

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes February 12, 2009

Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Chair Lenna Watson at 12:05 p.m.

Roll Call

Board Members Present: Lenna Watson
 Reford Theobold
 Dr. William Findlay
 David McInay
 Tawny Espinoza
 Jack Scott
 Bruce Hill (Ex-Officio)

Board Members Absent: Yvette Carnine

Parks & Recreation Staff Present: Rob Schoeber, Director
 Traci Wieland, Recreation Superintendent
 Mike Vendegna, Parks Superintendent
 Tressa Fisher, Administrative Specialist

Item 2: Approve Minutes

Jack Scott moved to approve the January 8, 2009 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board minutes. Reford Theobold seconded.

Motion adopted by Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 6 No 0

Rob Schoeber reported the City had five great internal candidates for the Parks Superintendent position and said he was proud to announce Mike Vendegna had been selected for the job. *Congratulations Mike!*

Item 3: Midwest Regional Conference

Rob Schoeber distributed registration forms for the upcoming Midwest Regional Conference being hosted by the Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Schoeber encouraged the Board members to attend the conference, stating it will be a great opportunity to network with other organizations. Rob Schoeber said the conference will be split between recreation and parks, and will cover a wide variety of topics. Mr. Schoeber commended the recreation staff for the excellent job they have done coordinating the event.

Item 4: Fees and Charges

Traci Wieland reported the Parks and Recreation Department's goal is to revamp the fees and charges policy, specifically with regards to facility rentals, in order to streamline and simplify the process for both customers and staff. Mrs. Wieland briefly discussed the current policy, stating it is often very confusing for staff, as there are generally two levels of confirmation for facility charges. Traci Wieland

said staff had identified a couple of main concerns in which they are requesting direction from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board prior to submitting the proposed policy changes to City Council:

Reduced fee for nonprofit organizations: Traci Wieland reported the Department has seen a significant increase in requests from nonprofit organizations for reduced facility rental fees, such as the Lincoln Park Barn, tennis courts, general use areas, etc. Mrs. Wieland said the process has historically been a “hit or miss” situation, as several of the local nonprofit organizations have not been charged for many years and have grown accustomed to using the facilities for free, while other nonprofit organizations have been asked to submit a written request to the Director of Parks and Recreation and/or City Council. Traci Wieland stated the Department would like to streamline the process by implementing a nonprofit “half price fee”, and would require the organizations to provide evidence of their nonprofit status. Other governmental agencies, such as School District 51 and Mesa State College would be included in this half-price category. Bruce Hill expressed the importance of the Department using caution when suggesting a flat rate for nonprofit events, using JUCO as example of a 501c3 organization that should not necessarily be given a reduced rate on facility rentals. Jack Scott agreed, stating it can be fairly simple for any organization to apply to be nonprofit. Traci Wieland stated the Department would use discretion when offering the reduced fee, and would limit the rate to the Lincoln Park Barn, loop area, practice fields, etc. Mrs. Wieland expressed the Department’s desire to implement a more standardized fees and charges policy, which will include charging the nonprofit organizations that have not paid the fees in the past. Discussion ensued. Bruce Hill suggested the Department establish a budget for waived fees, in order to clarify to users, both for profit and nonprofit, whether or not the Department can afford to sponsor the event. Mr. Hill stated City Council handles their requests from nonprofit organizations this way, and said all waived fees are charged to the City Council budget. Discussion ensued. The Board unanimously agreed the Department should offer a “half price” rate to nonprofit organizations that have proven their nonprofit status.

Reduction in tennis court rental fee: Traci Wieland reported the Department would like to reduce the tennis court fees to \$10/hour per court, as Grand Junction currently charges more than other comparable areas. Mrs. Wieland stated the lower rates should increase the amount of rentals from the private lesson instructors and said the Department is hoping to use peer pressure to regulate. The hope is to bring the entire tennis community together to discuss the rental fees and the Department’s intentions. Jack Scott expressed concern regarding how the Department would police the reservation process. Rob Schoeber stated the Department would reserve the courts once the fee is paid and said the tennis community is a tight group who would police themselves fairly well. Traci Wieland stated the tennis population is continually growing, bringing with it more and more requests for usage of the courts. Bruce Hill suggested setting the fee lower (\$5/hour per court), stating a lower rate would most likely obtain a higher level of compliance. Discussion ensued. The Board agreed the lower rate should encourage the tennis community to begin reserving the courts and to self regulate the usage.

Dr. William Findlay moved to approve the 2009 Parks and Recreation Fees and Charges as proposed, including offering a “half price” rate for nonprofit organizations and a reduced rate of \$5/hour for tennis court rentals. Tawny Espinoza seconded.

Motion adopted by Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 6 No 0

Jack Scott requested the Board review the set up and teardown fees at a future date, expressing concern the fees were too low to cover costs.

