



**CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD
SUMMARY
Wednesday, April 4, 2018**



City of Helena

City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Ross Johnson
- Steve Baiamonte

County Members

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

Joint Member

- School District Representative – Neal Murray

Commission Representatives

- Heather O’Loughlin, City Commissioner
- Susan Good-Geise, County Commissioner

Staff Contact

- Lewis and Clark County Representative, Lindsay Morgan
- Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent – Pat Marron
- Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager – David
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426

TIME: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Visitor(s): **Ron Alles, Carolan Bunegar, Jon Burnett, Gary White, Greg Thornquist, Peggy Stringer, Stacy Sommer, Jayson Zander**

1. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Dave Payne called the City-County Parks Board meeting to order at 11:35 am.

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

- A quorum was established.
- One change to the agenda: We moved the “Inflatable Structure Policy” from presentation/discussion items to an action item. No other changes were noted.
- After review of the March 7, 2018 minutes, Steve moved to approve the minutes as presented. Heather 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.

- Carolan Bunegar: Helena Citizen’s Council is working on volunteerism in community. One of the projects will be weeding Nature Park. They will also be cleaning up the trash/litter. Carolan stated she will meet with the city maintenance department to get this scheduled. This project will be done later in the spring. Carolan will send out information to the volunteers regarding this event.

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- Neal Murray asked that Jennifer send him an invitation to the City-County Parks Board meetings. He is attending the meeting as a representative from the school district. He will be attending these meetings when Kali is unavailable.
- Amy asked if it would be appropriate to allow Neal to have proxy for Kali as a voting member. Dave stated this scenario is similar to Lincoln (both Nyle and Ernie are voting members). Ross agreed that this would be appropriate as did Steve.

4. Unfinished Business

5. Presentations/Discussion Items

Baseball Property – Amy

- This agenda topic is for Information and discussion only amongst the parks board and city staff.
- Kindrick-Legion Field is the home field to American Legion Baseball. They have three teams and have hosted various minor league baseball teams. Some of the issues we have had at Kindrick-Legion field includes: 1. the need to balance games played and field rest between the leagues; 2. schedule and demand; 3. equity of sign revenue; and 4. maintenance improvements to include ADA requirements. The last improvements we did to the facility were in 2009 as a result of a parks improvement bond.
- Last year the Brewers announced that they will be leaving Helena at the end of the 2018 season (August 2018).
- This winter we were approached by representatives from the Expedition League. The Expedition League is a future collegiate summer baseball league representing the Great Plains region of the United States and Canada. The league was founded in May 2017 in Rapid City, South Dakota by businessman Steve Wagner, who will also serve as its president. The league currently features eight teams with its inaugural season set to start in May 2018. They would like to start a league in Helena.
- At the same time, Amy has met with American Legion and they have expressed their desire to expand their programs (more tournaments, more sponsorships, etc.) and utilize the field more. The city's perspective is that we have an obligation and commitment to Legion baseball. We want to see the city have optimal use and enjoyment by the community. We welcome this discussion. How do we move forward with accommodating existing use and potential new use? Ron Alles, City Manager welcomes the parks board input.
- Steve – as Amy mentioned, Steve, Amy and members of American Legion met a couple months ago to discuss opportunities with the Expedition League.
- Opening day is May 25th this year. There are currently 8 teams. Ultimately, Steve wants to expand to 20 - 24 teams. Last day of play is August 5th.
- The players are collegiate, NCAA baseball players. They have already played collegiately and still have eligibility to play.
- The Expedition League (EL) emulates minor league baseball with players using wood bats and playing 6 games per week on average in front of large crowds in some of the finest ballparks in North America. EL players are top tier collegiate baseball players from across the country who gains exposure to professional scouts. The players stay with host families from the local communities. Host families are a very integral part of the Expedition League, and these host family relationships provide a lifetime of memories for both the host families and the players.

