



City of Helena



CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Melissa Lewis
- Ross Johnson

County Members

- Jane Kollmeyer
- Dave Payne
- Lonny Cox (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
- Matt Heimel, Lewis and Clark County Special Districts Planner
- 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 – 1:30 pm

Visitor(s): Johnny Keintz, Helena Babe Ruth, Al Knauber, Independent Record, Corey Livesay, Helena Police Department

1. Call to Order

2. Establish Quorum/Review Agenda/Introductions

No proposed changes to the agenda. Melissa established a quorum.

3. Consent Action Items

Approval of minutes: January 6, 2016

With no corrections, Jane moved to approve the minutes as presented. Pat seconded. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

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.

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5. Presentations

American Legion Baseball

- Johnny Keintz is representing Helena Babe Ruth and has asked to present regarding the Ryan Field Improvement Cost Estimates Review. Helena Babe Ruth has requested to be on the next agenda – have some budget proposals to present.
- Johnny had a conversation with Bill Houston a couple months ago. He was informed that American Legion wanted to use Ryan field and that they want to bring the field in question up to a level playing that they are used to.
- After reading the minutes from the last meeting, Johnny stated that \$37,000 towards one field is a very large amount. There is a whole complex that has to be taken care of. His understanding of this process was that American Legion Baseball would be looking at other funding sources to complete the renovation to Ryan's field. The wind damage to the field that occurred in late fall/early winter totaled to a \$3,000 to \$4,000 bill that still needs to be paid.
- It is a great vision, but Johnny would like to see other avenues utilized. He stated they have fields they can use. Many in the association are against this proposal.
- Johnny would like American Legion to work on other avenues besides coming to the board for money.

Discussion:

- Ross – do the two levels play on the same size of field? Johnny stated the 9 – 12 year olds play on smaller fields. There are five fields that are that size. The field in question was shut down a couple years ago for ground testing. It is now their showcase field. The league is looking to improve the fields as time goes on. Ross then asked if Babe Ruth would benefit from these improvements. Johnny stated absolutely.
- Stacy added that the fairgrounds are looking for money as well from the county for a playground.
- Dave Payne – his understanding was that American Legion was looking only for a portion of the funding – they would be looking for outside funding as well. Was hoping American Legion would have been clearer in their proposal (i.e., we are looking for 20% of the total amount).
- Amy believes the intent was that we asked Mr. Houston for a proposal. She is fairly certain that they don't expect the full amount. This may not have been presented correctly.
- Jane – isn't there a way we can see all the requests? Do we have all the pieces?
- Kevin – Matt has prepared memo which includes the actual amount we can fund.
- Jane – is there a date that we will have all requests and then we decide?
- Matt – parks can make a recommendation for the \$8,287. There is currently no policy in place; however, Matt can put a together a proposal recommending a policy for monetary requests.
- Pat – does balance this have to be spent this year? Matt believes it does roll over to the next year.
- Kevin explained where this pool of money comes from – when someone develops land or a subdivision, they have two choices. They can set aside park land as part of the

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subdivision, or give money in lieu which is to be spent in that area. That money comes from the developments.

