

Park Board Work Session Minutes
April 12, 2022

Park Board Members Present: Ron Brunk, Carrielynn O'Reilly, Melissa Hartman, Jim DeHerrera

Park Board Members Absent: Frank Sweeney, Terri Dunn, Ray Boksich

City Staff Present: Maria Butts and Jennie Bradford

Guests: Luke Moses

- A. Call to order @ 5:47 p.m.
- B. Interview of Luke Moses for High School Student Position on the Pedestrian and Bicycle Path Advisory Committee
- C. N/A

Work session adjourned at 6:02 p.m.

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Park Board Members Absent: Frank Sweeney, Ray Boksich

City Staff Present: Maria Butts and Jennie Bradford

Guests: Jess Cerra (Last Best Ride)

- D. Call to order at 6:04 p.m.
- E. Approval of the April 12, 2022, agenda: motion to approve made by Vice President DeHerrera and seconded by Member Dunn. All ayes.
- F. Approval of the February 8, 2022, minutes: motion by Member Dunn to approve the minutes with an amendment that Vice President DeHerrera was absent on February 8, 2022. Seconded by Member O'Reilly. All ayes.
- G. Public Comment: N/A
- H. Committee Reports:
 - a. Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee: Vice President DeHerrera shared that the committee spent most of last meeting discussing Riverbend Condo easement. Bruce Boody put together a possible easement location and preliminary design. It generated a fair bit of discussion amongst those present. Following the meeting, Bruce, the Condo Association representative, and Karin Hilding were going to meet on the ground. They will bring comments back to the next meeting.

- b. Tree Advisory Committee: Member Dunn shared the committee discussed the change in language recommended to the city tree ordinance. Additionally, they discussed planting of 3 trees at Soroptimist Park on Arbor Day which is 4/29/2022.
 - c. WSFF: President Brunk attended the last meeting and will be attending tomorrow's meeting. He noted there is an item on tonight's agenda from the WSFF.
 - d. WAG: Director Butts shared the city has been working with RPA on the Armory Park Master Plan, which includes incorporating the engineering drainage work with which WAG had approved by the Park Board about a year ago. RPA has created engineering designs, and this is going out to bid. Once we have a landscape design in place it will be brought to the Park Board.
- I. Presentations:
- a. Presentation from Jess Cerra, The Last Best Ride, with request for exemption from Depot Park Policy #2 & #8.

Director Butts shared Jess Cerra (Last Best Ride) spoke during Public Comment at the February Park Board meeting and has requested to have added to this evening's agenda, a request for an exemption to the Depot Park Event Policy, so her event can be held at Depot Park on August 21, 2022, in conjunction with the previous 2 days events, the Hootenanny and Brewfest. Director Butts shared historic event dates have already been scheduled in accordance with the Depot Park Event Policy. The request that is being made by Jess Cerra conflicts with Depot Park Event Policy #2 and #8. Huckleberry days is a multiday event occurring the second weekend of August, and Hootenanny and Brewfest are single day events on the Friday and Saturday the following week. If the Last Best Ride were to take place on August 21st, we would have a 4-day event followed by a 3-day event with the Farmer's Market in-between. Since the February Park Board meeting, the City Council did amend the Smith Fields lease with Project Whitefish Kids (PWK), which allows them to hold events and allow alcohol without an appeal to the Council, a change from what the lease use to require. Director Butts informed the board that this has been shared with Jess as a potential option.

Jess presented the event layout in Depot Park with some modifications. She outlined a list of associated costs of running an event, (i.e., tent, porta potties), which is alleviated when split with the Hootenanny and Brewfest. Jess shared there is a shortage of porta potties in the valley, and the only reason TLBR was able to get them was because of WLP. Also, with the 3 events sharing Depot Park, there would only be one set-up and they could share resources. In the future Jess would like to host TLBR at Depot Park on a different date, but her request this evening is for the Park Board to allow her to proceed with the date of Aug 21 for 2022. Jess shared ideas on ways to alleviate impact to turf this year, for example, setting up bike parking and not permitting bikes on the grass, spreading out the vendors and removing the

kids bike park. Jess mentioned Alan of WLP is willing to discuss options for special rehabilitation of the park as well.

Jess spoke to the 2 other options proposed for an event venue. Jess has concerns with hosting the event at Grouse due to the Hwy 93 crossing with large vehicles on this road. Her second concern here is the parking. Another option is using Smith Fields but would need to route people through the neighborhood. Jess's biggest question is do they really want alcohol there? Jess would really like to keep people in the downtown area, so people can come and watch and have something to do while waiting for a rider. It also encourages cross donations amongst the 3 events.

Questions from the board:

President Brunk to Director Butts, "If we permit the event this year and come up with a solution for next year, what would the solution be? Is there a sure solution?"

Director Butts responded there are other dates in July.

President Brunk asked if all 3 events would need to re-schedule?

Director Butts reminded the board that the Depot Park Event Policy states there is a limit of 2 back-to-back single day events, so it would not be possible to hold the three events together and still comply with the Special Event Policy.