Item 5: Renaming of Melrose Park

Rob Schoeber reported on the success of the Melrose Park neighborhood meetings, stating the public is excited about the design, which will include many of their suggestions, such as moving the shelter to the center of the park, installing connector sidewalks, an exercise area (with a potential grant for the exercise equipment), a new playground, and the relocation and repainting of the rocket as a “sculpture”. Rob Schoeber and Mike Vendegna have also been working with the Garden Vista Club, who has offered to plant a landscaped corner with roses surrounding the rocket. Mr. Schoeber said another popular request was for off street parking, which would have to be completed in a later phase, should funding come available. In addition, there have been multiple requests to rename the park. Mr. Schoeber said the Department is suggesting changing the name to “Melrose – Rocket Park”. Traci Wieland reported staff has been researching the “Melrose” name, and the only thing they can find is that it might have been named after a subdivision. Dr. William Findlay suggested changing the name to “Rocket Park” if there is not a significant reason to keep the “Melrose”. Bruce Hill agreed, stating the park may have been named after a developer, at which time they just needed a name. Discussion ensued regarding what community members may still have knowledge of where the name “Melrose” originated. Rob Schoeber said he would follow-up with the few names mentioned and report back at the next Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meeting.

Item 6: Bureau of Land Management Update

Rob Schoeber distributed a copy of the letter he and Lenna Watson had submitted to BLM, on behalf of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, in response to the outdoor research management plan that is currently underway. Dave McIlnay said he intends to get involved in the process, stating BLM generally receives a very large list of requests which can take quite some time to sort through. Mr. McIlnay stated if there are currently areas the City would like to see developed, the more specific they get now, the more it will help BLM later down the line. Dr. Findlay discussed the importance of preserving access to the public properties. Mr. McIlnay stated it really helps BLM when local governments request the access areas to be preserved. Reford Theobald stated it would be good for the City to notify BLM that if they are going to dispose of land for private purpose, the City is very interested in seeing a percentage set aside for city parks. David McIlnay stated, by law, should BLM decide to dispose of any property, it must be sold at fair market value; however, per the Recreation Public Purposes Act, they do have the right to sell land for a lower price if it is going to be used for ‘recreation and public purposes’. Mr. McIlnay stated BLM is required to notify local government of any land being disposed of and must open it up for public review. Lenna Watson thanked Dave McIlnay for getting involved in the process and said the Board is looking forward to receiving more information.

Item 7: Internet Registration Update

Traci Wieland reported on the Internet registrations report that was included in the Board packets. Mrs. Wieland said the Department is seeing an increase in program and league registrations; however, is still not in line with industry standard of 25%. Traci Wieland stated the elimination of the nonresident fee has contributed to the increase in league registrations via the Internet, and said the Department expects to see another increase this year when boy’s basketball registrations can also be processed on-line.

Item 8: Weed Abatement Program

Mike Vendegna reported on the City’s current weed abatement programs for undeveloped properties, stating the Street Department and Parks Department programs have often overlapped. Mr. Vendegna said, due to the fact the two programs were duplicating services, it made sense for the Parks Division to take over the City wide program. Mike Vendegna stated the two programs will be combined and will

now be called the “Vegetation Control and/or Pesticide” crew, responsible for disease control, spraying weeds, insects, etc. Mr. Vendegna stated with the additional resources from Weed Abatement combined with the Parks crews, the new program should provide much better service and reduce expenses.

Item 9: Long’s Family Memorial Park Update

Rob Schoeber reported the City recently received a formal request from the County to take over the administration of Long’s Family Memorial Park. Mr. Schoeber said both parties have agreed and are moving forward with an early March implementation date. Rob Schoeber stated the proposed contract is being designed to cover all start up costs and any additional staff needed. Mr. Schoeber stated Long’s Family Memorial Park is currently seeing over 300 shelter reservations and an average of 500 activities per year.

Item 10: Project Updates

Rob Schoeber reported on the improvements at Duck Pond Park, stating the new restrooms and new playground are approximately 95% complete.

Mike Vendegna reported on the improvements at Canyon View Park, stating the restrooms are almost ready to open, and crews have completed the conversion of the vending machine area into storage. Mr. Vendegna said the tennis courts will most likely be completed in early May, as the temperature must remain a consistent 50 degrees. Mike Vendegna said there are a couple of different options being discussed regarding the parking lot area near the baseball field, stating the Department intends to bring the proposal to the Board soon for review.

Rob Schoeber reported the installation of the new restroom partitions is almost complete.

Mike Vendegna said the new pump house at Spring Valley Park I is 99% complete. Mr. Vendegna said the pit that housed the pump was actually an old railroad car that had been buried, which had to be replaced as it was ready to cave in.

Rob Schoeber said he had nothing new to report at this time regarding ACE Golf’s proposed changes to the Lincoln Park Golf Course.

Item 11: Future Meetings Agenda

Renaming of Melrose Park
Bureau of Land Management Update

Item 12: Adjourn

Lenna Watson asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Reford Theobald moved to adjourn and Tawny Espinoza seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tressa Fisher
Administrative Specialist