- Stacy – in the past, in order to get the money, you had to show a maintenance agreement of upkeep on the facility.
- Ross – reasonable close proximity – needs to be used in that area. Secondly, (ii) states “the governing body has formally adopted a park plan that establishes the needs and procedures for use of the money”. Is there a plan or procedures that would describe use of this money? Matt will ask county legal staff for clarification – will let the board know.
- Pat then asked if the improvements they want to do be considered park maintenance as stated in letter “c”. Amy believes that more of what Babe Ruth does is operation and maintenance and that is a line item in the budget. She would see this as park improvement.
- Melissa – we approve annual budget and Babe Ruth is included in that – this is in addition to that.
- Dave is hesitant to spend everything that is in this fund or even 50% because we don’t know how many more requests are coming in.
- Lonny noted that on his property taxes, he sees 6 cents, 4 cents, 11 cents, etc. Where does that money show up in the budget? That would appear in the general park revenue fund. That does not go into the restricted cash accounts on page 2. Amy added that money would go into the beginning cash revenues on the front page.
- Per Melissa – most of that revenue collected from taxpayers is spent on basic level maintenance such as mowing and weed spraying in the parks.
- Stacy – her understanding is that the board can approve funding contingent upon whether we can raise matching funds (i.e., through grants, etc.).
- Per Pat – we need to get the word to Bill that we don’t have much money to deal with. If he is made aware of this, it will help him to come back with firm proposal.
- Per Amy – no one knew how much money was there. Bill gave us total without knowing what was available – he can revise based on what is here. She will let him know that we need more detail.
- Jane – he needs to know there are others asking for money as well. Johnny stated as lessor of the park, Babe Ruth will work with Bill as well.
- Johnny then stated that it looks like Babe Ruth has a line item of \$15,000 for operation and maintenance. It costs \$50,000 annually to keep the grass green and cut. Babe Ruth subsidizes the additional amount. So in looking at the budget, \$23,000 comes from the park fund each year for park maintenance. When they present at the next City-County Board meeting, they will be sharing what is actually spent.
- Amy will get in touch with Mr. Houston. She then asked when the county prepares its budget – are you on the same timelines as the city? We create our own protocols as a board on when we want to hear proposals for money. Maybe we should recommend that we hear proposals in January/February in order to help us with decision making as we prepare budgets. In doing so, the board can then make recommendations to county staff and their commissioners for their budget preparation.

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- Per Melissa - moving forward, would the board like to ask the county to bring a budget forward perhaps in January? Amy – it wouldn't be the budget – it would be a process for this board to hear proposals from potential stakeholders for budget integration.
- Kevin – is there a motion on the floor for the city-county parks board to come up with a timeline/process for making proposals. This is something we could do.
- Melissa recommended we add this as an action item to next month's meeting. This will give us time to think about it.
- Amy – we can advertise to a lot of groups informing them that this is process for soliciting money from the city-county parks board and this is the timeline. Amy and Kevin will meet to discuss this process.
- Jane stated she feels this is fair to all groups coming forward.
- Ross had one more question – on page 2 – receipts – what are those? Open timber works and south hills – Matt believes this is cash in lieu of payments, but will check on that.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Helena Babe Ruth has asked to be on the agenda for the March meeting. Jennifer will add.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Matt will ask county legal staff for clarification on item "ii" on the memo he presented. He will bring that information back to the board.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Amy will visit with Bill Houston and ask him to revise his budget proposal for repair work to Ryan Field. She will tell him we need a more detailed request.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Melissa requested we add the motion for the city-county parks board to create a timeline/process for making monetary proposals.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Matt will clarify what the receipt on page 2 of the submitted budget includes.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Amy and Kevin will visit about hearing from partner groups their need for project support from the city-county parks board and a timeline/process.

6. Discussion Items

Park Safety Concerns

- Per Amy – we decided at the last meeting that park safety concerns will be a regular standing item on this agenda. Amy has committed to having a report in March. This report will be focused on what other communities are doing in relation to park hours and security. She emailed seven different community directors in Montana and asked them a series of questions. Some of the questions included:
 1. Does your city have park hours?
 2. What are the reasons for establishing park hours in your community?
 3. Are the park hours enforced?

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4. What value do you see in having park hours?

