

# **Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes**

## **April 2, 2009**

### **Item 1: Meeting Called to Order by Co-chair Reford Theobald at 12:00 p.m.**

#### Roll Call

Board Members Present:                    Reford Theobald  
    Dr. William Findlay  
    David McIlnay  
    Tawny Espinoza  
    Jack Scott  
    Yvette Carnine  
    Bruce Hill (Ex-Officio)

Board Members Absent:                    Lenna Watson

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

Guests:    Matt Anderson, Bureau of Land Management  
    Chris Ham, Bureau of Land Management

### **Item 2: Approve Minutes**

Tawny Espinoza moved to approve the March 5, 2009 Parks & Recreation Advisory Board minutes. Jack Scott seconded.

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

### **Item 3: Bureau of Land Management Update**

Rob Schoeber introduced Bureau of Land Management representatives Matt Anderson and Chris Ham, who distributed information on the Resource Management Plan. (See attached) Mr. Anderson said the 1987 Resource Management Plan (RMP) is very outdated, and said the Grand Junction Field Office is in the process of updating the plan by reviewing all land management allocation decisions. Matt Anderson briefly discussed BLM's environmental impact statement, stating the energy leases (oil, gas, coal, etc.) are also reviewed when updating the RMP. Mr. Anderson referred to the "Issues Categories" listed on the second page of the handout. BLM is striving to develop a reasonable range of alternatives while attempting to balance the needs of the wilderness along with the energy needs. Matt Anderson said it is a long and drawn out process that is often very confusing. Mr. Anderson stated BLM works to engage a variety of entities when developing the plan, and said they are very appreciative of the numerous cooperating agencies, such as the City of Grand Junction, Mesa County, Fruita, etc.

Chris Ham said Grand Junction is unique, due to the fact they deal with more “recreation” issues than the other BLM offices. Mr. Ham discussed the two levels of the Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), 1) the North Fruita desert, and 2) the Bangs Canyon area (including the lunch loop trail) Chris Ham said BLM is well aware there is recreation in “other” areas; however, these two areas have been identified by the public as areas in which a “physical setting” is necessary to gain any benefit. Mesa State College has assisted BLM in the planning process by developing focus groups to review additional needs. Other areas currently being reviewed include Gateway and Palisade. Mr. Hamm stated any property that has not been identified will remain as Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA), which tend to allow for more freedom, as they do not have physical amenities (facilities, designated trail systems, etc.). Chris Ham discussed the cooperative relationship between the City of Grand Junction and BLM, referring to areas such as the Riverfront Trails and Bangs Canyon. Mr. Ham said the continued partnerships are critical in order for BLM to succeed.

Rob Schoeber asked how specific the final RMP will be regarding the recreation areas. Chris Ham said it depends on what designation the area is assigned (SRMA or ERMA), and what desired benefits are identified for the SRMA areas. Once the benefits are determined, BLM will set up the framework in order to achieve those benefits. Dr. William Findlay asked if the Bookcliff area trails are included in the plan. Chris Ham said a majority of the Bookcliff area is a part of the wild horse study that provides a certain level of protection outside of BLM. Mr. Ham said just because an area has intense recreational use, it doesn't necessarily make it a special recreation area, stating there is not always a need to manage the “physical” setting, yet there still is a need to manage the “use”. Chris Ham stated every BLM office operates under the same guidelines and manages property leftover from the Homestead Act. Mr. Ham said, due to the continually increasing usage, BLM will most likely lose the management responsibilities of the trail heads and will need help from local partners. Chris Ham also stated BLM is not set up to manage heavy urban interfaces and will have to rely on other agencies, such as the City, County, etc. for such areas. In addition, Mr. Ham stated BLM currently has only one law enforcement officer who is responsible for managing approximately 1.2 million acres. Throughout the RMP process, BLM is attempting to identify potential partnerships, and/or commitments for assistance in managing the buffer zones. Bruce Hill stated the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board is very interested in enhancing the numerous interfaces, as 72% of the lands in our community are public property. Mr. Hill said the City wants to promote the use of the properties in a positive and prospective manner, while continuing to create successful relationships similar to the Lunch Loop Trailhead. Councilman Hill said the Board hopes to work with BLM for the benefit of the public, including ways to educate the public on how to use the lands in a safe manner. Chris Ham agreed, stating the Lunch Loop Trailhead was a great start, and is a great example of a partnership BLM would like to build upon in the future.

