

**Park Board Meeting Minutes
October 12, 2021**

Park Board Members Present: Jim DeHerrera, Ron Brunk, Carrielynn O'Reilly, Melissa Hartman, Terri Dunn, Ray Boksich, Frank Sweeney

Park Board Members Absent: none

Guests: John Phelps, Brandon Theis

City Staff Present: Maria Butts and Jennie Bradford

A. Call to Order: 6:06pm

B. Approval of the October 12, 2021 Agenda: Director Butts requested to move new business ahead of old business. Member Sweeney moved to accept the agenda with this amendment. Vice President DeHerrera seconded. All ayes.

C. Approval of the September 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes: Vice President DeHerrera moved to approve the minutes. Member Sweeney seconded. All ayes.

D. Public Comment: NA

E. Committee Reports

- a) Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee: Director Butts shared most of the meeting revolved around the proposed trail along the Riverbend condominiums. The committee would like to make a recommendation to the Park Board to then make a recommendation to Council to approve of the shared use path along the riverfront.
- b) Tree Advisory Committee: Member Dunn advised the committee has not met, so there is no update.
- c) WFSS Board: Member Sweeney advised nothing to report.
- d) WAG Board: Member Boksich reports they did not meet in August. A September meeting was held; however, the minutes have not yet been approved. He shared the shed arrived today. The next project is paving the path, but they are awaiting engineering services. Landscaping and water abatement will be addressed in the future. Currently preparing for winter.

F. Presentations: Bike/Ped Committee Chairperson John Phelps

Director Butts shared public comment has been received. Board members received this by email and were provided a hardcopy as well. John Phelps presented his report on behalf of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee.

Questions/Comments from the board:

Member Sweeney commented this is one of the most complete and well-prepared reports. He agreed this is the safest way to manage this if it can be done.

Public Comment: Julie Tickle, Executive Director of Dream Adaptive: Julie shared the Dream Adaptive organization has a growing adaptive biking program and they expect to see a large increase in the number of participants. The program aims to use the shared use pathway throughout town. She informed the board this past summer they had to shut their bike program down because participants were neither able to use the stairs under the bridge, nor go up Miles Avenue. Julie requested the concept of universal design, that which will be the greatest benefit to all community users, be considered when looking at how to best connect the downtown and BNSF pathways. She expressed, having the path go along the riverfront would be the safest, most welcoming, and accessible option.

President Brunk commented that despite being extremely comfortable riding his bike in traffic, this year it has become very challenging to cross highway 93 downtown. He added, this project is long overdue and hopes council will move forward with the condo group and hopes they will work with city on this to benefit the community.

Frank moved to approve the report as prepared and pass it onto council. Seconded by member Dunn.

Director Butts added there is a conceptual design included in the Bike/Ped minutes and while this is not an exact design, wanted to note there is some concept of an elevated boardwalk design.

All members were in favor of supporting or passing this on to council with the board's endorsement. None opposed.

Member Sweeney added he supports this report, is not sure the conclusions can be supported long term but feels Council does need to investigate this.

G. Public Hearings: NA

H. New Business: Consideration to approve final Armory Park Master Plan
i. RPA presentation of Master Plan

Director Butts reminded the board that we have received a LWCF grant in the amount of \$150k with \$100k pending.

Brandon Theist (RPA) presented the master plan. There are 2 phases (phase 3 and phase 4), and phase 3 is scheduled for next summer.

Brandon explained the project needs to go to bid. We will have a base bid and then several additional options we can choose to add-on based on price.

The base bid will include the shared use path around the eastern portion of project and southern portion of the project framing the northern limits of parking lot, installation of a well, resurfacing of the lacrosse field and adjusting irrigation, installation of an adult fitness area, completion of drainage improvements for the eastern half of the park.

Added alternatives include the eastern parking lot, shared use path around the playground loop, fitness loop, and building loop around the south and west sides of the Armory building.

Phase 4 includes added alternatives we could not do in phase 3, the park trees, ball field improvements and irrigation, west parking lot, large pavilion north of the eastern parking lot, and several small gazebos north of skatepark.

Questions from the board:

Member Boksich, wonders what the status is with the usage of the ball fields as his observation is they are currently underutilized.

