

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

**Thursday, August 11, 7 p.m.  
ARC Meeting Room, 1701 W Ash**

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

**Commission Present:** Dan Devine, Ted Farnen, Sue Davis, Chad Henry, Brendon Steenbergen, Paul Morrison

**Commission Absent (excused):** Meredith Donaldson

**Commission Absent (unexcused):**

**Staff Present:** Gabe Huffington, Zach Nikin, Erika Coffman, Tammy Miller

### **CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 7 pm.

### **AGENDA**

Acting Director Gabe Huffington said he had an update regarding the City's virtual meeting policy. He requested that it be added as an Old Business item. Agenda was approved as amended on a motion by Farnen, seconded by Davis. Motion passed 6-0.

### **MINUTES**

Minutes were approved on a motion by Henry, seconded by Steenbergen. Motion passed 6-0.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### *Virtual meeting update*

Huffington said that City staff made a report to Council at their Aug. 15 meeting. They are proposing a phased in approach for virtual meetings for all boards and commissions. It would cost \$11,100 for each room at the ARC for the equipment needed. The Parks and Recreation Commission would be in phase 4 and 5, which would take two to four months. IT would also recommend moving meeting times to business hours on weekdays to allow for technical support. There would be an annual fee for Parks and Recreation for \$681 for a Zoom license. Council is discussing who determines the virtual option for each board, and if meetings would be recorded in the Zoom platform. They would also need to determine how citizens would participate. At this point, public comment can only be taken in person at a meeting or via email.

Farnen said he appreciated the City considering these options.

Huffington said he would keep them informed.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### *FY'23 Budget Presentation*

Huffington presented details about the proposed budget for FY'23. There is a new budget officer so there are major changes as to how the budget is organized. In prior years, Parks and Recreation's budget was organized by general fund, recreation services fund, capital improvement fund and Park Sales Tax fund. Starting this year, the general fund, rec services and Park Sales Tax fund will be consolidated into one.

Huffington shared other details, including two new positions (parks and grounds specialist for trails and sports recreation specialist) and a slight decrease to support for Parks from the

General Fund. This support has been flat since 2013. Parks and Recreation's budget for FY'23 is proposed to be \$22.5 million.

Farnen commented that the amount from the general fund in 2001 to Parks and Recreation have not kept up with inflation at all.

Huffington shared revenue predictions for the new use tax. This includes \$530,267 for the Park Sales Tax. Huffington shared the list of capital improvement projects for FY'23, highlighted by the second phase of the Columbia Sports Fieldhouse, ARC improvements, and the new bike park at Cosmo Park.

Some fee increases are proposed: ARC daily admission, baseball and softball field daily rentals, Camp CoMo Kidz, and classes fee range. It has been several years since there were any increases, Huffington said.

Huffington described the Vehicle Equipment Replacement Fund (VERF) which will be intended to ensure there are adequate funds for vehicle replacement and promote the use of alternative fuel and fuel-efficient equipment when feasible. There is \$687,000 in the fund, with 22 percent allotted to Parks and Recreation. Huffington said this fund will have to be monitored, he is concerned that if the department does not receive back the equivalent of what is put in, then Parks and Recreation would essentially be paying for other departments' vehicles.

(Commissioner Henry had to leave early).

Davis asked if all the changes will be difficult for employees?

Huffington said it won't be bad, there is more control over the bottom line however, there is apprehension about the subsidy staying consistent.

Farnen commented it is odd putting the Park Sales Tax with other funds, it seems like those should be kept separate.

Huffington said that cost recovery goals would remain the same. Staff will continue to monitor revenues and expenditures as they have always done

After further discussion, Farnen made a motion, seconded by Davis, that the Commission recommends approval of the Parks and Recreation FY'23 budget as presented. The Commission also wishes to express concern about the General Fund allocation to Parks and Recreation. Motion passed 5-0.

## **REPORTS**

### *Council Items*

Huffington informed the Commission of recent and future Council approvals:

- Flat Branch Park appropriation - \$85,000 in donations
- Clary-Shy LWCF easement agreement
- Veterans United agreement – Northeast Regional Park facility lease
- 2015 PST land acquisition appropriation - \$1,325,352
- Cosmo-Bethel Park tennis court improvements

### *Bicycle and Pedestrian Commission Report*

No report, the board does not meet until August 17.

### *Capital Project Report*

Nikin shared updates on the following projects:

Lake of the Woods cart shed, Magnolia Falls Park, Harmony Bends disc golf course, Shepard Park tennis courts, Vineyards Lake Park dock, Cosmo Park football fields 5 and 6 (interested parties meeting on Aug. 29), Columbia Sports Fieldhouse contract with architect for phase II, Clary-Shy Community Park and Perche Creek Trail.

*Recreation Services Report*

Coffman shared programming updates for:

ARC Water Zone shutdown, Adapted Sports, Aquatics, Community Events, Golf and Sports.

**STAFF COMMENTS**

Huffington reminded the Commission of the upcoming Park Plan interested parties meetings. He also told them that there would be a check presentation at the Sept. 6 City Council involving the Columbia Trails Association (COMOTA). And, Ballard, King and Associates will be conducting a feasibility study of the Northeast Regional Park to help determine the best use of the building.

**COMMISSION COMMENTS TO STAFF**

Steenbergen asked about proposed improvements at Twin Lakes Recreation Area, including trail improvements.

Huffington said those are being done now and in FY'24, there will be more parking improvements as well as Little Mates renovations.

Farnen asked about algae on ponds near Garth Nature Area?

Nikin said as long as it isn't blue algae, then it is not harmful. Staff has added plantings but the lack of rain is a problem.

Steenbergen said he had seen one complaint on social media of restroom cleanliness and asked about that?

Nikin described the maintenance crew's cleaning schedule and added that even though the crew can clean, it takes just one person to come in soon after and create a mess.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

None.

**NEXT MEETING DATE**

September 15, 7 pm at the ARC

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:02 pm on a motion from Morrison, seconded by Steenbergen.