

Memo

To: City Council

From: Marin Blevins, Chair, Columbia Parks and Recreation Commission

Date: August 22, 2016

Re: P&R Commission FY 2017 Budget Recommendation

The Parks and Recreation Commission considered the proposed FY 2017 budget for the Parks and Recreation Department at our August 18, 2016 meeting. Director Mike Griggs shared a detailed presentation and the Commission discussed the proposed budget.

A draft copy of the minutes related to the budget and our unanimous motion to approve the Parks and Recreation budget is attached to this memo. Once approved, the completed minutes will be available on the City's website. There are several key points from our discussion that I would like to bring to your attention:

- The City's General Fund is essential to the department's budget; the Park Sales Tax alone cannot support the department with the level of services and amenities the public expects. The Commission wants to ensure that the Parks and Recreation Department continues to be able to provide citizens with quality services, programs and facilities.
- The Commission is concerned about the possibility of other cuts being proposed to the department's budget. We would appreciate the opportunity to respond to any other proposed cuts to the Parks and Recreation FY 2017 budget before Council takes official action.
- To support Columbia's parks and programs, the Commission requests that the 45-day delay in hiring be discontinued or adjusted so that P&R positions are filled. Most General Fund positions are park maintenance related and to lose those resources puts a significant strain on the quality of the parks, trails and facilities. Failure to provide adequate maintenance may result in liability risks on the City. Furthermore, we strongly oppose moving any positions from the Parks and Recreation Department to another department. The Parks and Recreation Department's staff has not kept up with the growth of the park system over the past ten years.
- The Commission strongly supports police commission restoration to the Park Rangers.
- To support Columbia's growing park and trail system and increased population served, we recommend that the proposed FY 2017 budget cuts from the General Fund portion of the Parks and Recreation budget be restored in future years if/when the City's revenue forecast improves.