



City of Helena

CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD

SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 11, 2017



City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Ross Johnson
- Steve Baiamonte

County Members

- Dave Payne
- Ken Wallace
- Nyle Howsmon (Lincoln Parks Board)
- Ernie Lundberg (Lincoln Parks Board)

Joint Member

- Kalli Kind, School District Representative

Commission Representatives

- Rob Farris-Olsen, City Commissioner
- Jim McCormick, County Commissioner

Staff Contact

- 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 – 1:00 pm

Visitor(s): **Steve Ackerland, Greta Dige, Jason Egeline, Johnny Keintz, Greg McNally, Nick Miller, John Moore, Commissioner Ed Noonan, David Smith, Stacy Sommer**

1. Call to Order

- Chairman Pat Doyle called the City-County Parks Board meeting to order at 11:34 am.

2. Establish Quorum/Introductions/Review Agenda/Approval of Minutes

- A quorum was established.
- There were no changes to the agenda.
- Approval of: September 6, 2017 Minutes
 - With no noted corrections, Dave moved to approve the September 6, 2017 minutes as presented. Ken seconded. Motion carried.

3. Comments from Persons Present

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

None.

4. Unfinished Business

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Indoor Recreation Facility Update – HRSA

- Steve Ackerland provided an update for HRSA. They anticipate the completion of the feasibility study sometime this month.
- The potential economic benefits of a multi-sport complex in Helena have been estimated by Highland Economics. Among the study’s most significant findings are that:
 - The household spending alone could expand the local economy by approximately 15 jobs and over \$572,000 per year in labor income.
 - Visitor spending during sports tournaments has the potential to bring in \$1.36 million per year in increased revenue.
 - A facility such as this could potentially provide users up to \$1,500 per year in health care savings.
- Steve reminded board members that this is a 3-phase process: 1. Assessment Phase, 2. Financing Phase, and 3. Design and Construction Phase.
- The current concept being presented will cost approximately \$25 million.
- Ken stated that at the last meeting there was brief discussion about community partnerships. Do other cities have a similar model? Amy said the city made an initial contribution of \$5,000 for the feasibility study. If we move forward and have the facility at the YMCA location, we would have to amend our lease agreement. The city has stated we are not opposed to the removal of the gardens and horseshoe pits, but we will not manage the new facility. Ideally, this would be the time to have continued discussion of a regional park district. If there is a future park district, she could potentially see that district to support the building and management of such a facility.
- Once complete, the feasibility study will go out to the public for review via the HRSA website.

5. Action Items

None.

6. Presentations/Discussion Items

Cherry Park Playground – Helena Kiwanis Project – Jason Egeline

- Jason Egeline of CWG Architects presented a playground replacement and enhancement proposal in partnership with Helena Kiwanis Club, Helena Parks and Recreation, Helena’s Playable Playgrounds, Dakota Fencing, and Landscape Structures, Inc.
- Cherry Park (900 Cherry Street) and its playground serve as a valuable neighborhood asset for children to play and families to gather in close proximity to their homes. This park was chosen because it has outdated equipment which is in need of immediate replacement. There is great interest and support from the neighborhood.
- This playground is an optimal size and location to install fully accessible pour in place (PIP) rubberized playground safety surface. This product is commonly used in other parts of the country but has not yet been used in Helena. The rubberized material is much easier for people with mobility limitations to access and enjoy the playground. The new equipment follows the theme of all-inclusive play, which helps all children develop.
- The Kiwanis started meeting with the parks department 2 years ago to identify possibilities for a signature project. With the assistance and guidance of Dakota Fencing (a representative of LSI), they were able to develop the necessary elements of a truly all-inclusive park utilizing the PIP materials. Helena’s Playable Playgrounds and the Helena Kiwanis Club have already developed

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- the overall design, the construction documents, legal agreements and specific equipment. They
- The city has agreed to give \$10,000 for the rehabilitation of Cherry Park. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$250,000. This will be a 2-phase project: Phase I - \$140,326 for PIP material and main marquee equipment with demo and new concrete. General City improvements will happen alongside this work to include ADA compliance work such as adjustments to the sidewalk running slope, a new curb ramp, installing accessible routes between park amenities, and some new accessible picnic tables – all covered by the Parks Department. Phase II – \$87,674 includes engineered wood fiber with supplemental all-inclusive equipment.
 - Jason’s goal is to redesign a small local neighborhood park every 2 year.
 - Amy stated Cherry Park was selected for the project as it has the greatest need. The equipment is very unsafe and needs removed as soon as possible. In past 6 months Amy has received multiple calls and emails from residents asking how we can upgrade. This park has a shelter and basketball court. It needs some upgrades.
 - Board members agreed that this is a great project and a great partnership.
 - Jason will keep the board updated on the progress.
 - The state has approved a \$100,000 grant program for accessible playgrounds. The city will be submitting Cherry Park for a \$10,000 grant as well as assist with other fundraising efforts.
 - Amy and Jason will have a follow-up with meeting. The Kiwanis have agreed to spend \$5,000 towards the marketing plan which Jason submitted to the board. For up to date information, please go to: <https://www.facebook.com/CherryParkHelena/>.

