



City of Helena

## CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, April 6, 2016



### City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Melissa Lewis
- Ross Johnson

### County Members

- Jane Kollmeyer
- Dave Payne
- Nyle Howsmon (Lincoln Parks Board)

### Joint Member

- John Carter, School District Representative

### Commission Representatives

- Rob Farris-Olsen, City Commissioner
- Andy Hunthausen, County Commissioner

### Staff Contact

- Kevin Hamilton, Deputy Director, Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning
- Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- Todd Wheeler, Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

**LOCATION:** City-County Building, Room 426

**TIME:** 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

**Visitor(s):** Nancy Everson, Debbie Grebenc, Corey Livesay, Stacy Sommer

### Call to Order

The City-County Parks Board Meeting was called to order at 11:30 am.

### Establish Quorum/Review Agenda/Introductions

Chairperson, Melissa Lewis established a quorum. There were no proposed changes to the agenda.

### Consent Action Items

Approval of Minutes: March 2, 2016

With no corrections to the minutes, Ross moved to approve the March 2, 2016 minutes as presented. Pat seconded. Motion carried.

### Comments from Persons Present

None.

### Presentations

County Budget – Nancy Everson

*“The City-County Parks Board’s mission is to promote investment in the development and maintenance of parks, recreation, trails and open space.”*

- Nancy stated that this is not yet an action item. She will present the county budget at this meeting and open the floor for discussion. She will then request this as an action item for next month's meeting (looking for a recommendation to present the budget to the commission).
- The first page of the handout is the parks funds. This fund is supplemented from the general fund.
- Babe Ruth requested additional money at the last meeting. Their request is shown on page three of the handout. They are asking for an increase in the mowing budget from \$8,000 to \$14,500 next year. That request has been built into the county budget request.
- What this budget pays for includes the following:
  - ✚ Weed Spraying
  - ✚ Sierra Park Contribution (school district)
  - ✚ Warren Park Contribution (school district)
  - ✚ City Administration (electric, utilities)
  - ✚ Babe Ruth Lawn Mowing
  - ✚ Miscellaneous Contracts
- Other expenses include Board expenses (lunches) as well as city assessments.
- Per Nancy – Babe Ruth also gets \$15,000 in operating revenue as well as \$3,000 which is transferred into a capital account (which they use to purchase capital equipment such as mowers).
- Ross asked for an outline of how the agreement with Babe Ruth works in comparison to agreements similar organizations would have with other parks. This agreement seems to be a different model where other organizations pay a use fee to the Parks Department in order to use the park. Does Babe Ruth provide more services for the park?
- Nancy – Ryan Field is owned 50% county and 50% city. Babe Ruth is in charge of maintaining those fields. The county has always given Babe Ruth some support. The county doesn't have any other agreements like this.
- Amy gave additional explanation. The city ownership of Ryan field, as Amy understands it, is 51% county ownership and 49% city ownership. This was done in order to make it legal for the city back in the 90's to give open space funds to the development of Ryan Park. We don't manage Ryan Fields – it was technically done this way so the city could give open space bond money to a project back then. John stated that this is correct. John's recollection is that this money was given for capital improvements.
- Amy then added that there are other agreements that the city has where an individual or organization will pay use fees which are very specific to the types of events. The county doesn't have a parks and recreation department, so the county pays Babe Ruth to provide these services.
- Stacy asked if anyone else uses these fields. Small fry football program does and they pay \$4,000 per year for the use. John then added that Ryan Field is separate from the fairgrounds maintenance.
- Melissa - If the county were to pick up mowing expense, would the cost be similar? Nancy stated they did at one time have a seasonal employee that mowed the fields and that cost was considerably less; however, the level of service they need in order to keep the fields maintained is more than what the county can provide.

