contained and is completely separate from the swimming pool. Shawn Cooper stated Larry Manchester and Tin Ross had determined to go with a self containing unit, to avoid limiting the use of the swimming pool for swim meets, etc. Mr. Cooper said the waterslide is waiting on the installation of the chlorinator, and then will be opened to the public. Shawn Cooper also reported on the installation of the new hot tub, located on the South side of the pool deck. Discussion ensued regarding the water temperature of the swimming pool, with Traci Altergott stating the pool tends to stay on the warmer side of what the competitive swimmers would prefer. Tawny Espinoza asked if pool staff is expecting an increase in the usage, due to the upcoming closure of Mesa State's swimming pool. Traci Altergott responded, Larry Manchester has already been contacted by some of Mesa State's swimmers regarding the closure.

Shawn Cooper reported the new slide has been ordered for Lincoln Park-Moyer Pool and that the old one has been completely torn down. Mr. Cooper stated the new slide is not anticipated to be finished until the middle of June, which is later than originally scheduled. The new slide will be approximately the same height as the old slide; however, it will be a tube slide with tighter turns.

Whitman Park

Shawn Cooper stated he had been invited to participate with the planning for the upcoming Public Safety facility, to discuss possible improvements to Whitman Park. Mr. Cooper said after several meetings with the project's stakeholders, it was determined major improvements to Whitman Park would be a much larger issue than the group was anticipating. Shawn Cooper said there will be a presentation to City Council regarding proposed changes, but the park will most likely end up with only some new "minor" amenities.

Canyon View Park

Shawn Cooper reported Phase III of Canyon View Park is underway, beginning with the design for tennis court complex which should be completed by the end of May. Mr. Cooper anticipates a contract will be awarded by the end of June and that they will break ground in July. Shawn Cooper stated the design team will move forward with the plan for the parking lot in early spring 2009. Mr. Cooper said the tennis club house will not be part of the current phase, but space will be reserved for it, as it is included in the park's master plan. Joe Stevens stated they are planning to refine the conceptual plan, due to its costly amenities. Dennis Teeters asked about the status of the volleyball club's interest in the park. Traci Altergott responded the gentleman who was pursuing the volleyball complex has since

moved out of state, and without him the concept has appeared to fizzle. Joe Stevens stated the Parks and Recreation Department will bring the revised master plan back to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for review. Discussion ensued regarding additional lighting at Canyon View Park. Joe Stevens said there were no plans at this time to light the baseball field. Shawn Cooper stated the housing contracts in Spanish Trails subdivision included the stipulation the owners were buying property next to a park that could be loud and include lights.

No-Through Fare County Trails Grant

Shawn Cooper reported Mesa County had recently received the grant for the No-Through Fare County Trails project. Mr. Cooper said Mesa County, in collaboration with GOCO, plans to develop a trail from the 340 area (Riverside Park) to connect to the Monument Road trailhead. Shawn Cooper stated Mesa County plans for the City to assume ownership and maintenance of the properties, which are currently under title to the Riverfront Foundation.

Lincoln Park Barn Restrooms

Don Hobbs reported the restrooms at the Lincoln Park Barn are currently under renovation. Mr. Hobbs stated the renovation will include the following: The removal and replacement of the toilets with commercial toilets (automatic flush valves), the replacement of the flooring, two tube lights are being installed in the ceiling, and the drinking fountain is being replaced. Don Hobbs stated the project will begin on April 28 and should be completed by May 19. Mr. Hobbs stated there are no public events scheduled during this time, and there will be portable restrooms available on site for the ongoing exercise and dance classes. Mr. Hobbs reported, during the renovations, asbestos was identified, so they will be removing the linoleum down to the concrete level. Don Hobbs stated, unfortunately, asbestos removal is costly.

Item 5: Other Business

Traci Altergott reported the spring softball league has grown from 77 teams in 2007 to 90 teams this year, speculating the growth has a lot to do with the elimination of the non-resident rate. Ms. Altergott stated Parks and Recreation Department staff has received numerous positive comments about the change. Joe Stevens reported early season golf ticket sales have doubled over the same time period since the change, with a good portion of the sales generated from the City's employee health benefit program.

Item 6: Adjourn

Dennis Teeters asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Findlay moved to adjourn and Jack Scott seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tressa Fisher
Administrative Specialist