Ryan Park Complex Issues – Johnny Keintz

- Johnny Keintz and Nick Miller presented on Ryan Park Complex issues.
- From the time baseball ends, around Aug. 1st, to the time it starts, around March 1st, they have come to the conclusion that the park has become unsafe with all the vehicles that have access to it. On any given day, there could be between 10 - 20 vehicles in the Park. Johnny stated they have found that most often these people are only there to congregate and hang out. The garbage, beer cans, broken beer bottles, drug paraphernalia and damage to Park property has become so outrageous that Babe Ruth has had to contract with a local security company to patrol the area 4 times a day (at the expense of \$1,000 per month). When it is raining even more vehicles come to the park to "mud bog" and drag race. In the middle of September a vehicle crashed into a "porta-potty" and chain link fence. This was called into the Police and a citation was ordered. There have been many other issues during the past few months.
- The Babe Ruth Association is recommending a plan. The plan is to place concrete jersey barriers approx. 5' apart along the South access road from Henderson to the back of Field 13, the big field on the SW corner of the property. There are already jersey barriers on the South side of Custer Avenue running the length of the Park to protect the public from the busy road. They will place a lockable gate across the South access road. They also plan to gate (with a lockable gate) the small area just South of Custer between Fields 2-3. The public will still have vehicle access to the entire park along Custer Avenue. They are just restricting vehicle access to the South side of the Park where all the activity occurs. Once these barriers are in place, any person on foot can still enter the Park. While maybe this isn't the most aesthetically pleasing option, it is relatively inexpensive and the barriers are extremely heavy and difficult to move. Eric Griffin and Doug Nisbet of Lewis and Clark County have been consulted and agree with the action plan.

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- The board supports this proposal.

Hill Park – Fountain Replacement

- Amy received a request from Ed Noonan and John Moore with the Helena Public Art Committee to discuss working with the parks board in looking at a replacement for the Hill Park Fountain.
- HPAC feels it is important to involve the public in the selection of any design that will replace the fountain. They recommend a RFP of designs. HPAC would assist with the installation and dedication of a new monument. HPAC has been given a budget for public art.
- If the City-County Parks Board is amenable to HPAC’s participation, they will move forward with public input.
- Amy has agreed to attend the next HPAC and will report back to this board.
- Dave added that no matter what the decision is regarding replacement of the fountain, there will be controversy. Ken agreed and added that going forward we may want to refer to it as “**new established art**” as opposed to replacement of the fountain.
- **Amy will keep the board updated on this.**

Park Safety Information Discussion – Amy Teegarden and Jayson Zander

- As a result of discussing park safety concerns and the potential for implementing park use hours, the City-County Parks Board directed city parks and police staff to begin documenting calls for service in city parks. To date, 17 months (May 2016 – September 2017) of statistics have been gathered and summarized.

Statistics Summary:

- There were a total of 1050 calls for service. 681 were citizen initiated, 135 were initiated by police patrols, and 234 were unknown.
- The months with the highest number of calls were June, July, and August.
- The highest categories for calls included: 212 for animal control (103 of those calls were in Centennial Park); 126 for suspicious circumstance/person (catchall term); 87 for disorderly conduct (arguments, fights, profane language); 84 for traffic (usually officer initiated, traffic violations, reckless driving); 59 for violation of City-County ordinance (camping, open container).

Questions:

- Ken sees the biggest issue is undesirable transients. Jayson agreed and stated that most of the serious offenses occurred as a result of transients. There have been many complaints from businesses in the Cruse area – not as many of those in Centennial or Memorial Parks.
- The disorderly conduct citations include profanity, fighting, and urinating in public.
- Dave – if there is a curfew placed on parks, do we anticipate less or more calls? Amy stated that we need to first determine our goal. Do we want everyone out at 10:00 pm or just those causing serious issues? We need to determine what our expectations will be for having a curfew and we will have to enforce our rules for everyone.
- Amy stated the next step might be to have a conversation with the city attorney’s office to determine how they convict curfew violations.
- The police department will enforce whatever this board and the city attorney decides.
- Ed Noonan stated there was a problem on Cruse Avenue where people were camping. The police were limited on what they could do. What do you do with transients when they have nowhere else to go?

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- Amy stated that our parks are relatively safe and crime free. A curfew / park hours won't address the issue of homelessness in our community.
- Jim McCormick stated there are several hundred unserved warrants in the system. There is no room in the jail and the criminal justice system that deals with these issues is backlogged.
- Curfew hours create another category of violations. Ken reminded everyone that there are different circumstances at these parks. We have heard from residents living near neighborhood parks. The solution is not a one size fits all approach.
- Amy recommended we brainstorm a solution. Perhaps we could do a "Quiet Hours Campaign, similar to the tobacco free campaign. This is a topic we will continue to discuss.
- Amy recommended that the board review the city codes which appear on the last two pages of the handouts. She stated we should begin the process by reviewing and revising our city park codes. There is no staff recommendation at this time. Amy asked Jennifer to continue with the monthly parks report and we will add this as an ongoing discussion at the next meeting.

City-County Comprehensive Planning Effort – Amy Teegarden

- Tabled until November meeting.

7. Reports

Due to time constraints, the board agreed to forgo this month's reports.

City	Amy Teegarden	Parks	Craig Marr
County	Matt Heimel	Fair Board	Pat Doyle
HOLMAC	Dave Payne	Playgrounds	Stacy Sommer
Lincoln Parks Board	Nyle Howsmon	School District	Kalli Kind
Recreation	Todd Wheeler		

8. Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)

9. Next Meeting Date: December 6, 2017

10. Adjournment

With no further business, the City-County Parks Board adjourned at 1:05 pm.

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