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- Andy agreed that it definitely is a higher level of service. He added that the county contributes more than what is seen on paper as you look at other infrastructures. The county has worked on the parking lots, hard surfaced the street front, and replaced the steam well pump. These items were paid for from the general fund. They wanted a large county park for baseball and needed someone to take care of it. Babe Ruth has taken on that role.
- Jane mentioned that board expenses include providing lunches for this meeting. Jane would like the committee to consider eliminating this expense. The lunches are a 50/50 split between the city administration and the county administration. Amy added that part of the money budgeted under board expenses are to pay for the administrative assistant to take minutes at the meetings.
- Nancy – the second page of the handout is the Parks Development Fund. This is where the payment in lieu of parks money goes. Every year, the county budgets \$100,000 in this fund which gives this board the budget authority to approve projects as they come up throughout the year. Melissa – we have had a few requests for money from this fund in recent months.
- In previous years, the funding was disbursed based on sub-divisions. Nancy stated that if someone presents a project for funding, we determine the area.
- Per Melissa – Babe Ruth requested some of this money – they were asking for \$11,000 (even though there is only \$8,000 currently available in the fund). Amy added that this request was for some special projects associated with damage due to wind storms this year. Pat – when we heard the presentation from Legion, is it correct that they wanted money from this fund as well? Amy stated that is correct.
- Amy – as part of our general discussion, it was recommended that this board creates standards to request funds. Melissa agreed and stated she is in favor of establishing a process so we can consider all funding requests, prioritize, and make thoughtful decisions. What would be the schedule for such a process?
- Amy stated this schedule would be more for the county as their budgetary timelines differ from the city.
- Nancy stated this board would need to determine a schedule for accepting requests. Kevin stated he is looking at how other counties process such requests, but he recommends a January deadline for submission and then we would put proposals together for review.
- Stacy – in requesting funding, what area would East Helena fall under? Per Nancy – that would be the southeast valley.
- John is working on getting a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for the level of maintenance service we do with other organizations such as Sierra Park. We may want to do something similar with the Babe Ruth organization so you can separate the capital projects from the ongoing maintenance costs. Wind damage and fences getting knocked down is more of an ongoing cost whereas new dugouts would be considered capital improvement.
- John looked at the costs of Ryan exchange – we need to look at the ongoing costs to maintain a park per acre. You have mowing, weed eating, irrigation repair, maintaining playgrounds, etc. – we really need to look at this long term.
- Kevin –in reviewing one program, they would agree to pay up to half of the request and require the requestor to show proof on how they would provide long term maintenance.
- Jennifer will add the county budget as an action item on next month's agenda.

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Craig – City Park Projects Presentation

- Craig was asked to present a city park projects update. Two parks recently updated include Barney and Waukesha Parks. We renovated the playground equipment. The parks department selected these two parks for renovation using the following planning process:
  1. Identified outdated and unsafe playground equipment and prioritized for replacement.
  2. Solicited proposals from major vendors for 2 playgrounds. Asked for proposal for one playground for 2 – 5 year olds and one for 5 – 12 year olds.
  3. Screened proposals based on various criteria such as cost, variety of features, construction, etc.
  4. Selected the top choice.
  5. Amy successfully used the information and applied for a LWCF grant.
  6. With the competitive bid process and the LWCF grant, we were able to get two playgrounds for the cost of one.
- Craig then presented basic costs in upgrading/redoing a playground:

Remove old equipment and wood chips and concrete.	\$1,500 - \$2,000
Add fill to adjust grade	\$600 - \$1,000
Concrete for posts and footings	\$1,000
Accessible route construction	\$1,000
Retaining wall blocks	\$4,000
Engineered wood fiber	\$3,500
<b>PLAYGROUND COST</b>	<b>\$42,000</b>

- There is approximately \$10,000 - \$12,000 in additional costs after purchasing the playground. There are many variables that impact costs. This figure does not include labor.
- Craig shared old pictures of **Barney Park**. This project took one month to completion. Three parks employees worked on this project. It was all done by city staff.
- **Waukesha Park** – we had to remove trees due to wind damage and had to create an accessible route.
- **Dog Park** – we had issues with water spigot area. We excavated out the area and put in a rubber membrane and drain. This has been repaired.
- **Last Chance Water Park Pool** – a pipe broke from boiler room to splash deck – pipe froze and broke. Needed to paint lazy river – this was sandblasted late in fall.
- **Kay McKenna Park Playground** – replaced wood fiber. This park gets a lot of use.
- **Peanut Park** – city staff put in new playground equipment and built a retention wall.
- **Batch Fields** – we removed wood bleachers and replaced with aluminum ones.
- **6<sup>th</sup> Ward Park Playground** – the playground is in and ready for concrete footings. We used engineered wood fiber. Craig gave recognition to Helena Playables Playgrounds for donating the playground. It has a garden theme and accessible route as well. Parks employees are working on irrigation lines, removing roof trusses, etc. They will also help landscape the area.
- Amy – we have budgeted to replace one playground each year. We are working with the Kiwanis on the possibility of putting in a playground at Cherry Park.
- In determining when a park is worked on, we look at the neighborhoods that have a lot of kids and perhaps come from a lower economic background. We want to ensure that our parks are

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safe. Parks add quality to our community and playgrounds aid in social and physical development.

- Amy then gave kudos to our parks maintenance crew. We have a very innovative group of people!
- Craig finalized his discussion saying that the parks maintenance staff are planting a lot of trees throughout the community.
- We also have completed installing the tobacco free signage in all the parks.

