



City of Helena

CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 7, 2015



City Members

- Pat Doyle **absent**
- Melissa Lewis
- Ross Johnson

County Members

- Jane Kollmeyer **absent**
- Dave Payne
- Nyle Hawson (Lincoln Parks Board) **absent**

Joint Member

- John Carter, School District Representative **absent**

Commission Representatives

- Andres Haladay, City Commissioner
- Susan Good Geise, County Commissioner

Staff Contact

- Matt Heimel, Lewis and Clark County Special Districts Planner
- Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder **absent**

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426

TIME: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm

Visitor(s): Becky Baraby, Nancy Everson, Sara Lepkoff, Karen Lane, Janet Sucha

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Melissa Lewis called the City-County Parks Advisory Board Meeting to order at 11:33 am. A quorum was present.

2. Establish Quorum/Review Agenda/Introductions

3. Consent Action Items

Approval of minutes: September 2, 2015

- After review of the minutes, Dave moved to approve the September 2, 2015 minutes as presented. Ross seconded. Motion carried.

4. Comments from Persons Present

The board will accept brief comments from the public for items that are not on the agenda at this time.

- Community member David Smith, CEO of the YMCA spoke on Centennial Park concerns. He stated that he is seeing increased patrols by Helena Police

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Department. He has noticed decreased gathering activity but is uncertain if this is a result of increased patrols or change of weather and school being back in session.

5. Presentations

- Janet Sucha, Tribal Health Education Specialist, Chronic Disease Prevention Program, Native American Ceremonial Use of Tobacco in Parks
 - Amy provided background explanation that at the September Parks Board meeting, Commissioner Susan Good Geise informed the board that she had been approached by Mr. Dan Pocha of the Helena Indian Alliance about concerns he had with the tobacco-free parks policy. His concerns were directed at ceremonial use of tobacco by Native Americans. Amy reached out to Karen Lane of the City-County Health Department who invited Janet Sucha, Tribal Health Education Specialist, Chronic Disease Prevention Program to speak to the group.

Janet communicated that the Religious Freedom Act allows for the use of tobacco for cultural practices. It is important to clarify the “intent of tobacco use” (such as for ceremonial purposes) vs. recreational habitual use.

Parks board members discussed that the current tobacco free policy never meant to exclude the use of tobacco for Native American ceremonial purposes. Amy commented that she was not aware that any ceremonial uses in the parks take place. She also stated that she had not been contacted by Mr. Pocha regarding his concerns. Amy suggested that if the Parks Board felt strongly enough that clarification to the current resolution should be made, the appropriate process would be for the Parks Board to make a recommendation to the City Commission to consider amending the tobacco free parks resolution to clarify it does not prohibit the use of ceremonial tobacco. It was agreed to have further discussion at the November meeting.

- Nancy Everson, Director of Finance, Lewis and Clark County; County Park Budget Presentation
 - Nancy Everson, Director of Finance, Lewis and Clark County gave an overview of the County park budget. Questions related to disbursements and allocations were discussed.

6. Discussion Items

- Park Safety Concerns Deferred to November – Amy reported that Police Chief McGee will attend the November meeting.

7. Action Items

- No action items identified.

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8. Reports

City	Amy Teegarden	Parks	Craig Marr
County	Matt Heimel	Fair Board	Dave Payne
HOLMAC	Jane Kollmeyer	Playgrounds	Stacy Sommer
Lincoln Parks Board	Nyle Howsman	School District	John Carter
Recreation	Amy Teegarden		

Informal Announcement: Amy informally announced that we are one step closer to the purchase of a new Parks Maintenance facility. We received approval from the Commission to hire an architect to create a plan for a joint facility at the golf course. However, since that time, another building (the Lehrkind Warehouse building just east of Kindrick Legion field) came on the market. We have had many visits to look at it as well as the City Manager and several Commission members. The City Manager made an offer with some contingencies and the offer was accepted. This is a 25,000 square foot building and it would benefit other city departments. The police would use it for evidence storage, storm water improvements, etc. The location could not be better. The building needs some work but we would be able to do much of the work ourselves. Craig stated that while the golf course would have been a good location, this building will provide us better access to our parks.

In addition to discussion about the new facility, Craig mentioned that we are putting in the sidewalks at 6th Ward Park. Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) as well as other groups assisted with laying a living forest floor on the mid-bioswale on National Public Lands Day. The help was greatly appreciated.

9. Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)

- Park Safety Concerns and Discussion with Representatives of the Helena Police Department.

10. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 4, 2015

Adjournment

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citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov
316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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