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- Teams play a 64-game season beginning in late May through mid-August. The league hosts a mid-season All-Star Game and an end of season playoff to crown an Expedition League champion.
- Current teams include:

Clark Division

- Casper Horseheads, Casper, Wyoming
- Sodbusters, Hastings, Nebraska
- Spearfish Sasquatch, Spearfish, South Dakota
- Western Nebraska Pioneers, Gering, Nebraska

Lewis Division

- Badlands Big Sticks, Dickerson, North Dakota
- Hub City Hotshots, Aberdeen, South Dakota
- Pierre Trappers, Pierre, South Dakota
- Souris Valley Sabre Dogs, Minot, North Dakota

- For more information regarding Expedition League, please go to:
<http://expeditionleague.pointstreaksites.com/view/expeditionleague/about>
- Steve stated he has agreements with Legion in every community they are in. He added that EL has agreements in place with Legion Baseball in each of the communities. Legion Baseball is very strong in each of these locations as it is here in Helena.
- The EL schedules are set around American Legion schedules. They enter into an agreement with the Legion program to buy them out of the program advertising. Steve's ultimate goal is to enhance baseball in our community. EL is looking to expand an additional 6 teams in 2019.
- They have been working on this program for four years. They have great owners and would like to be here in Helena.

Discussion was opened to the community:

- Greg Thornquist – General Manager for American Legion Baseball
 - Some of the concerns Greg expressed included scheduling and Legions ability to use the field. America Legion (AL) currently has 3 teams. They at times were forced to play games at Ryan Exchange. The players of American Legion want to play at their field.
 - The second concern is advertising. There was an agreement made with the Brewers that they would have control of the advertising. Greg does not know what revenue is being brought in from advertising. Legion would like the opportunity to capture that revenue as well.
- John Burnett is the head coach for Helena Senators
 - John has a 17-year involvement in American Legion.
 - John supports the concerns Steve has discussed.
 - Kindrick-Legion is the only field this program has. Having dealt with the Brewers, John wants to see the youth of Helena using the facility as much as they should be able to. Babe Ruth fields are not up to standards for what a legion player should play on.
- Gary White - signage was done 7 years ago with the Brewers. They received all revenue from the sign and then would handle the cost of the maintenance. There have been conflicts regarding field maintenance, revenue, and access to fields. Legion does not want this to happen again.
- Greg – make strides to make play affordable. The cost for the Reps and Senators to play Legion Baseball is \$700 for approximately 60 games. The cost for the

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Independents is less. We are the cheapest program in the state of Montana and have never turned a kid away because they can't afford to play.

- Amy – the city helped to negotiate some agreements between Legion and the Brewers.
- The Expedition League is willing to enter into an advertising agreement with Legion so Legion can receive some of the revenue.
- Amy stated there seems like there is a continuing theme in our community that there are not enough facilities in these growing sports. It really is a challenge to meet all the demands. Kindrick-Legion field is another example.
- Heather asked if there is a timeline in place. Steve would like to see a team start in 2019.
- Each team is owned by a separate team owner. Steve recommends team operations to start in late summer/early fall. We would then bring in office staff and begin selling sponsorships. It would be nice to have this in place by late August/early September.
- Ross asked what kind of services EL would provide.
 - They want high quality playing fields. There is a lot of cost, materials and labor that goes into this. This would need to be similar standards to Brewers and Legion.
 - Steve said they look at a longer term lease (5 years with additional 5 years renewable). They have a per-base rate that is included in the lease which helps to allow for field improvements. The owners would also be involved in other improvements such as stadium seating. The city would no longer be involved with field maintenance. This would be contracted out.
- Steve anticipates that baseline attendance per game will be at 1000 or more fans. The players are not paid so EL's break-even is approximately 550 fans.
- Amy stated that we will have continued discussions between all stakeholders to see if this is an option for American Legion Field.

Update: Comprehensive Parks Plan

- Amy announced that we finalized contract agreements with GreenPlay. On March 23rd, there was a strategic kick off meeting. They began to look at phase one deliverables. Part of phase one is to review our existing parks plans and conditions, our inventory, and a needs assessment. Representatives from GreenPlay will be in Helena on April 25, 26, and 27 to interview stakeholders as well as the public. They will also be doing onsite visits of our facilities. Also included in this will be an inventory of the level of services. Based on feedback from the stakeholders, GreenPlay will design a survey based on comments heard.
- In July/August, the representative will be back to present a findings presentation and roll out the draft of their implementations presentation. This will include a final presentation to the parks board.
- There will be more information coming regarding the public meetings.
- It was recommended that we reschedule the May board meeting and have a special meeting in April while the consultants are here.
- **All agreed – Jennifer will move the May meeting to April 26, 2018.**

6. Action Items

Inflatable Structure Policy Action Item – Amy/Craig

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Recommended Motion to be Made:

Move to approve the proposed inflatable structure policy and ask park staff to integrate it into the policy section of the updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.