5. How long have you had park hours?

- She asked many questions along these lines to determine the benefit. Her biggest eye opener – Helena is the exception not having park hours. Missoula not only has park hours, but even has hours for open lands.
- Trying to look at protocols and standards in doing a risk assessment that John Carter recommended. Not finding many models.
- In meantime, Amy has reached out to Corey Livesay of the Helena Police Department. He has agreed to attend meetings on a regular basis.
- Amy asked the Chief and Corey what information can be provided to the city-county parks board on the number of incidences or patrols in our parks. Wanted to make sure they have input on what we are asking.
- Corey – update: In considering Amy’s request and the parks board concerns, the first thing he is looking at is what is the problem, what are the number of incidences, what is the response to the calls of service. Corey stated the PD has been quite active in parks since he has been here. The problems move from one area to another – start on the drag, to Hill Park, then Women’s Park, and Anchor Park as well as groups in other locations. Inherent gathering is a problem.
- A lot of kids have moved to Memorial and Centennial Parks as well as on to private businesses for gatherings.
- In order to track what the PD has done, Corey has had to implement change on how the PD tracks activity in the parks. They have made technology changes in the dispatch center. Previously, they didn’t track a problem by park name, but by address. Amy provided Corey with physical locations and they were able to add them into the computer aided dispatch system. He has directed officers to use the park name when referring to any activity in a park.
- He has also asked IT to generate a report at beginning of each month and he will bring said report to the meetings. He added that we are down in negative activity in some of the parks. There is a lot of transparency going on.
- In addition to tracking, if the officer does a security check, they will also log that information via the park name not the address. They are really developing the technology side of things.
- Melissa – are you talking about kids just congregating? What is the level of severity?
- Corey – no matter what the issue, if the police are called to the park, it will be documented. If there is a noise disturbance due to a large gathering, that will be in the report. If they do a security check, that will be documented.
- Dave – without specific numbers from the summer, and over time, do you feel issues are increasing? Corey – always been a general sense in some of the locations where people want to gather that you will get a portion of that demographic creating a response from officers. The problem areas have shifted from different parks. The reason for hanging out at some of these places is that the groups change, the reasons they are hanging out has changed, or the businesses that drew them to a specific area has changed.

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- Corey – large gatherings that generated police response ranged from graffiti to noise disturbances. The demographic was young people that didn't want to hang out with other groups. This particular group would hang out in Anchor Park all night. They had a different interest for being there which conflicted with the residents around that park. The PD did some liaison work with some of the kids in that area. They had three police officers on bikes that were assigned to downtown. Their responsibilities were to: 1) do a walk through in the bars, 2) keep in check the skateboarding on the walking mall, 3) we had a vandalism problem (painted bears became a target), 4) dealt with noise issues down at Anchor Park. They told these groups of kids to find park that doesn't have residential component. That is when they moved to Memorial and Centennial. The problem then became the trash and conflicts created by different groups in Memorial and Centennial. Corey hasn't seen an increase – more of moving and changing of areas.
- Ross – thank you for making an effort to improve communication which in turn will help this board make recommendations for park management.
- Dave Smith reached out to Corey to go take an assessment of the YMCA and look at layout of parks. Corey gave Dave some advice for his facility and the issues he had which included transient issues, trash, gathering, and noise. Dave will most likely reach out to Parks Maintenance.
- Amy added that in addition to getting these statistics, Craig and Amy are redoing the signage at Skate Park. We will continue to put out the dumpster that was out there last summer. It is our hope that through signage and environmental design, we will be able to curb negative activity. Amy has also met with BID and has informed them that they will not be allowed to use the canvas structure (bandshell) this summer in Heritage Park, Performance Square, or Women's Park (for Alive at Five). They will rent a stage this year until we come up with a long-term solution.
- Amy believes that working with police, looking at our sights, its signage and environmental design – all of these things are going to help in these efforts. She also shared an interesting article that states if you want to create safe parks environments, promote more recreational programming in parks; specifically, integrative design, programming, maintenance, and citizen involvement. As we continue to have discussion, we will have better solutions. She will make copies of the article for the next meeting.
- Craig added how important proactive enforcement is. We can use the data obtained for potentially adding officers in the future. If you see something about to happen in a park, be proactive! Some of these young people are conditioned to do bad things because there are no ramifications. If you see someone about to do something that is a violation, (i.e. littering, keeping pet on a leash) and are in a city vehicle don't just drive by. If they see you drive by and you don't say anything, they will think it is okay.
- Melissa – one thing we discussed last month with John, our school district representative, was to utilize student council to get information out to students.
- Amy agreed and stated it may help with the high school lots as well.

