



City of Helena

## CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, May 4, 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):** Cory Bailey, Ken Ballard, Frank Buono, Susan Good-Giese, Al Knauber, Patrick Marron, David Schneider

### 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. Amy stated the county has an action item (#7) to present, but will be unable to attend the meeting until 12:15. She recommends we allow Nancy to present at that time.

### Consent Action Items

Approval of Minutes: April 6, 2016

With no corrections to the minutes, Dave moved to approve the April 6, 2016 minutes as presented. Jane seconded. Motion carried.

### Comments from Persons Present

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

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

None.

## **Presentations**

### Helena Regional Sports Association – Feasibility Study Consultants (Ballard\*King)

- Ken Ballard – with Ballard\*King Associates. Ken stated Ballard\*King is a recreation planning firm based out of Denver, Colorado. Joining Ken is Frank Buono, Architect with Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture. The firm has been in business for over 40 years. They specialize in the design of community recreation centers and will assist in the feasibility portion of this study.
- Ken will crunch the numbers and demographics and Frank will help do test fits on sites, develop capital construction costs and eventually will do a higher level of programming and develop the visual collateral so the community will understand what they will be investing in.
- Ken stated that their two firms have been hired by the Helena Regional Sports Association (HRSA) to complete a feasibility study for possibility of an indoor recreation facility. This is a 3-phase process and they are in the first phase – the needs assessment. This is where they will determine if there is a need for an indoor facility in the greater Helena area. They are also looking at demographics. They are talking to a number of user groups and stakeholders to include representatives from the city, the county, a number of the schools to include Helena, East Helena, Clancy, Montana City, etc. They have also spent time visiting other facilities such as the fairgrounds, private providers (i.e., health clubs), the city pool, and the YMCA health club to get a sense of what we already have. Their goal is to gain as much information as they can about what is going on in the community as it relates to recreation sport's needs and how that translates into demand. As part of this process, over the next month, they will be doing an online survey of general community networks asking for their input on the process.
- Once this information is obtain, they will have a report on the first phase and then the association and the board will determine if they want to move forward to phase two and ultimately to phase three. Those phases will identify the following: what should this building be, what should it contain, where should it be located, how much will it cost to build, how much will it cost to operate, how do you move forward, conceptually what does this building look like, etc.
- Frank stated that part of this process is also dialogue with many of the stakeholders to include the city and ask are there any strategic synergies that should be brought to the table that can help facilitate the development of a plan than can meet needs currently not being met.

Open to questions / comments:

- Peggy Stringer – member of board, stated she is happy to have these gentlemen in Helena. She is excited for the opportunity for the community to be allowed to recreate during the summer and winter as well. She has heard of a family moving because kids are competitive swimmers due to lack of a facility. Peggy then invited everyone to attend an open house at 7:30 pm this evening to visit about this opportunity. The entire community is invited. It will be held at the Montana Club on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor.