Matt Anderson stated, between now and October 2009, BLM plans to compile the information and review the various alternatives. Mr. Anderson also said BLM is looking for input regarding the possibility of creating a riverfront commission to establish routes to Fruita, Delta, Old Spanish Trail, etc. Matt Anderson thanked the Board for inviting them to present at today's meeting, and said BLM will continue to look for ways of expanding the recreation opportunities in our community.

#### **Item 4: Long Family Memorial Park Update**

Traci Wieland reported the agreement between the City and County has been signed and the City's Parks and Recreation Department is now responsible for all programming of Long Family Memorial Park. The final agreement differed from the original proposed agreement, as it is now an annual (automatically renewable) five year contract. In addition, the new contract states that either party can

terminate the lease for no reason. Bruce Hill stated the contract also requires the County to pay the startup costs upfront versus spreading it out over the five years.

**Item 5: Renaming Melrose Park Update**

Rob Schoeber reported Jack Scott and City staff have continued to research the “Melrose” name and have reached the conclusion there does not seem to be any significance to the name other than being named after the subdivision. Bruce Hill also reported he had made some phone calls and was not able to find any additional information regarding the history of the name. Traci Wieland said the community members who have been attending the neighborhood focus group have indicated they would prefer the name “Rocket Park”. Jack Scott suggested calling the park “Melrose – Rocket Park”. Discussion ensued regarding changing the name to “Rocket Park”. Bruce Hill suggested installing a plaque at the park that states the original name of the park. Tawny Espinoza agreed, suggesting the plaque include the reason the park was renamed.

Dr. William Findlay moved to make a recommendation to City Council to change the name of Melrose Park to “Rocket Park” with a plaque indicating the park’s original name and the reason for the name change. Tawny Espinoza seconded.

Motion adopted by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:            Yes 5    No 1

Jack Scott opposed the motion, as he would prefer “Melrose” remain somewhere in the park’s name.

**Item 6: RC Car Group’s Request for Lease**

Traci Wieland said the RC Car Group is a local club who travels all over valley racing remote control cars. The group has requested the use of some undeveloped property to host the races. The club originally requested the use of a small portion of Matchett Park; however, City staff has determined the Northeast corner of Canyon View Park would be a better fit. Mrs. Wieland said the group intends to pay all associated costs (developing the track, installing fencing, etc.), as they are strictly asking for the use of an undeveloped area (approximately 100’ x 60’) that has access to water and electricity. The group maintains a \$2 million liability policy and will self monitor the track use. Traci Wieland said staff has discussed potential issues with the club, including the possibility of conflicting usage on busy Saturdays, parking concerns, noise levels, etc., stating the group has agreed to schedule around any conflicts. The club is very excited about the high profile corner at Canyon View Park, as it will provide their events with more exposure. Mike Vendegna expressed the Canyon View Park location is a win-win situation for both organizations, as the undeveloped area is currently an eye sore.

Yvette Carnine moved to approve the RC car group’s request for a lease of the undeveloped Northeast corner of Canyon View Park. Jack Scott seconded.

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

**Item 7: Pomona Park**

Rob Schoeber reported on a recent wind storm that blew down a large light pole in the outfield at Pomona Park. The steel pole had deteriorated over time and was removed immediately by Parks staff for safety purposes. The unanticipated incident caused much concern, in which the Parks Department

decided to have sonic testing completed on the remaining poles. The testing revealed a number of other weaknesses, with approximately 50% of the poles being at a much less density than they should be. Mr. Schoeber stated the entire softball complex will remain closed until the Department can determine the best course of action. At this time, the crews are going to remove all of the poles until a long term solution is found. League games will be delayed for approximately two weeks, with only “day” games being scheduled once the poles are removed. In addition, a weekend softball tournament was canceled. A total of 16 poles need replaced at a cost of approximately \$8,000 - \$10,000 per pole. Rob Schoeber estimated the entire project will cost \$150,000 - \$200,000.

