

Park Board Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2022

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

Park Board Members Absent: Jim DeHerrera

City Staff Present: Maria Butts, Jennie Bradford, and Carla Belski

Guests: Kevin Gartland (Chamber), Heidi Van Everen (WLP), Clare Goble (GRG), Tom Gilfillan (WF Pottery), Katie Williams (Event Volunteer)

A) Call to order at 6:03 pm

B) Approval of the July 12, 2022, agenda: motion to approve made by Member Sweeney and seconded by Member O'Reilly. All ayes.

C) Approval of the May 10, 2022, minutes: motion to approve made by Member Hartman and seconded by Member O'Reilly. All ayes.

D) Public Comment: Clare Goble or Glacier Restaurant Group (GRG) - Re: Oktoberfest; GRG would like to have Oktoberfest stay at Depot Park; Tom Gilfillan (Whitefish Pottery, Chamber board member); hopes we can find a way for Oktoberfest to remain downtown. Both Clare Goble and Tom Gilfillan spoke to the importance of Oktoberfest being at Depot Park for the vitality of downtown businesses.

E) Committee Reports:

- a) Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee: Director Butts shared there will be a special work session July 25 with the Bike Ped committee to review 2 conceptual design options for Riverbend Condo path. They will likely make a recommendation to Park Board to make a recommendation to Council. The work session is at 8am on July 25th.
- b) Tree Advisory Committee: Member Dunn states nothing to report.
- c) WSFF: frank – Member Sweeney advised they meet tomorrow. President Brunk added their schedule is full for the season, they have staffing in place, and all is going well.
- d) WAG: Member Boksich shared the kiosk is finished; they are waiting for paving. They have experienced some water issues, possible contamination in ponds and streams (Giardia), which is not uncommon this time of year. They are working on a solution. In addition, a family of muskrats have moved into pond. We do not have a way to get rid of them as there is an ordinance against trapping in the city. Member Hartman asked about the algae in the pond. She states it appears to be more prevalent this year. Member Boksich replied Mike of Whitefish Lake Institute did samples and testing and everything came back fine.

F) Presentations: NA

G) Public Hearings: NA

H) Old Business: NA

I) New Business:

- a) Consideration of approval of the Glacier Twins (GT) Maintenance Plan 2022: Director Butts shared that in May the Park Board signed an MOU for Verizon funds. The MOU states yearly the Glacier Twins will submit an annual report, budget, and proposed maintenance plan for the Park Board to review, which they have done. Upon approval of the maintenance plan, this year, the GT would receive 78% of the Verizon funds plus \$22,891 received in FY21. In future years, upon receipt and approval of the maintenance plan, the GT will receive the 78%. The GT did submit their plan and budget, and they are here tonight to answer any questions. No questions. Member Sweeney moves to approve the GT maintenance plan for 2022, seconded by Member Hartman. All ayes. Director Butts will request Finance submit a check to the GT. The GTs are to keep track of funds and we will see GT next February (2023).
- b) Consideration of Whitefish Chamber of Commerce request for an exemption from Depot Park Event Policy #11: Unauthorized equipment and vehicles are not permitted on park grounds. Parking on the grass is prohibited. Kevin Gartland of the Whitefish Chamber of Commerce presented a request to have an exemption from Depot Park Policy #11. Katie Williams, Whitefish resident and volunteer of WLP Legacy Run expressed support for this exemption and to allow beer trucks to be parked in Depot Park for special events. Member Hartman asked what other mitigation measures have been discussed in the past. Director Butts shared there were mats that were looked at previously, but the Park Board was not interested in purchasing these at the time as they are several thousand dollars. Member Hartman asked how damaged the park has been after previous events where vehicles were parked. Depot has been in poor condition following events in the past. Director Butts shared this is first year Depot has been a revitalized park. We do not know what it can tolerate now. Member Sweeney asked if is there a temporary fix that could work. Member Boksich shared he is opposed to exceptions to the policy as this would be an exception year to year. He stated this policy is what we have in place, and organizers need to determine how they are going to work with what they have. Kevin Gartland expressed the layout they have used in the past and propose using again because it works; it has to do with flow of people. Member Dunn added, it is our responsibility to protect the integrity of the park; we do not dispute value of the event, but once we start making exceptions, we set a precedent that is not sustainable. Dunn shared she would like to find a way to make this work that upholds our commitment and one that we can offer other events. Member Sweeney voiced that Depot is a community park first. He added, we have not experimented with the temporary fix of mats but do not feel the City should pay for that. He wondered if these products were rentable. Kevin Gartland mentioned he does not want to damage the park either, but added, the platforms that hold up the tent are larger than trailer tires. Director Butts added that in addition to the toll trailer tires have on the park, beer pouring in one area makes the grass wet, which then gets beat up with