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- Pat stated this is a great first step. Helena has been lacking something like this for a long time; not only from a recreation aspect, but a health and wellness component and also economic development. There is a lot of traffic brought to Helena with a facility like this. Pat then asked Peggy what kind of involvement she has seen from the greater business community at this point. Peggy said there was a lot of participation by the business community in their focus group yesterday. The Helena Tourism Alliance has given HRSA a \$5000 grant. This allowed them to get their matching money to bring Ballard\*King to Helena. They still want more support from the Helena community and will be reaching out to folks in the near future.
- Ross – this board advises city/county commissions on parks management. What role do you anticipate for local government? Ken stated this is what they have been asking – whether they see a role in this project and if so, on what level. There is a lot of moving parts right now that says we don't know answer yet, but he is encouraged that everyone is willing to look at this and talk about it. The selected site has something to do with it as does the focus of facility. They are trying to ascertain the level of interest. Frank then added by having these discussions, you begin to figure out the comfort level of governmental entities a working and capital sense. He was excited to see law enforcement at today's meeting. In one project in Eagle County Colorado, as part of the community policing effort, there is a sheriff substation that was combined into a recreation center. 3000 kids passed through the doors every day and get to meet law enforcement officials. It really has helped with community outreach. It also tied back into cost recovery model as well.
- Ross then asked about other projects completed and how local government has interacted. Ken stated that almost all projects with a strong community focus include governmental interaction. There is always financial assistance to make the project a reality. There are examples of projects that have moved forward without public financial assistance; however that is very rare. These usually come about because of an organization or benefactor who has come forward to fund the project. Most public projects involve public dollars to build and offset operational obligations.
- Melissa stated they mentioned an online survey for the public to complete. Which websites will offer the online survey? Ken said they are still working on that, but at the very least, the public should be able to access the survey through the Helena Regional Sports Association <http://helenasports.org/>. They will also explore attaching to the city/county websites. They really want a strong response from the community.
- Dave – regarding the needs assessment. At what point do you make the determination of whether or not the community needs a facility such as this? If you go to most communities, they would tell you definitely yes. Is it a matter of finances that makes the determination? Ken responded by saying the needs assessment isn't tied to the financial side of things. They are determining is there a need or demand for this. As a result of the loss of the pool at the college, it is very clear that there is a big need for a swimming pool – one that will support competitive swimming. Community members have to use the YMCA or private health clubs (which is unusual). They have heard from everyone that there is an acute need in the community for gym space as well. Schools are forced to go outside of their own schools for their competitive activities. It isn't until later in the process that we say there is a definite need, but can the community support this financially. Frank said the goal of the feasibility

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study is to provide Helena community with the data and determine what our comfort level is in moving forward. Dave then added that it seems like it will be extremely important to get this information out to the community.

- Amy – when you reference the “community”, can you define what you think that is? Ken said they don’t know what that is yet. They look at thresholds as it relates to population. There are some very small communities that have some elaborate facilities. It comes down to a value decision especially if it is a public financed project (i.e., tax dollars and user fees). Frank added that they have worked in large communities that had the financial ability, but didn’t have collective vision to do this. They have also worked in small communities who had the vision and did it. Example – Gypsum Colorado. This is a small community of 3,500 people. It is a blue collared town. They decided their recreation needs weren’t being met. The people in the community approved an increase in sales tax on themselves to build a 60,000 square foot facility. This is one of the few facilities that was cash positive in the first five years (\$100,000). They worked out a deal with the airport for creative excise tax on car rental fees. The airport then became a financial partner in the project. They also worked closely with Costco and paid off their bond in half the time.
- Please visit <http://www.a-p.com/project/recreational/gypsum-recreation-center> for more details.
- Melissa reminded all to attend the public meeting and encouraged Peggy or someone from the board to continue attending these meetings for update.

#### County Presentation

- Melissa stated Nancy Everson will present the county budget as an action item to consider.
- Nancy – at the last meeting, Nancy presented the county budget and asked for feedback. There have been no changes to the budget presented. Again, the only difference in this budget from last year is that Babe Ruth has asked for additional funding for mowing. This is funded by a small mill levy.
- Nyle asked for clarification on Babe Ruth mowing. Historically, the county has contributed \$15,000 to Babe Ruth for maintenance operation. They have a capital fund of \$3,000 which allows them savings for capital equipment. The mowing contract was added in 2012 which was \$8,500 – they are asking for an increase of \$6,000 totaling \$14,500.
- Dave – Babe Ruth has asked for additional money for mowing. Suppose Sierra Park folks or Warren Park folks ask for additional funding for their facilities. How is that granted? Nancy stated that any request for additional funding would be included in the preliminary budget for consideration. Then it goes to the county commission for consideration as well. This is not a done deal as the county commission has to balance the general fund. In previous years, they have done a matrix adjustment on Sierra and Warren parks. John added the school district supplies these services and could make the requests. The Sierra Park Board does generate revenues for capital improvements and maintenance investments.
- Nyle then asked if the city contributes to Ryan Park. The city contributes to the mill levy so city residents are paying into the mill levy. Amy – the 49% that the city owns is because in order for the city to help give open space bond money to this project, we had to own a percentage. This is not a management ownership or an ongoing obligation.