#### Review of City Park Use Fees and Policies – Amy

- Amy asked for follow up questions. She brought extra copies of what the city did to develop our park use fees. The broader the benefit, the lower the cost. We continually work to improve this process. To date, we are seeing more than \$15,000 in park use fee revenue. This figure is on the rise.
- Ross stated he feels this process was thoughtfully done. The document indicates the fees will be analyzed every 3 years. Amy said it is time to look at the fee schedule and recommends we reevaluate the fees this summer. Todd has caught some inconsistencies between the policy and our fee schedule. We want to keep this affordable; however, we may be too low in some of our fees. A market analysis may need to be done.
- We are trying to be very detailed on how to establish fees for bigger use agreements (i.e., softball, etc.). Amy stated she would be willing to do a presentation on our use agreements next month at this board meeting.
- Ross then mentioned the Alive at five events. Per Amy – we have regular park use events as well as the community events such as the Alive at Five. The fees are waived for this type of event. These events are sponsored by the BID (Business Improvement District). This event generates money for the BID to do projects in the community. Amy is meeting with their director tomorrow and has suggested we create a master agreement with them.
- Some of the projects the BID has done for our parks include the installation of electricity in Women’s Park as well as the funding for the improvements of the pavilion at the walking mall. She hasn’t put together a plan in a long time. One of their future projects will include a performance stage at Women’s Park. We do require the BID to submit a schedule of what parks will be used for Alive at Five and we’ve requested they rotate parks as we want the use to be distributed.
- Amy will bring a copy of a draft master agreement for the City-County Parks Board to review as we move forward.
- Melissa applauded Amy and the late Carol Kirkland for their efforts in creating this fee schedule. Jane echoed Melissa and added she has not seen a lot of push back in the community.

**FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Amy will do a presentation on our use agreements next month at this board meeting.**

#### **Discussion Items**

##### Parks Safety Concerns

*“The City-County Parks Board’s mission is to promote investment in the development and maintenance of parks, recreation, trails and open space.”*

- Amy stated she handed out a memo at the March City-County Park Board meeting that discussed meeting. Al Knauber wrote an article for the newspaper regarding that meeting. Because Amy received many calls as a result of the article, she forwarded the memo presented to anyone who had questions regarding our intentions. From the conversations she had, she feels the public thinks we are “pushing park hours”. Amy reiterated that we are researching what other parks are doing. The question of the week in the Helena IR was “What is the best way for Helena officials to deal with litter and unruly people in the parks?” Amy stated she wants to stress that as we move forward, this will be a community discussion. She added that John Carter shared his spreadsheet that the school facilities use for risk assessment. This will be a good starting point for us to develop something of our own.
- City commission goes through a process of identifying priorities that they want staff to work on and one of the priorities Amy suggested they review park codes/ordinances and the commission agreed this needs to be a priority.

### Parks Report

- Corey – presented on park issues for the month of March. The direction given to patrol and animal control officers was to make sure they are doing preventative patrols in the parks. They were instructed to monitor the activity, do regular walk-throughs; as well as check on known parks where we have had many complaints.
- Over the course of the month of March as it relates to parks, the Helena PD received 252 calls for service generated at a park. 80% – 90% is patrol being logged – there may or may not have been a formal complaint. The officer is logging that they visited the park to monitor the activity.
- Others items logged include:
  - A trespass issue at Bill Roberts Golf Course – there was some light pole damage as kids were throwing rocks at the light.
  - Underage drinking and animal control issues at Bausch Park and Centennial Park.
  - Trespassing issues. If anyone violates a Montana code in one of the parks, they can be issued a short-term trespass notice. Sometimes this may include just a verbal warning.
  - Traffic complaints related to Memorial Park.
  - Criminal mischief around the golf course and Batch fields.
  - Disorderly conduct violation issued at Lincoln Park.
  - Thefts reported by people using Centennial Park as well as an assault.
- To generalize this, Corey stated they are receiving 8 or 10 calls to a park each week.
- Amy – what is the typical call for animal control? Corey – most of those issues are dogs off a leash and some are regarding an aggressive animal.
- Corey is looking at all addresses to include park names in report. Amy suggested to Corey that they get together to discuss what can be done with this information.
- Amy was contacted by the YMCA and they stated the activity at the Centennial parking lot is picking up.
- Dave – is this information documented and provided to the Parks Department? Corey stated not yet; however, their IT department is working on this. The biggest issue they are having is getting data into the report. Once we figure this out, the PD will discuss providing to others.

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- Melissa suggested Amy and Corey get together to discuss how to use the data the police department is collecting. Amy doesn't feel we are ready to make recommendations as she feels we need to continue our discussions about park safety. Corey agreed with that and said we need to continue to look at what the issues are, our existing resources, as well as park hours.
- In an effort to move this along, Amy stated we now need to start reviewing the park codes/ordinances; where there are gaps and where there are needs and defining what the issues are.
- Melissa stated we should keep this on the agenda as continuing discussion.