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FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Corey will bring a report of the activity in the parks for each city-county board meeting.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Amy will make a copy of the article regarding creating safe parks.

7. Reports

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

- **Amy** – The city is in process of developing the FY17 budgets. She will have a preliminary budget report available for the May meeting.
- Received ADA Audit results. As staff, we are in the process of reviewing the audits. We had 75 sites audited, with a total of over 3 million dollars in improvements that need to be done for ADA compliance. We will work on the low hanging fruit this year and after adopting the transition plan, we intend to add more money to our budgets for future improvements.
- Delighted to have Todd Wheeler, our new Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager. He came on board 3 weeks ago.
- Amy picked up a publication at the Chamber and noticed two great articles. One featured Helena’s Playground Playables (East Helena Project / KaBOOM Grant) and the other was regarding the Vigilante Bike Park and the volunteer work day.
- **Jane** – HOLMAC is currently working with Prickly Pear Land Trust on open lands and trail maintenance.
- **Lonny** – Lincoln Parks is still working on restrooms in park – DEQ wants public water supply tested. Will add extended time frame to the project. Working on getting low-cost public water system designed.
- **Todd** – Third week on the job. He comes to us from the City of Westminster in Colorado. Most of his career has been in the northwest. He grew up in Alaska. He went to college in Oregon. Much of the focus of his career has been on aquatics so he is excited to branch out and do more recreation type things. He is winding down the ice rink season and gearing up for summer.
- **Craig** – Craig added this was the best ice making season ever. Urban forestry – 160 trees have been ordered. They are working on finding places to stage trees before beginning summer planting. We will have a new lift truck by the end of March. Crews are working on street clearance (14 foot curb to curb). Looking at some upcoming training opportunities. Tree Risk Assessment Certification – will probably send our two arborists to that. Work Zone Safety Training. In March, a lady will be coming up from MSU to present at the Admin meeting on the Emerald Ash Borer. Went to an AMTOPP (Association of Montana Turf, Ornamental, and Pest Professionals) Conference. They did an ABE presentation – hasn’t spread as fast as it has in the Midwest. However, we have over 60% green ash trees so we need to get this number down – more aggressive removals this summer. Still working on

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the 6th ward garden park – installing irrigation and doing planting. Fence is in as are the sidewalks. Working on budgets. Excited to move into the new shop. Doing some repairs at the pool. Craig is also working on a list of ADA items. Preparing a trail maintenance plan. Draft will be out soon.

- **Dave** - Past couple meetings Dave has handed out a list of different events going on at the fairgrounds. Today, he handed out a list of improvements taking place. These are things that need to be done to take care of the facilities. Trying to increase visibility of fairgrounds with public. Part of this is coming from the Friends of the Fairground group. Trying to expand this group. Looking for community support and financial support. Looking at possibility of increased sponsorships – maybe some of the businesses and local community would like to be more associated with the fairgrounds through advertising, etc. Looking at potentially increasing fees (which would need to be approved by the commission). Possibility of changing name of the fairgrounds (looking at sponsor to provide some financial support). Also looking at updating our plan of action – the bond was not passed. At that time, we were looking at several different improvements to include: 1) running track, 2) playground equipment, 3) new horse barn, 4) new arena, etc. Now we are trying to reprioritize what we can do – hopefully will come up with list in next 6 months.
- **Melissa** – has the fairgrounds had any conversations with the Trinity group or Catholic Church are proposing to develop area out by Costco – maybe you should reach out to them to see if there is interest in making improvements to an existing facility.
- **Stacy** – Upcoming events include: Zombie Prom – February 13th at the Eagles Club, Princess Tea Party – Royal Family Ball – 2 weeks later at the Civic Center, Superhero’s event. Also working on the Cherry Park project and working with the fairgrounds on different projects.

8. Action Items

- None listed.

9. Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)

10. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 2, 2016

11. Adjournment

With no further business, the City-County Parks Advisory Board adjourned at 12:31 pm.

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