

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Thursday, Aug. 15, 2019, 7 p.m.

ARC, 1701 W. Ash

MINUTES

Commission Present: Dan Devine, Ted Farnen, Marin Blevins, Sue Davis, Meredith Donaldson, Chad Henry, Brendon Steenbergen

Commission Absent (excused):

Staff Present: Mike Griggs, Erika Coffman, Gabe Huffington, Tammy Miller

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Devine called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

AGENDA

The agenda was approved on a motion by Farnen, seconded by Davis. Motion passed 6-0.

MINUTES

The minutes were approved on a motion by Farnen, seconded by Blevins. Motion passed 6-0.

MONTHLY REPORT

Park Services Manager Gabe Huffington shared these highlights: maintenance staff spent 212 hours in July at the ARC for the Water Zone shutdown, including locker replacement; golf crews spent 495 hours mowing rough; forestry staff spent 224 hours on the disc golf courses preparing for the Mid-America Open disc golf tournament. Recreation Services Manager Erika Coffman shared these highlights: shelter reservations for July increased from 2018, total aquatic participations increased, total aquatic rescues have decreased; and total first aid assistance has decreased.

Devine asked about the concrete seam at the Albert-Oakland pool deck that had been a problem in the past?

Coffman said there have been no reports of it being a problem. Staff will do a walk-through of the facility after the season and note needed repairs.

Devine then asked if the number of trespass warnings has been out of the ordinary?

Griggs said that with security, that has led to an increase. The Rangers also sometimes change their hours to catch park users off-guard, which leads to more trespass warnings.

The monthly report was approved on a motion by Farnen, seconded by Davis. Motion passed 6-0.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Budget presentation

Director Mike Griggs shared a presentation on the proposed FY'20 budget for Parks and Recreation. He showed the Commission where to find the budget online and shared a timeline of the planning process. City Council will have a work session on Aug. 26. Notably, there is a decrease in sales tax, estimated at about \$813 for FY2020.

Key points of the proposed Parks and Recreation budget are: overall decrease of 2.9 percent in total budget, primarily due to decrease in CIP; pay package will result in total cost of

\$176,521; and there is \$231,000 in fleet replacement. The total Parks and Recreation budget is almost \$16.9 million.

(Commissioner Donaldson arrived).

Griggs shared proposed cuts to shore up the budget, as \$111,000 was needed to fund the pay package: reduction of the CARE program for FY'20 as all other core services have been decreased over recent years. Huffington shared details of these previous cuts.

Griggs said staff has tried everything else, without layoffs or closing facilities. If there were not cuts to CARE, other alternate reductions would include reducing sprayground season by 60 days, eliminating some temp help and eliminating care of downtown trees and planters, among other items.

Griggs shared details of the budget by division. He also reminded the Commission of the promise made to keep Parks and Recreation funded through the general fund, after the Park Sales tax was passed in 2001. The level promised at that time has not kept up.

Highlights of the Recreation Services budget include: two new positions for janitor and rec specialist to support new sports facilities and rental facilities, increase in pay package, decrease in intragovernmental charges, decrease in CIP, same general fund subsidy, and increase of Park Sales tax subsidy to the financial assistance program.

Proposed fee increases include shelters, Riechmann Pavilion, swim lessons, golf, day camp and new fees for the MU Health Care Pavilion and Philips Pavilion.

Farnen asked about the Philips Pavilion?

Coffman said it would open in January or February of 2021 but fees will be established so staff can accept rentals ahead of its opening.

Devine asked about user fees being used for capital projects?

Coffman said that there will funds going into the golf course improvement fund. Recreation projects may also be added to the 2021 ballot list.

Devine asked if that renewal would be made permanent?

Griggs said that is to be determined. In 2015 before the vote for renewal, a survey indicated that a permanent tax only had about 53 percent support. About 70 percent indicated support for a 5-10 year tax. The Council settled on asking for a 6-year renewal at that time.

Griggs then shared information about CIP projects in FY'20, which includes Flat Branch Park expansion, Perche Creek Trail, Hinkson Creek Trail from Stephens to Clark.

Steenbergen asked about Battle Park?

Griggs said it is a new park that will be located near Battle Elementary and High schools.

Steenbergen asked about how the list is determined?

Griggs said when the list of projects is determined for the ballot issue, staff and Council try to ensure each ward is equally represented.

Steenbergen said he was glad to hear that, as sometimes Ward 3 constituents have a feeling of being forgotten.

Griggs shared staff concerns about the budget, that some Park Sales Tax projects will have to be reduced, that no general fund staff has been added to keep up with the growing park and trail system, and that budget cuts seem to be requested annually.

Farnen commented that if a recession occurs, the budget forecast will likely be even worse.

Davis asked about CARE?

Griggs said it was difficult but the thought was to reduce part-time staff that has not been hired, rather than potentially making other drastic cuts.