#### Indoor Recreation Facility Update

- Todd was asked to discuss the city interaction with the Helena Regional Sports Association (HRSA). He welcomed Debbie Grebenc to our meeting.
- Todd has been invited to represent the Parks and Recreation Department at the HRSA monthly meetings. He will continue to engage in the group. Melissa then asked Debbie to share a little about the organization.
- Debbie thanked Todd for attending meetings. His input and insight is very valuable.
- Debbie then shared that a recreation consulting firm, Ballard\*King of Colorado has been awarded the contract to complete a feasibility study for the sports complex in Helena. Representatives from the firm will visit Helena on May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> to conduct interviews with community leaders and potential facility user groups in a variety of Helena local sports association. There will also be a community open house to everyone interested – this will be an evening event.
- Tomorrow, HRSA will present at the joint City-County Joint Work Session. They have a request on the agenda for \$5,000 from city matched a \$5,000 contribution by county that will allow HRSA to fully fund and match the Big Sky Trust Fund Grant from the state.
- Debbie thanked the City-County Parks Board for their support in this project.
- Per Melissa – we will keep this as a standing discussion item on the agenda.

#### **Action Items**

None.

#### **Reports**

City	Amy Teegarden	Parks	Craig Marr
County	Kevin Hamilton	Fair Board	Dave Payne
HOLMAC	Jane Kollmeyer	Playgrounds	Stacy Sommer
Lincoln Parks Board	Lonny Cox	School District	John Carter
Recreation	Todd Wheeler		

#### **Reports**

##### City – Amy

- Amy reminded the committee that April 29<sup>th</sup> is National Arbor Day. We will be planting a tree in memory of Carol Kirkland at Barney Park at noon. Amy will send a formal invitation to the committee.

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- We currently have a memorial tree program; however, it has come to our attention that we need to solidify how the department collects memorials (i.e., benches, trees, etc.). We will be working on formalizing our process.
- Amy would like to create a memorial donation program. Within the next 6 months, she will bring forward a draft to this committee much like she did with our park use fees.
- Amy has worked with American Legion and the Brewer's on a joint MOU agreements.

#### County – Kevin

- Nothing to report.

#### HOLMAC – Jane

- Nothing to report.

#### Lincoln Parks Board – Nyle

- Nothing to report.

#### Recreation – Todd

- Getting everything ready to go for summer events.
- The maintenance department is preparing the pool and Todd is in the process of revamping the swim lesson program.
- We will be offering Kay's Kids at Barney, Memorial, and Lincoln Parks.
- We are offering Yoga in the Parks as well as Dancing in the Parks this year and we continue to see Park Fit requests.
- Jane – was this similar to what we did a couple years ago? Amy said yes – these are free workouts in the parks.
- Ross – last year there was some issues in hiring qualified swim instructors? Has this been issue been resolved? Todd hopes there will be no issues with this. Todd stated the jobs should be posted on the website today. He has many returning.
- Ross also heard of difficulty registering last year. Todd has been told about this problem. He has been working with the City Manager's office on online forms. Todd's goal is to allow people to register and pay online with credit cards.

#### Parks – Craig

- Firing up irrigation systems.
- Craig stated the parks department is in the process of hiring seasonal employees. There is one full time position they are interviewing for.
- The arborists have been very busy planting boulevard trees.
- Craig will be manning a booth at the Helena Earth Day Expo at Carroll College on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. He will be representing Montana Urban Community Forest Association. This event is a good opportunity to get out information on our boulevard tree program.
- Wrapping up trail plan which he will eventually present to this board.

#### Fair Board – Dave

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- Rodeo Committee has proposed that the City-County Commission rename the arena in honor of Greg Kesler.
- There was a meeting on Monday at the fairgrounds with existing user groups (as well as new user groups) to discuss what we have in terms of facilities and what does meet community needs as well as what everyone would like to see. This meeting was well attended and people provided some really great comments. The fair board will work up a long range plan which will include what we can do with the existing budget and where we would like to go moving forward.

#### Playgrounds - Stacy

- Stacy stated there are two fundraisers coming up. April 15<sup>th</sup> is the Royal Family Ball at Exploration Works and the Carousel – tickets are \$10 each. April 29<sup>th</sup> is the Super Hero Party again at Exploration Works – tickets are \$10 each.
- Playable Playgrounds – Imagination Playground has been invited to Alive at 5.
- Will be delivering two high-back swings to the school district next week.

#### School District – John

- John is retiring from the school district in June. They will be looking for a replacement. He will be at the May meeting.

#### Other

- Amy shared a newsletter that Mountain View Meadows puts out to all their homeowners. It is a really nice article about the value of Mountain View Park in their subdivision and the value of Parks and Recreation to the quality of life.

#### **Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)**

- Presentation on Use Agreements – Amy

**Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, May 4, 2016**

#### **Adjournment**

With no further business, the City-County Parks Board meeting adjourned at 12:55 pm.

#### **ADA NOTICE**

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[citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov](mailto:citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov)  
 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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