

APPROVED

Minutes of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board Meeting

March 8, 2012 Regular Meeting

The March 8, 2012 Regular Meeting of the Recreation and Parks Advisory Board was convened at 7:20pm in the Social Room of the Recreation Center with Gerry Palau, Board Chair presiding. The meeting was delayed due to extended discussions during the Board Open House on Athletics.

Roll Call

Members present included: Sherith Colverson, Bob Cushman, Bridgette Ellis, Allen Eubanks, Gerry Palau, Laurel Patrick, Dan Robbins and Cathy Toth. Absent was Lou Rabinowitz who submitted his resignation from the Board to Mayor Beehan earlier in the day.

Approval of the February 9, 2012 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the February 9, 2012 minutes was made by Cathy Toth and seconded by Bridgette Ellis. The minutes were approved by an 8-0 vote.

Appearance and Citizen Comments

Doug Colclasure appeared before the Board to discuss the continued use of Haw Ridge Park by horses. He expressed concern over potential damage to the new walking trail and the removal of signage regarding horses on the trail. The Board decided to include Haw Ridge Park usage as a discussion item for the April 12 meeting.

Doug also talked about the White Water Club's 50 year history and current usage of the Indoor Pool for practice. He encouraged the Board to take a look at Bike Rental opportunities for Melton Lake Park.

Committee Reports

Bike/Ped Committee- Sherith Colverson

Sherith Colverson asked Josh Collins to provide a brief update on the Bike rack project and a timeline for completion. The project included installation of 40 bike racks at 17 different locations at a cost of \$12,096. The contract is being finalized and a notice to proceed should be issued by late March work could be completed within 45 days. The cost was higher due to the number of locations around town.

Sherith discussed ideas on the Community Bike Ride. The Committee thought the second weekend in May would be a good time. She expressed a need for more advertising for bike activities, bike safety and community rides.

She discussed the Committee's position on cell phone usage while driving and encouraged the Board to support the effort to place restrictions on phone usage. The Committee would like to work with the City's Traffic Safety Advisory Board to encourage City Council to add the issue to their Legislative Agenda. She expressed the Committee's concerns over pedestrian and vehicle safety while using a cell phone.

Josh Collins discussed a way to bring the issue before City Council. If the Board takes an official position on the issue, they can recommend Council action. City Council can then decide whether to include the topic in their Legislative Agenda.

Laurel Patrick commented on whether this was a Recreation and Parks Advisory Board issue or a Traffic Safety Advisory Board Issue. Several Board members expressed reluctance to take on the issue with so many other items in the work plan. The Bike /Ped Committee needed to make a stronger case for adding it to the Board's work plan.

Dog Park Committee- Bridgette Ellis

Bridgette Ellis reviewed topics discussed at the February 27 Committee meeting including the recent benchmarking survey sent to Municipal Recreation and Parks Departments in the state. Nine Cities with Dog parks responded to the initial request for information. The following questions were sent to the nine cities:

1. How did you determine the space requirements for the dog park and what was the initial capital investment, either per linear foot or per square foot?
2. What are your annual operating costs per square foot and do you consider this a "bare bones" maintenance level or an enhanced level?
3. Do you operate the park solely as a municipally funded entity or is it a public-private partnership or is it funded primarily as a fee-based entity? How did you determine which operations model was best for your city?
4. Was there a liability/insurance analysis conducted for the park? If so, what factors were important and what did you conclude? Also, do you track incidents at the park, and if so, how many incident reports are filed annually?
5. What amenities do you have in the park and how did you set priorities for the amenities?
6. Is the park used for events which benefit the city such as vaccination clinics, education seminars, obedience training, etc?
7. Do you monitor the dog park for aggressive behavior? If so, how?

A summary of the data collected will be forwarded to the Board.

The Committee will have a booth at the April 28 Earth Festival to discuss the need for a dog park and solicit support. Since a Dock Dogs event will be included in the Festival, the Committee hopes there will be a lot of interest in the proposed Dog Park. Bridgette hopes to have a draft of a Needs Assessment Survey available for Board review at the next meeting.

Bridgette briefly discussed the Committees deliverables and proposed time line. The timeline will be amended at the next Committee meeting.

Playful City USA- Allen Eubanks

Allen Eubanks reported that he had met with Matt Reedy, Recreation and Parks staff member, to review the application and discuss the Playful City USA Event. The facility inventory is complete and the application should be ready to submit before the deadline. Allen will take the lead on organizing an event in the Children's Area at the Secret City Festival.