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- Ross –as county staff, have you done anymore investigation into other options that are less expensive? At the previous meeting, Nancy told the board that the county hired an employee that took care of the mowing; while a cheaper option, the level of service was not conducive to what was needed. There was also conversation about having the city go to the fields with their equipment and pay them for that, but there were issues with that option as well. They have explored other options.
- Ross then asked if Nancy has a recommendation on this issue. She said she isn't prepared to make a recommendation yet. Babe Ruth is great organization and they do a lot for the community. The county has put a lot of money into this budget that we don't see. Looking at the financials for Babe Ruth, it would certainly be a help to have county support.
- John asked if they make a capital investment in equipment, does the county own the equipment or does Babe Ruth. Nancy – the county carries those purchases on their capital list.
- Melissa – if there are no other questions or comments, we should entertain a motion. Susan Good-Giese stated Andy asked her to attend the meeting in his place. Traditionally, commissioners don't vote on budget approval as that will be brought before the commission. Susan abstained.
- Dave – does this budget address other requests that Babe Ruth made for containers and storage, etc. Nancy – they requested a mower out of their capital improvement funds. This hasn't been addressed yet. As Dave recalls, they asked for an additional \$6,850 for storage containers and \$11,450 for damages done in the park due to storms as well as a commercial aerator. Nancy said these projects are on hold until we have a procedure worked out. Melissa agreed and added that a funding source is not sustainable for a capital project.
- Amy – the issue between American Legion and Babe Ruth has subsided as we are limiting their use of the field.
- Ross asked Amy to further address why the city can't maintain this field. This is due to a lack of capacity mowers and personnel. Our equipment is used every day. We too would have to hire someone else and purchase additional equipment.
- Nyle – if they had someone to operate the equipment, would it still be too much for the city to do this. Amy – we looked into this a few years ago and there would be significant cost that someone would have to absorb. At that time, we discussed a regional park district. It seems this is coming full circle. We all benefit from a regional perspective.
- John – this was somewhat unique about capital investment. It needed significant investment and that was made by the city. There were many stakeholders for the ongoing maintenance. This was an underutilized piece of property that became a nice park. Now we are struggling with how we maintain this.
- John – these fields is an improvement over what it was. This group has vested interest as does many other stakeholders.
- Melissa – this is a debatable issue that comes up with this every year. The Babe Ruth organization has a high user group population that it serves and it is very important for our community. Maybe we should have the county commission take a closer look at mowing budget. Nancy stated that Babe Ruth did ask for this increase last year and the commission denied it.

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- Dave made a motion that we approve the county budget as presented. We have funding available and it doesn't guarantee it for next year. John seconded. Nyle opposed the motion. Motion carried with one descent.

Use Agreement Presentation – Amy

- At the previous meeting, Amy offered to provide an overview of our Parks and Recreation Agreements. These agreements are an effective management tool.
- Ask Amy for PP
- In our department, we use a lot of different agreements. Some of them include:

<b>TYPE OF AGREEMENT</b>	<b>USED FOR:</b>
Use Agreements	Park Reservations
Lease Agreements	Helena Brewers for use of fields
Maintenance Agreements	Helena School District to maintain various parks
Recreation Program Agreements	Kay McKenna Youth Foundation
Master Use Agreements	Helena School District (all activities). We used to have separate agreements for different sports – this is now consolidated into one.
Encroachment Agreements	When developers/homeowners need to be on park land for access.
Temporary Construction Access Agreements	Amy is working with Northwestern Energy on an agreement.
Memorandum of Understanding	These are agreements for various partnership projects. There is an Interlocal agreement for the city/county board for the city/county parks board.
Garden Management Agreement	This is with the Helena Community Gardens.