Director Butts commented that before covid, there was an adult rec softball program run out of Armory Park and there was discussion of bringing it in-house. Stephen Kostoff, the Recreation Programmer would like to offer an adult rec softball program, but the current condition of the ball diamonds does not allow for a successful program. With the field improvements, Director Butts feels we could revive adult softball and have a league.

President Brunk inquired as to what will happen if we will be moving soil around but not addressing the fields until phase 4. He questioned if this would make the fields unusable? Brandon responded that next summer, they would only grade the eastern half, so the ball fields would remain as is.

Member Boksich asked if the WAG Board could meet with RPA to discuss drainage for dog park as well.

President Brunk asked Director Butts to explain how this project will be funded. Director Butts advised of the established funding amount and amount of unsecured funding at this time but added there are additional available funds through resort tax, the parks cash balance, paved impact fees and the parkland acquisition fund.

- ii. Staff presentation of adult fitness equipment component

Questions from the board:

Member Sweeney commented that without a cover, its usefulness would be approximately 4-months of the year.

President Brunk commented seniors were the smallest percentage of those who participated in the survey, yet this is the group we are trying to target. He questions the usability of such an area.

Member Boksich reports the overwhelming reaction he experienced amongst people his age that he spoke with was they would not exercise in a field, they would not use it.

Member Sweeney states even though he is not against it, he questions what practical use will become of it. President Brunk echoed this stating of all the comments he read, people think it's a neat idea, but he does not get the sense very many people are excited to use it.

Member Dunn commented many people use the outdoor fitness activities along the trail at the hospital, but this proposal looks more like an outdoor gym.

Director Butts shared if the board chooses not to pursue this outdoor fitness area we would have a savings of \$89,000, however, we would need to discuss this with LWCF as this was presented in the original grant application.

Member Dunn feels an adult fitness area is still a good idea but would propose something like the trail and activities at the hospital which would be aesthetically pleasing but cost much less.

Director Butts says she has a mid-October meeting with LWCF and can discuss this with them and make sure it would not compromise our funding.

Member Sweeney moves to approve the Armory Master Plan with the amendment of making the fitness component more activity and less equipment based, like that of the hospital trail, and with the approval from LWCF. Seconded by member Dunn. All ayes.

I. Old Business:

- a. Consideration to approve of new mechanisms for managing commercial use in public parks

Fitness in the Park: as presented

Gazebo Rentals:

- Political campaigns are not permitted to charge a fee however, donations are acceptable.

Park/Field Rentals: as presented

Watercraft Launching:

- Allow for up to 5 daily non-motorized individual watercraft rental deliveries at river-front parks
- Does not allow non-motorized rental delivery at City Beach due to competition with City lease
- Limit for-profit parking at City Beach to 2 parking spaces per launch
- Limit number of annual permits issued by type as follows (no limit on dock service, guiding limit to 6 permits, marine services/sales no limit, motorized rental delivery limit to 4, no limit on boat storage/delivery)

Commercial Filming:

- Continue using a special event application/permit until more information is collected. Look to see out-of-state resort towns have such a permit.

Member Sweeney made a motion to approve the proposed mechanisms for commercial use in parks as presented. Seconded by member Boksich. All ayes.

J. Other Items: NA

K. Items from the Parks and Recreation Department

- Administrative Report – no comment.
- Recreation Coordinator Report – Director Butts added we have canceled the before school program as we only had one child in attendance.
- Maintenance Report – no comment.
- Community Services Report – no comment.

L. Correspondence: Bike/Ped communication from the public was provided to board members both by email and hardcopy.

M. Items from the Park Board:

Member Sweeney would like the Bike/Ped committee to make it a priority to obtain easement along the trail at Birch Point, as this has been in the works for as long as the Riverbend trail project.

President Brunk shared that on Monday, he, as part of a committee representing the public, will request council take a stand against alternative C on highway 93 S. Member Sweeney moved to authorize President Brunk to vote against alternative C on behalf of the Park Board, for the reasons of loss of tree canopy and a loss of quality of downtown Whitefish. Seconded by member O'Reilly. All ayes.

President Brunk shared they had a productive meeting with Glacier Twins earlier in the day. More information will be provided soon.

N. Adjourn

Member Sweeney made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Vice President DeHerrera. All ayes.

Meeting adjourned at 9:26pm