Unfinished Business

Work Plan for 2012

Chairman Gerry Palau reviewed the Boards proposed work plan. The plan included City Council and City Manager Goals plus items the Board had discussed in recent meetings. Laurel Patrick and Sherith Colverson offered suggested changes for Board consideration. After some discussion, Bob Cushman made a motion to approve the Work Plan for 2012. Cathy Toth provided the second and the motion passed 8-0. (See attached Work Plan)

New Business

Attendance Policy

Chairman Palau reviewed the City Council approved Attendance Policy for Boards and Commissions. Board members with three absences will be asked to provide letters detailing reasons for their absences and seeking Board approval as outlined by the Policy. Chairman Palau reviewed a letter submitted by Dan Robbins seeking Board approval for three absences. Cathy Toth made a motion to excuse the absences and Bridgette Ellis seconded the motion. The motion was approved 7-0 with Dan Robbins recusing himself from the vote.

Chairman Palau reported receiving a letter of resignation from Lou Rabinowitz due to work conflicts. Lou had missed four meetings and saw continues absences in the future. Several members asked about the process to fill the position. One Board member asked about moving a current member into Lou's three year term slot. Josh will seek clarification on filling the position.

A brief discussion was held regarding the need for Board Bylaws. This issue will be discussed in more detail in April.

Director's Report

Pavilion RFP Update

Josh Collins reviewed the construction timeline for the Pavilion Project to include the following dates:

Release of RFP	March 9
Mandatory Pre-Submission Site Visit	March 20 10am Melton Lake Park
Submission Deadline	April 17 2pm Central Services Center

Staff Review	Week of April 23
City Council Approval	May 7 7pm
Notice to Proceed	Week of May 28
Preconstruction Meeting	June

Amenities requested by the Board such as stone wraps, low stone wall with electrical outs and 8' apron have been included in the document as bid alternates.

Big Turtle Nature Trail

Josh reviewed the key elements included in the presentation made by Dennis Gound, Trail Steward for the Big Turtle Nature Trail. These included:

- The trail does not meet ADA accessibility standards
- As a result of erosion and the over flowing stream, roots and rocks have been exposed making the trail difficult to navigate
- During and following inclement weather conditions, the trail is muddy and slippery
- Several of the wooden steps are missing and pose a safety problem

Josh provided an overview of the process that the Recreation and Park Department followed when the trail was first proposed in 1998 as an Eagle Scout project. The City evaluated the route and determined that, when completed, the trail would always be an informal "Nature Trail" due to the following issues:

- Proximity to the stream: The trail falls within the floodway of East Fork Popular Creek and will experience repeated flooding resulting in significant erosion. Any trail upgrades would be subject to State controls and permitting.
- Terrain/topography: The trail was to be constructed at the base of a fill area with large rocks thus making ADA Accessibility along the proposed route impossible without a substantial retaining wall.
- Natural Features: The unique natural features highlighted by the scout encouraged a leisurely walk along the waterway. The area was not conducive to a formal 8-10' hard surface trail that would destroy the very features that make the trail special.
- Wetland Area: The trail would enter a wetland area near the beaver dam thus prohibiting the construction of a hard surface path.

Staff estimates the cost could total between \$200-250k to make the current trail accessible and address the issues identified. Options currently available to the City include:

- Establish this project as the top priority for Recreational Funding in the Capital Improvements Program Fund and recommend that City Council set aside \$200k for rehab of the Big Turtle Nature Trail. Apply for Grant money to cover the balance of the projected cost and hope we are funded.
- Reroute the trail to the upper level adjacent to the soccer field and move the markers to overlook the existing trail. This area is level and would require little/no permitting. Request \$80-100k from the

Capital Improvements Program Fund to construct an asphalt walking trail around the soccer field. Apply for grant money to cover the balance of the costs.

- Leave the trail as a “Nature Trail”, install appropriate signage/disclaimer and reroute a section of the trail to bypass the steps.
- Close the trail due to the risk and remove the sign and posts.

Josh recommended leaving the trail as a “Nature Trail”, install appropriate signage/disclaimer and reroute a section of the trail to by-pass the steps. The Board agreed with the recommendation. A letter of explanation will be sent to Mr. Gound and copied to the Board chair and the Chair of Greenways Oak Ridge.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:55pm.

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Recreation and Parks Advisory Board 2012 Work Plan

City Council Goals for Recreation and Parks Advisory Board - 4 Tactical Projects

- 1) Re-design and configure the boathouse area along Melton Lake Drive to insure the placement and construction of a new Pavilion donated by UT-Battelle as a linchpin project of the Melton Lake riverfront.
 - a) Support construction and commissioning of new pavilion with reviews/consultation as requested by R&PD (September 2012)
 - b) Evolve the Master Plan with available resources (ongoing as resources permit– minimum, a written report by December 2012)
 - c) Define a proposed plan for future executable projects (scope, cost estimates, coordination/integration, and ROM schedule (December 2012)
 - d) Help staff address existing buildings repurposing/refurbishing with recommendation based on options and ROM cost estimates (October 2012)