people walking back and forth. This is the same in high traffic areas (entrances), and if it rains.

Member Sweeney stated he is willing to examine if there is a mat-based solution that we can try this year, and if the park gets damaged, the event organizer pays for it, and we do not do it again.

President Brunk said he was leaning with Member Sweeney. We can we do a trial basis for the remainder of 2022 and make exceptions for all events. If Depot Park does not hold up, then these events will not be permitted again. Member Dunn shared she would prefer an experiment over seeing how the park holds up without any protective measures.

Member Sweeney made a motion that Director Butts works with the Chamber to set up an experiment we might be able to go forward with, that Director Butts can come back to council with to request a contribution of the purchase price.

Seconded by Member Dunn.

Member Boksich sought clarification and asked the board if they were granting an exception to the Depot Park Event Policy (#11)?

Member Sweeney stated, for the duration of the experiment.

Director Butts proposed the Park Board could direct staff to allow exemptions to the rule with mitigations (under \$4,000) for the remainder of 2022, with the intension of seeking a long-term solution for any event organizer.

Member Boksich added that finding products and a solution should be on event organizers.

Member Sweeney re-stated his motion: Director Butts is to work with a budget of \$4,000 and work with event organizers to acquire them paying at least 50% in mitigation material that we can experiment with to see if it is going effectively protect Depot Park from damage. Effectively, to allow events to happen so long as they provide a mitigation facility to prevent damage, and if damage occurs it must be paid for by the event organizer. Member Sweeney adds Director Butts has authority to determine which product will work or has the greatest chance to work. If we cannot obtain it right now, we do what we can until we get the material.

All in favor 4, Member Boksich in opposition

Vote carries

c) Review map of monument, welcome, and orientation sign locations.

Parks and Recreation Community Services Coordinator Carla Belski presented to the board.

Member Boksich asked about signage in the WAG kiosk. Discussion about placing a regulatory sign in the kiosk and reducing number of signs on the fence. Member Boksich said he would work with staff on what we can do. Staff asked the Park Board what signage option they prefer for the restrooms (universal or custom) and the board agreed they liked the (custom) option presented.

President Brunk asked about signage for the restrooms at Grouse. Staff noted that a sign is needed here.

The board sought clarification on the proposed material of signs, which will be sintra-board (same material used for Bakke signs)

Director Butts elaborated that this material will be wrapped all the way around back and the back of signs will be black. Signposts will be steel and mounted on the sides of the signs.

Member Dunn made a motion to approve sign locations as presented, seconded by Member Sweeney. All ayes.

J) Other items

K) Items from the Parks and Recreation Department

a) Administrative Report: NA

b) Recreation Coordinator Report: We have interviewed for the Recreation Programmer position. We offered the position to one individual, and they declined as their employer offered them a promotion. We then offered the position to another individual, but pay negotiation was unsuccessful.

c) Maintenance Report: NA

d) Community Services: NA

L) Correspondences: NA

M) Items from the Park Board:

a) Member Boksich asked if staff were aware of the damage near the bridge by Cow Creek on E 2nd caused by the water runoff. Director Butts replied that Facility Foreman, Jeff Brown, proposed the idea to widen sidewalk and remove the bridge, adding 2 overlooks instead.

b) Member Sweeney: NA

c) Member Hartman: NA

d) Member Dunn thanked Member Boksich for standing up and advocating that we uphold our Depot Park Event Policy this evening.

N) Adjourn: Adjourned at 8:18 – Motion made by Member Sweeney and seconded by Member Hartman. All ayes.