

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

December 11, 2014 Regular Meeting

The December 11, 2014 Regular Meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:05 pm in the Social Room of the Oak Ridge Civic Center with Alan Tatum, Chair, presiding.

Roll Call

Members present at roll call: John Clayton, Steve Dittner, Ray Garrett, Dan Robbins, Bradley Spears, Alan Tatum and Cathy Toth. Members absent at roll call: Naomi Asher, Fay Martin. Fay arrived at 7:18 pm.

Approval of the November 12, 2014 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes for the November 12, 2014 meeting was made by Cathy and seconded by Steve. The minutes were approved by a 7-0 vote.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

None

Staff Presentation

Jane Gibson, Recreation Manager for Aquatics/ Secret City Festival Executive Committee Chair

Jane provided an overview of operations of the City's outdoor and indoor pools. There was a lengthy discussion of the challenges of operating the facilities, especially the outdoor pool due to its size and uniqueness. Challenges include aging filters, bath houses that are long overdue for renovation and a number of regulatory exceptions that have been granted to allow the pool to operate, including the use of spring water, staffing requirements and the use of chlorine gas to treat the water. Ray asked if the use of city water would eliminate the need for filtration and was told that it would not. Steve asked about the cost of converting the pool to salt water. Jane replied that it had been considered, but cost estimates had not yet been obtained because that type of treatment is unproven in pools of that capacity.

Jane then gave an overview of the Secret City Festival. She provided background on the Festival's mission, history, and its theme. Jane showcased some of the many awards the Festival has received and described the components of the Festival. She provided an overview of revenue and expenses for the 2014 Festival and then concluded with a list of problems and concerns for the Festival in the future.

Committee Reports

Bike/Ped Committee:

Ray Garrett reported that he had received his first refusal from a property owner along the proposed Poplar Creek Trail route. The Kennel Club told Ray that they were concerned about having people behind their facility

at night while members were out walking their dogs. John Clayton suggested Ray show them his map indicating that they were the only holdout along the route to try to encourage them to reconsider the decision.

Ray then presented a slide show of the CSX rail line that has been proposed for a rails-to-trails project. Slides showed current conditions along the rail line and at various street crossings. Ray showed a slide of the abandoned rail car, which is actually located on a siding at a point where the tracks are 4 wide. The rail car will not interfere with running the trail down the main line. Ray asked about the fill site adjacent to Elza Gate Park. Jon Hetrick explained that it was a spoil dump for city work crews and was actually on a portion of the Elza Gate parcel. Once the area has been filled and leveled it will provide an opportunity for future park expansion. Funding for the project was discussed, including rails-to-trails and transportation grants that would require a 20% match from the City. Jon mentioned that funding for the project was included in the Capital Improvements Program plan.

Community Funding Opportunities Committee:

Alan reported that Naomi has completed a draft of the brochure. He asked that Jon meet with the committee to review the brochure and provide comments on the pricing of the donations. Jon agreed to meet with the committee as soon as a meeting could be scheduled.

Dog Park:

Jon Hetrick reported that City staff has substantially completed the security lighting project. He has placed an order for a 20 ft. x 20 ft. cantilevered shade structure. The structure will ship to the City and be installed by City staff in early spring. The Board discussed the possibilities for the next Oak Ridge Dog Park. Dan suggested the open area near the power lines at Haw Ridge Park, adjacent to the greenway trail. Steve strongly objected due to the likelihood of increased off-leash use of Haw Ridge Park as a result and the impact on mountain biking there. He cited Concord Park in Knox County as an example of that kind of problem occurring.

Updates and Observations (Non Action Items):

Alan provided a quick overview of the Friendship Bell presentation for the benefit of Board members who were unable to attend the November meeting. Alan mentioned the need for some additional public meetings for input on the plans. He suggested a meeting preceding the February Board meeting and another at a date to be determined. He also informed the Board that the Rotary Club would be serving as the 501(c)(3) non-profit for the fundraising, with Pat Postma leading the fundraising effort. Alan is also planning to meet again with the Japanese Consul. As a side note, Alan mentioned that he had learned that the state of Tennessee is number two in the nation for Japanese manufacturing, second only to California. The Board discussed whether the focus of the design should be the bell or the structure itself. Alan concluded that the presentation has created the desired effect of stimulating conversation.

Dan found a fire ant mound on Melton Lake Greenway in December. Dan also commented on the extension of the application window for City Boards.

Director's Report:

No report.

Cathy made a motion to adjourn and Fay seconded the motion. The motion to adjourn was approved by an 8-0 vote. The meeting was adjourned at 8:55 pm.

DRAFT