Henry asked if this was the first time that there was alternate list of cuts?

Griggs said yes, City Manager John Glascock requested that kind of detail.

Donaldson commented that there may be a chance of grants to fund the CARE Gallery and this may be a wake-up call for other sources of funding.

Griggs said yes, there may be sponsorship or co-funding opportunities for the program.

Farnen asked about employee retention?

Griggs said professional positions in Parks and Recreation are mostly staying, but there is difficulty retaining the trades positions.

Huffington added that wages are higher for those positions in private industry.

Steenbergen mentioned it was worth noting the different in general fund revenue between 2001 and now.

Devine agreed, saying he wants to reiterate the concept that the department is not receiving what it should be, to keep up with what they do.

Steenbergen commented that there may be other City departments more closely aligned with CARE, such as REDI.

Griggs shared some history of how the CARE program was developed.

The Commission discussed their main concerns and formulated some key points:

- The Commission supports the CARE program and believes it is an important program to the youth of Columbia. We encourage City Council to explore additional funding sources for CARE as the program overlaps the mission of other City departments, not just Parks and Recreation.
- The Commission is concerned that though the City states they are maintaining the allocation to the General Fund as promised in 2001, with inflation over the last 19 years, the City in reality is not keeping up with this allocation.
- The Commission is also concerned that two segments of the Parks and Recreation budget, General Fund and Park Sales Tax revenues have both decreased, adding to the negative impact on the Parks and Recreation overall budget. The Commission supports Council's effort to capture all sales tax that is being lost due to internet sales or seek other alternate funding sources.
- The Commission recognizes that two full-time positions are planned for the Recreation Services division, however, there are none planned in General Revenue, which supports parks and trails. The City has added numerous parks and trails over the past 10 years, with no new positions to support these facilities.
- Intragovernmental charges and the lack of control over them is an ongoing concern of the Commission, especially with no additional revenue.

At the end of the discussion, Henry made a motion, seconded by Donaldson, that the Commission recommends approval of the Parks and Recreation FY'20 budget as presented. Motion passed 7-0.

Henry then made a motion, seconded by Donaldson, that the Commission authorizes Commissioner Devine to send a memo to the Council outlining their main points as listed. Motion passed 7-0.

REPORTS

Council Items

Griggs shared these updates:

Ridgmont acquisition- Council approved 5.73-acre land as buffer for the County House Trail.
Kiwanis Park public hearing- held at recent Council meeting.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission Report

The August meeting is the following week, Aug. 21.

Capital Project Report

Huffington shared these updates and project photos:

ARC: new lockers installed, HVAC repaired.

Lions-Stephens Park: playground installed.

Clary-Shy Park: details finished for new MU Health Care Pavilion.

RTP Trail Signage: new signage installed.

Gans Creek Cross Country Course: construction continuing.

Sports Fieldhouse: construction continuing.

Recreation Services Report

Coffman shared these updates and event photos:

P&R Month Photo Contest: Winner was Haley Johnson at Bonnie View Nature Sanctuary.

Splat: event rescheduled to Aug 10.

Family Fun Fests: Fitness is Fun was theme of July event.

Movies in the Park: held monthly through the summer. Movies featuring closed captioning services.

Camp Slime: held at Hillcrest two separate weeks.

Community Recreation: held activities for Black and White Ball at Douglass and Indian Hills block party.

Aquatics: staff supported Show Me State Games triathlon and has been busy with camps and lessons.

CARE: end of summer reception held.

Kaleidospoke: Twin Lakes will be closed the night of Aug. 17 for glow bike ride.

Upcoming events: Kaleidospoke, Family Fun Fest, Back 2 School Bash, Glow Golf, Pooch Plunge, SLP Amphitheater Concert, Movies in the Park, Family Fun Fest, Heritage Festival and Gans Creek Classic.

STAFF COMMENTS

Staff provided staffing updates: a maintenance tech position was recently offered, there were three recreation staff retirements over the summer and there is a custodial vacancy at the ARC that will be filled soon. Griggs pointed out that staff retirements offer the opportunity to evaluate and reorganize positions as the department's needs change.

COMMISSION COMMENTS TO STAFF

Blevins commented that staff handled the large crowd at the Magnolia Falls interested parties meeting very well, presenting good information and listening.

Huffington said there were 105 comments offered.

Devine asked about the Shepard to Rollins trail?

Huffington said Public Works has awarded the bid for their portion of the trail. Staff recently met with concerned citizens.

Devine said that by holding those meetings for projects, staff is showing how open they are to working with the public and being transparent.

Davis said she has heard about threats to dogs about algae?

Griggs said that was in the national news, which resulted in calls to the Parks and Recreation office about it. There have been no issues with blue-green algae in department lakes.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Sept. 19 at 7 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Blevins made a motion, seconded by Donaldson to adjourn. Motion passed 7-0; meeting adjourned at 8:55.

Submitted by: Tammy Miller