### **Item 8: Park Supervisor Position**

Mike Vendegna reported Tom Ziola was recently promoted to the vacant Parks Supervisor position. Tom Ziola will be replacing Mike Vendegna, providing direct oversight to the Forestry, Horticulture, and Cemetery divisions. Mr. Vendegna said Tom Ziola has been a Forestry Crew Leader for over 15 years and is very excited about his new position. *Congratulations Tom!*

### **Item 9: Project Updates**

Mike Vendegna said construction of the new playground at Spring Valley Park II has been completed. Mr. Vendegna said “immediate” changes are also being made at Spring Valley Park II, as it was recently discovered that the irrigation pond is fed by water from the storm drain. Reford Theobald expressed disappointment regarding the removal of the old playground bridge.

Mike Vendegna reported crews are still waiting for the weather to cooperate in order to complete the tennis courts at Canyon View Park, stating the target date is still the same. The new restrooms are now open and the final design is being reviewed in hopes of “finishing” the park.

Rob Schoeber reported the Parks Division is in the process of a major transition, as the crews may soon be relocating. The Department has been exploring the opportunity to use one of the City owned homes on the Matchett property, as it is no longer suitable to rent without major renovations. Mr. Schoeber stated the Department’s proposal has been accepted by City Council, and said the Northeast quadrant, including the spray crew and weed abatement, will be relocating to the rental house. In addition, the Department has requested the use of the parkway building, for relocating another parks quadrant; however, this proposal has not gone to City Council yet. If approved, the remaining quadrant will be relocated to the new cemetery shop once the construction is completed. The intent is to completely abandon parks operations in Lincoln Park, which will eliminate safety concerns and allow the Department to remove several unsightly building from the park. Jack Scott asked why the City would move staff into the Matchett house if it is not up to code for renting. Rob Schoeber said many of the issues with the house are related to plumbing, showers, and code regulations regarding the downstairs bedrooms, none of which will affect the staff.

Rob Schoeber reported Palisade’s Town Administrator, Tim Sarmo, recently approached the City of Grand Junction requesting help with operating Palisade’s outdoor pool. Since that time, the City has been working with Palisade in developing a draft agreement, which includes the City hiring all staff (lifeguards, instructors, managers, etc.). Mr. Schoeber stated Palisade will pay the City a lump sum to operate their facility, and discussed Tim Sarmo’s request for the facility to remain “Palisade’s” community pool as much as possible. To assist in assuring the transition is translucent to the public; City staff will wear Palisade uniforms when working at the Palisade facility. Reford Theobald said there may

still be some concerned citizens regarding the “big” city intruding on their small town values. Bruce Hill stated this is a policy management decision Palisade chose to make, and expressed it shouldn’t matter who owns and/or runs the facility as long as the children are safe when swimming there.

Rob Schoeber stated Palisade will continue being responsible for all maintenance of the pool, and will be required to maintain the equipment at the same standards as the City’s. In addition, Palisade’s aquatic staff will need to acquire a higher level of training than they current have, as they will be required to obtain an Ellis & Associates certification. Palisade’s program names and fees will not change and pass holders will be offered a \$1.00 rate at the other organization’s facilities. (Example: Palisade pass holders will only be charged \$1.00 to swim at either of the City’s swimming pools and vice versa.) Mr. Schoeber stated the aquatics staff will rotate at all three locations, and management anticipates the arrangement will increase employee morale. Tawny Espinoza agreed, and suggested the City’s application be modified to allow for the employees to request a “primary” location.

Rob Schoeber reported the recreation and aquatic participant numbers are currently up. Mr. Schoeber commented the poor economy is most likely resulting in the public looking “locally” to recreate.

**Item 10: Future Meetings Agenda**

ACE Golf Update

**Item 11: Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned by acclamation at 1:22 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Tressa Fisher  
Administrative Specialist