 - 2) Begin planning process and community involvement process for the first Dog Park in Oak Ridge and obtain necessary approvals and recommending budgetary capital levels. .
 - a) Benchmark comparable facilities – 1-2 page synopsis (June 2012)
 - b) Identify Oak Ridge community user needs & preferences (September 2012)
 - c) Define preferred facility infrastructure (October 2012)
 - d) Identify operational controls, ordinances, licensing, user permits, etc. (October 2012)
 - e) Propose an implementation schedule for construction/commissioning in light of grants and CIP process (December 2012)

 - 3) Incorporate the Bike-Pedestrian Plan premises into all Parks facilities
 - a) Inventory of the proposed bike rack locations for appropriate space and placement (March 2012)
 - b) Heart of Oak Ridge corridor and spot location enhancement recommendations (May 2012); follow-on analysis of optimal ways to segment CSX rail-to-trail project into manageable chunks based on highest & best use of limited funding resources over time.
 - c) "TOP 10" list of potential funding sources for 2012 – 2014, for each of the integrated project spot location and corridor projects (May 2012)
 - d) Most relevant measure for City of Oak Ridge to make in terms of bicycle and pedestrian friendly policy/procedure (white paper) (August 2012)
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- 4) Develop planning for Playful City USA designation and integrate public input into community recreational events (i.e. Secret City, Earth Day, concerts, etc.)
 - a) Assist staff in inventory/map play spaces and evaluate play policies (March 2012)
 - b) Assist staff in submittal of Playful City USA application (March 2012)
 - c) Gap analysis in areas of weakness, including feedback from Playful City USA application process; determine priorities needs to enhance Playful City USA posture (December 2012)

Board Strategic Directions and Plans:

5) NEEDS ASSESSMENT:

- o Identify the long-term community needs/investments beyond Council's four tactical initiatives. This is an ongoing, evolutionary process that helps define mission and vision.
 - Deliverables:
 - Quarterly open house-style availability sessions (e.g., topics such athletic facilities/programs; parks; human-powered; individual activities (hiking, etc.), city programming.)
 - Working draft of needs assessment (~10 page report for CY-2012) including a spreadsheet containing key data such as:
 - o Inventory of citizen-suggested unmet needs;
 - o Demographic that need would serve;
 - o Extent of deficit/unmet need versus existing capacity;
 - Extent to which average versus peak demand is met;
 - o What condition/situation it fixes/improves;
 - o Opportunities to increase/optimize utilization of existing facilities, including potential to use existing facilities for new purposes.
- o Evaluate the current recreation & parks mission & vision
 - Deliverables:
 - Consider R&P mission statement; is it to provide a diversity of quality community recreation opportunities for citizens and guests to the city?
 - Consider the 5, 10, and 20 year vision for R&P (25 years ago the city's R&P vision was to develop a park system, and resources were focused on that);

6) METHODS FOR PRIORITIZING NEEDS:

- o Establish a methodology to prioritize projects (both capital and maintenance) so the city has a basis for making sound recommendations for changes and additions to the CIP, as well as to optimize annual operating expense budgets.
 - Deliverables:
 - o Research 'community ROI' benchmarks in other communities;
 - o Establish 5-10 metrics that would help quantify the costs and value added of CIP investments, possibly including:

- Capital \$\$/person served;
- City capital leveraging of grant ratio
- Annual operating/maintenance \$\$/person served
- Ops/maintenance cost per citizen-hour of use
- Frequency of use (person hours used/yr)
- Utilization ratios (percent of time used vs idle)
- Tax revenue generation ROI

7) FUNDING FOR GROWTH & IMPROVEMENT:

- Evaluate options for new/additional funding sources or recreation/parks partnerships.
 - Deliverables:
 - Develop a menu of 'funding mechanisms' that include both financial and in-kind/sweat equity investment (e.g., private groups, state/federal/foundation grants, partner organizations (like the arrangement where SCOR/AYSO currently contribute \$8-\$10 thousand/year to soccer field maintenance); community projects (like playground builds), Eagle Scout projects, etc.)

8) INCREASE COMMUNITY SATISFACTION LEVELS & PUBLIC REALTIONS:

- Help staff raise the R&P perceived satisfaction level of citizens through improved understanding/education/PR about what R&PD does, and the balances that are necessary when running such a diverse, multi-program operation.
 - Deliverables:
 - Create 10+ new, positive press opportunities for the city's R&P enterprise;
 - Options:
 - History newspaper articles like "The History of Cedar Hill Park"
 - The City's Greenway Trails Patch
 - R&P blog
 - Identify and target getting on agendas of 3 community groups' meetings (e.g., Rotary, League of Women Voters, etc.)

9) Maintain a backlog list of potential of ideas for CY2013 Parks Board initiatives that are low/no cost (in recognition that the CIP will constrain the city's ability to fund new R&P initiatives).