

PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

February 17, 1993

Called to order by Chairman Keith Mumby at 12:07 p.m.

Item 1

Roll Call

Board Members present: Frank Dunn  
Kathy Hall  
Jamie Hamilton  
Dr. Lynn James  
Karen Madsen  
Keith Mumby  
Alan Workman

Members not present: n/a

Staff present: Ted Novack, Director  
Doug Jones, Golf Superintendent  
Jack Sommers, Head Golf Pro  
Keri Bailey, Rec. Secretary

Guests: Greg Trainor, Utility Manager

Item 2

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - JANUARY

A motion was made by Frank Dunn to approve the minutes for the month of January.

Seconded by Jim Bonella.

Approved: Yes 6 No 0

Item 3

RIVERFRONT COMMISSION REPORT

Dr. James was unable to make the first part of the meeting, but dropped off a report from the last Riverfront Meeting.

Item 4

GRAND MESA SLOPES SPECIAL MANAGEMENT AREA - GREG TRAINOR

Greg Trainor, City Utility Manager, gave the Board a presentation on the Grand Mesa Slopes Special Management Area. They have been working with the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service to put a plan together on the preservation and management of an 80 square mile area, which includes the Somerville Ranch (City owned).

The area includes land at East Orchard Mesa, Lands End Road, the rim of Grand Mesa almost to Powderhorn and east of Whitewater.

The Bureau of Land Management has been concerned about this area for years, because of the dumping of trash and harassment of wildlife. They would like to see the area become managed open space for people to enjoy. All of the land owners have met to come up with this plan.

There are several different options in the plan, and it will take some time to see if the BLM, Forest Service, City of Grand Junction, Loring Ranch owners, and Lombardy Ranch owners can get a plan approved.

The City has not decided whether they want to sell, lease or keep the Somerville Ranch Land. Greg told the Board he wanted them to be informed, and will update them on the project.

Frank Dunn said he thinks it is a great idea to preserve the area.

Kathy Hall asked Greg if it will be safe to work with the BLM, because of what has been happening to water rights issues with federal agencies. Greg said you never know, but he thinks it is good for us all to work together. Kathy said she thinks the City should retain ownership of the land so we can avoid any disputes or mismanagement.

The Board told Greg they think we should keep the land and still work with the other agencies. They thanked Greg for the presentation.

Item 5

NEWCOMERS GOLF GROUP - WEB MCDONALD

Web McDonald, Lyle Vandover, and Leo Porter of the Newcomers Golf Group were present to ask the Board to give their group blocks of tee times at Tiara Rado Golf Course on Tuesdays and Fridays. They used to be able to block the times before the City changed the policy. They are able to block tee times except during the months of May through August.

The policy was changed two years ago, because we had many golf leagues tying up the course and making the other golfers angry. The Men's, Ladies' and Grand Valley Senior Golf Groups are still able to block tee times at the golf courses, because they are open to anyone who wishes to join, and contribute to the golf courses.

Web said the group has been playing for eight years, and when they were able to block the tee times they had a list ready for the golf pro three days in advance.

Jack Sommers said they are an organized group, and have never been a problem.

Frank Dunn asked Web if they are still newcomers. Web said most of them aren't anymore, but anyone can golf with them. Frank asked if most of them golfed with the Grand Valley Seniors. Web said most of them do, but it is a scramble format, and they can't all be together.

Ted asked Jack Sommers how many other groups would ask for blocked tee times if we allow the Newcomers to have them. Jack said we have the DOE/UNC, V.A., Sundstrand, and City Municipal Groups that would probably ask for them.

Frank Dunn told Web they sounded like a neat group. He told them the reason we had to limit the groups who blocked tee times is because other people complained that they couldn't get on the golf course.

Keith Mumby told the group the Board would think it over, and get back to them. He told them it is difficult to accommodate everyone.

A motion was made by Jamie Hamilton to deny the request of the Newcomers Golf Group to block tee times during May through August. Seconded by Karen Madsen.