Jess shared one idea she has is to make the 3 events a festival, so they are not single day events.

Director Butts responded that would still violate the policy that there is only one multi-day event per month (Arts Fest is in July, Huckleberry Days in August, Oktoberfest in September). Could host it in June but likely unfavorable riding conditions.

Member O'Reilly expressed concern over allowing an exemption to the policy and permitting TLBR to take place in Depot Park on August 21, 2022.

Jess asked how the policy of only permitting one multiday event per month came to be.

President Brunk answered it was to lessen the impact on the park (if its dry, we don't have enough days to water, and if it is wet, the park gets damaged), and to keep the park operating as a park for the people.

Vice President DeHerrera asked Jess what the history is of her event, and how she currently routes riders over the train tracks.

Jess responded that this is their second year, and they use the viaduct and bike path through the underpass.

Vice President DeHerrera shared that once over the viaduct could go through backroads (i.e., Columbia Ave) to get to Smith Fields.

Jess replied she is not opposed to this but would need help/resources directing traffic.

Member Dunn added that she is an employee of the hospital, and there is a group of volunteers that would likely be able to assist with her event at Smith Field, She also shared that the hospital has held events there with alcohol.

Member O'Reilly mentioned the year Oktoberfest was held at Smith Field she was initially disappointed, but it was great. She also used to work at Grouse Mountain, which hosted the governor's cup, and it was a beautiful venue.

President Brunk shared ideas on how to route riders to and from Grouse.

Jess asked if there was a way to use Riverside and Baker Park?

Director Butts expressed concern over minimal parking space.

Jess said she would ask people to use the same parking spaces as last year, i.e., parking garage and around Depot Park.

President Brunk mentioned there is residential parking as well.

Director Butts stated you would still have riders crossing Hwy 93.

President Brunk wondered if the highway / police department could assist with stopping traffic to wave riders through to the finish line.

Jess commented that Grouse and Smith Field are nice venues but cannot stress enough the importance of inclusivity when families travel here to have access to the downtown and have something to do while they wait for their significant other to finish riding.

Director Butts informed Jess of the need to reserve both parks, as 2 separate parks.

Jess would also need to work with MDT on use of Baker Ave and Hwy 93.

President Brunk shared he would like it to see the event in Depot Park but does not want to violate the policy this year to make it happen. He expressed that he would like Jess to look at using Riverside.

Director Butts clarified to Jess that if she would like to hold her event at Riverside/Baker Park that it is something she would need to work with the city on.

Director Butts also sought clarification on TLBR's non-profit status.

Jess replied that they have applied for non-profit status, but they are unsure if they will have it by the time of their event.

Director Butts stated, to hold a special event, you either must be a non-profit, or you must partner with a local non-profit, and you must have 501 c status when you apply for the special event.

Jess commented she thinks the reason they were exempt last year because of the amount they gave away. This year we have \$40,000 in scholarship funds to give away.

Director Butts re-stated, it must be to a local non-profit.

President Brunk voiced that if Jess is willing to look at Riverside, then we could make a motion to table this decision.

Vice President DeHerrera made a motion to table the decision to the May 10th meeting. Seconded by Member Hartman. All ayes.

- b. Presentation from Whitefish Sports Facility Foundation to request approval to construct a covered walkway from the Ice Den to the Warming Hut.

No presenters attended the meeting. Director Butts will follow-up with Aaron Wallace.

J. Public Hearings: N/A

K. Old Business: N/A

L. New Business:

- a) Consideration of a recommendation to amend the Whitefish City Code Title 7, Chapter 5, aka Tree Ordinance.

Director Butts went through each of the revisions that were made and stated upon approval this would be taken to Council for codification. Member Dunn motioned to approve the amendments as presented. Seconded by Vice President DeHerrera. All ayes.

M. Other Items:

Director Butts shared some of the Parks and Recreation staff recently attended the MTRPA conference in Great Falls where she was recognized as the 2022 Professional of the Year.

N. Items from the Park Board:

- a) Administrative Report – Director Butts mentioned the Glacier Twins Lease Agreement was going to be on the agenda, however, there has been a change to the insurance clause that has to go through the consent agenda on the next council meeting, so it will be coming back to the Park Board in May.
- b) Recreation Coordinator Report: Director Butts shared Stephen, Recreation Programmer, has given his resignation. She also shared seasonal wages will now be determined using the same matrix used for regular full-time staff, resulting in an increased hourly wage. This will hopefully help the City attract and retain seasonal employees.
- c) Maintenance Report
- d) Community Service Coordinator Report

O. Correspondences: N/A

P. Items from the Park Board:

- a) Member Hartman made a motion to approve the appointment of Luke Moses as the High School Representative on the Pedestrian & Bicycle Path Advisory Committee. Seconded by Member O'Reilly. All ayes.
- b) Member O'Reilly shared she will be moving out-of-country in September so her position on the board will need to be filled in her absence.

Q. Adjourn: Member Dunn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Member Hartman. All ayes. Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