Inflatable structure

- In the past summers, we are getting increased requests for use of inflatable structure use in city parks. As a result of this, the City was directed by our insurance authority Montana Municipal Interlocal Authority (MMIA) to increase insurance requirements for inflatable structures. This new policy is a result of this and other conversations. Pat then shared pictures of some of the turf damage that was done last year. We also experience two broken irrigation lines due to staking of the devices.
- Along with implementing this policy, the maintenance department will work with businesses to find locations for the least amount of impact.
- Amy is recommending that we (the board), **move to approve the proposed inflatable structure policy and ask park staff to integrate it into the policy section of the updated Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan.**
- Steve then asked if this policy absolves us from liability. Ron Alles who serves as the chair of the MMIA board stated they name the city as additional insured so we are absolved of liability.
- Amy then stated there is a demand for bouncy houses. She just wants to make certain we make an honest effort to help these businesses and that we meet requirements to protect the city. The policies presented today are the same policies in place in Missoula. Bozeman has banned bouncy houses completely.
- We are also requiring a Helena business license.
- Ross stated he thinks this is a reasonable solution. Stacy agreed and added that the city must be protected.
- With no further discussion, Steve moved to approve the motion as presented. Ross seconded. Motion carried.

7. 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	Vacant	HRSA	Peggy Stringer

Reports

- Pat stated the maintenance department is trying to balance between snow removal and accommodating field / court users. There has been a lot of garbage removal.
- Amy stated that we advertised the Aquatics/Recreation Manager Position with no successful candidates. We were able to hire Cody Rapley. Cody has worked as a life guard for the pool in past years. He will be able to work for us until mid-September.
- David Tortora will serve as the Recreation Supervisor and be in charge of managing the non-aquatics programs to include Kays Kids, Tennis, and Yoga in the parks.
- We will be reevaluating how we post this position.
- The urban foresters are currently working on 9th Avenue. We hired two new foresters in October.

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- Amy then added that the city received a \$10,000 ADA grant.
- Last week, Amy submitted an \$83,000 LWCF grant. The application process closed last Friday. This grant is for matching dollars for the Cherry Hill Park project. The Kiwanis have already raised
- The Kiwanis have stated they would like to help fundraise in an effort to replace a playground in the city every 2 years. Pat asked if their budget includes installation of the playground. Amy stated yes. Various local contractors have offered to help as well.

County – Lindsay

- They had someone who came in to the county offices to discuss Warren Park. They would like to request money to partially fund a basketball court and for minor improvements in that area. This park is located in NE Helena Valley but is adjacent to SE Helena Valley.
- Had a message from another person who is requesting money for park funds.

HOLMAC – Dave

- HOLMAC approved the open space work plan minus the Beattie Street project. We are still evaluating the public comments regarding the Beattie Street Trailhead project. Brad will finalize this and bring forward a recommendation.

Lincoln Parks Board - Ernie

- They have received 2 proposals for bathroom facilities. They came in quite higher than the bid from Idaho.
- Ernie is involved with the Envision Lincoln Program. They are working on connecting parks and businesses with trail systems as well as connecting trailheads.

Playable Playgrounds

- Stacy – the Princess Tea Party was a huge success! Profits will go to the Cherry Hill Park program.
- Stacy is also working on the Townsend Park Program and Cherry Hill Park ADA project.
- Update on Cherry Park Playground: we received the \$10,000 ADA grant. Last week Amy submitted the \$83,000 LWCF grant which will be matched to what the Kiwanis raised which was \$70,000.

School district

- The school district is also working on snow removal.
- They had three groundbreaking ceremonies for the new schools being built.
- The schools are preparing for graduation ceremonies.

HRSA

- Peggy – HRSA is still looking for partners.
- HRSA held a meeting last month with community members and it was standing room only. They noted 65 people in attendance.
- HRSA has raised \$11,000.
- Current goals include obtaining partners in the community and improving the website with a donate button.

8. Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)

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9. Next Meeting Date: SPECIAL SESSION: APRIL 26, 2018

10. Adjournment

With no further business, the City-County Parks Board meeting adjourned at 12:58 pm.

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Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the County's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact Aaron Douglas, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following: (406) 447-8316, 316 North Park Avenue, Room 303, Helena, MT 59623; ; TTY Relay Service [1-800-253-4091](tel:1-800-253-4091) or 711, adouglas@lccountymt.gov.

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