Approved: Yes 6 No 0

Item 6

REVIEW PROPOSED MEETING WITH SPRING VALLEY HOMEOWNERS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ted informed the Board about the meeting with the Spring Valley Homeowners Board of Directors to keep them informed on the progress of the regional park. Ted said he feels it is very important to keep the lines of communication open with the homeowners in Spring Valley. He has heard there are a few people who do not want the regional park located at the Matchett property, but most of the people are exciting about it.

Item 7

GYMNASTICS PROGRAM

Brian, Kerri, and Harlin Bensley of the Grand Junction Gymnastics Academy were present to inform the Board of their protest to our gymnastics program which is held in the Barn.

Brian asked if everyone had received the letter he mailed out. He said what prompted his letter was a copy of a memo from Ray Coca to Ted Novack. He said this paragraph is what prompted the letter he sent out, which states: "Our gymnastics instructor, Ron, voiced his

opinion, from the standpoint of a small business man . . . that he also has the right to earn a part-time living as a gymnastics instructor. ""I do not believe my four classes a week, with 36 students, will hurt the Gymnastic Academy's overall business"", Ron explained to me on January 26th. Ron indicated that he and some parents were going to approach some City Council members and seek a decision on keeping his class open through March or whenever.

Brian said since City Council and everyone had received Ray's memo, that he wanted to do the same mail out to the same people, so they are aware of both sides of the story because this didn't cover his main concerns that he approached Ray and Ted with initially. Brian said he had some more information he would like to read. He said it would explain what led up to this and what he didn't already put in the letter he mailed to them. The letter that he mailed to them basically expressed his concerns about the Parks and Rec Gymnastics Program. He had previously gone over this with Ted Novack in detail and again with Ray. He felt his efforts had been futile, and after his initial contacts with these men and after consulting with a City Council Member, he did what he suggested and mailed a list of all concerns to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. He had been contacted by the media, but refrained from involving them at this time. He wanted to resolve this issue here. He then explained how this all became such a sensitive issue.

Brian said he and his father purchased Grand Junction Gymnastics Academy in January of 1986. They have made it through ups and downs, and almost went out of business in 1990 due to the poor economy and recession. He said they are an Olympic cycle business, and the enrollment is up during Olympic years. The Gulf Crisis also hurt business, and they had to take out a loan to keep going.

However, luck and finances fell into place and they were able to purchase the building they were leasing last September. Shortly after that, Brian was shocked to hear the Parks and Recreation program was planning to build an eight million dollar facility, which was to house a gymnastics program and a climbing gym, which is their main source of income. He immediately contacted Ted and received an invitation to the meeting at which they would go over the proposal. Ted assured Brian it would not conflict with their business, but Brian was still hesitant. Brian talked to Ted about joining forces. Ted thought it was a great idea and told Brian to pursue it.

Brian has a friend, Ron Crescentini, who now directs the Boulder Parks and Recreation Gymnastics Program. He says his private program could have never made it competing with the Parks and Recreation program. He began working privately, and then began working with the Parks and Recreation Programs. Then he ended up combining all his efforts with the Parks and Recreation Program. He works full time for them, and says there is really a difference, because a private business could never run on a deficit.

Ted told Brian to contact Ron, which Brian did, to find out how he set up his program. After his first meeting with Ron, which was at Brian's expense, he found out that Grand Junction Parks and Recreation had hired his potential competitor Ron Davis to run a year round program. He felt betrayed and threatened. Brian called Ted to explain how he felt.

Brian said he was at the meeting to fight and will continue to fight for the survival of his business.

Harlin Bensley said Brian has a degree in electronics engineering. He likes to work with kids, so they bought the Gymnastics Academy. The first six months Harlin took nothing, and Brian took enough to live. After that Harlin never took more than \$1,000.00 a month. There was an awful lot that went into the business, and insurance is unbelievable. They don't charge a lot, and the price isn't much different than the Parks and Recreation fee for beginning kids. He said they could charge more, but they would lose the kids who don't have much money. He said they really went through it. Brian puts

50-70 hours a week into the place. He could have made a lot more money as an engineer, but he cares about gymnastics.

Kathy Hall asked if the business was an existing business they purchased. Harlin said it had been here, and was called Colorado Country. Brian said he had to take out a loan to buy it.

Alan Workman told Brian he has done a tremendous job with his program. He said he has done so much for the community, but this is the same old thing. Not everyone can be as accomplished and skilled in the gymnastics the Academy promotes. So the City gets into providing additional opportunities and a regional park, expanding services for the County and Grand Junction residents. The elderly, retired, youth - some people who can't be a part of this program. You get into a head butting thing, the Crossroads Nautilus, Grand Junction Athletic Club, etc. The recreation center is progress for our community, and it is not meant to be competition for other business in the area.

Brian said actually his main concern was about Ron Davis, he came into the Academy asking for an outrageous amount of money to coach that nobody gets in the State. Then he left saying there is enough room for two programs. Brian said Ron then tried to establish his own program, but couldn't get it going. Now he is working for Parks and Recreation getting a 60/40 split, making 25-30 dollars per hour. He can build up his clientele, and leave Parks and Recreation for his own business.

Kathy Hall asked Ted how many students are enrolled in our program. Keri told Kathy we had 35 in January, and 37 in February. The maximum we can have per month is 60.

Ted said that he wanted to give a little background. He said Brian was very accurate on their conversations. Ted said he wanted to go on record that he would like to keep the communication lines open as far as doing a joint venture. He said it is too premature to talk about what we are going to provide at a recreation center. Ted said the gymnastics wing at Boulder came after the recreation center was built. The possibility is there. Ted said the specific instructor we hired came from Ted, Ray and Keri talking to a Mesa State College class. Ron talked to Ray, and started the program. We didn't know that Ron had talked to the Gymnastics Academy. It wasn't a calculated move.

Ted said that he understands Brian is suspicious that we are trying to build a big gymnastics program. That is not our intent, and based on our survey results for a recreation center we did not have a top priority for gymnastics.

Ted said at this point we want to deal with the immediate problem, which is let the program run its course, which Ted thought only ran through February, but is advertised through March. Brian has offered to give the 3 participants who are registered for March the same deal that Parks and Recreation has given them for the month of March. Ted said we haven't had a chance to contact those people, because Ted received Brian's letter yesterday, and he doesn't know if they will want to go to the Gymnastics Academy.

Ted said we need to figure out where to go in the future with the gymnastics program. Ted said we have a Summer program which has gone on for many years over at the Barn, but it doesn't come close to the level of the Gymnastics Academy.

Brian told the Board he is not concerned about the Lincoln Park Barn, because it doesn't compare to his facility. However, Ron Davis, with his sixty students can go out and start another business. He got an unfair start, where Brian had to scrape along.

Keith told Ted he is surprised that we do a split with instructors. He asked if this is a common practice. Ted told Keith it is. Instead of getting into an employer, employee situation we do a contract with them. Ted said what you gain by that, is that we can

operate at a lower minimum for each class.

Jamie told Brian that when he first read his letter, he didn't have any empathy for him at all. He felt it was similar to what we hear from the Athletic Club. Jamie said it bothers him that the fees are so similar. Jamie said he doesn't feel that Ron Davis is going to be able to build a clientele and take it somewhere to compete with the kind of facility the Academy is.

Brian said that Ron Davis has a really sweet deal, making 25-30 dollars an hour. He said it's more than he makes sweating it out in his place. He said in the Summer they send their instructors to apply for our gymnastics program, and we never hire them.

Jamie told Brian that we need to evaluate this situation.

Karen Madsen asked Brian if it was not Ron Davis would there be a problem.

Brian said no, but this guy has threatened to set up another program and compete with them, which is fine, but it is not fair if he gets his start from the Parks and Recreation Department.

Harlin said they work on volume, and they could charge more, but they want to have as many kids as they can. He said Brian can make more money as an engineer.

Ted said we never intended to go into direct competition with the Gymnastics Academy.

Karen Madsen told Brian we hope some of our programs act as springboard programs to other businesses and programs.

Keith told Brian we would review the situation and get back to them.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Keri Bailey  
Parks and Recreation Board Secretary