- The reasons for these agreements include 1. They define the purpose and conditions of the use – it outlines conditions or restrictions, compliance (want to make sure everyone is meeting their obligations), 2. Scheduling, 3. Payment/fee structure. Communication is a key component of this process. We meet with the groups that we work with annually – some of the groups once every three months.
- We have added compliance of ADA requirements to all of our agreements as well as our tobacco free parks statement. This has given us the ability to enforce some of these conditions. The agreements formalize use. Due to nature of the activity, we use the agreements as a communication tool for things such as rotation of fields.
- Highlighted Kindrick Legion Field: The city has two separate agreements with each team – the Brewers Baseball and American Legion. The city is the lessor and the teams are the lessee. Up until recently, there was no official use agreement between the two teams. Amy facilitated a Ballpark Use Agreement between the two teams. That agreement is between the two teams and it says how they are going to work together to co-lease the facility. As a result, we now just executed a three-way MOU between the city and the two teams and it references their ballpark use agreement and how the three of us will work together within the framework of the two agreements.

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- Amy's next effort will be to facilitate an agreement with the Business Improvement District (BID). They promote the Alive at 5 events. We will be looking at a master agreement for those projects in lieu of payment. They get to use the parks for free because of the community benefit and because the raise money for the downtown area that goes back into mutual benefitting projects.
- Some are annual (such as the Helena Community Garden group – they manage the community gardens – they collect the money and pay for the water use in the gardens). Some of the agreements are for a five-year period, and some are for a ten-year period (such as the Brewers).
- Regarding the use fees for the public, Ross appreciates the consideration of public benefit versus benefit levels. Is same concept the same amount being charged to these other organizations? Amy - school and youth fees are the same. Legion is maxed out at \$15,000. Entities such as YMCA are charged \$2 per hour/per field. Fees were approved by the commission.
- Ross – Do you think this arrangement could be used with Babe Ruth in lieu of the budgeting process? Amy can't speak to the County's relationship with Babe Ruth. But Amy believes this is exactly why you want an agreement. The agreement can reflect what each party agrees to do, what reimbursement would be, and what they will contribute in-kind. Amy thinks this would be a useful tool. John stated that the challenge is that the county doesn't have a parks department.

## **Discussion Items**

### Park Safety Concerns – Parks Report – Amy and Cory

- Per Amy – there is still no formal report as of yet. Cory Bailey will be our representative moving forward. Amy and Cory met and discussed what kind of statistics would be useful. Cory stated he does have a printout of calls for service at city parks. This report includes whether a complainant called in or an officer patrolled in a certain park. There were 232 calls for service between 3/23 – 4/19, 2016. Fourteen of the calls were related to a crime whether disorderly conduct or criminal mischief. There were two welfare checks, many animal control calls and several walk-throughs by police officials. Cory has visited with Scott O'Connell who runs the PD Records Management System to give information he is looking for (the exact name of park, event, disposition, etc.). What Amy and Cory want is a report where we can find trends of what is occurring.
- Of the fourteen calls received this last period, two of the calls were for disorderly conduct at Women's park, two were welfare checks at Women's and we had theft and threats at the Skate Park as well as an assault at Memorial.
- We are building a baseline of defining what is happening in parks.
- Melissa stated the board recognizes how valuable the Cory's time is and suggested we move his presentations to the top of the agenda (add new item under item #4 – Park Safety Concerns).

### Parks Board Discussion

None.

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## 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	Nyle Hawson	School District	John Carter
Recreation	Todd Wheeler		

### Amy – City

- Amy introduced Pat Marron – Craig is on vacation.
- Amy – the City/County Parks Board recognized John Carter for his years of service on this board. John started on the board in 1999 which was when the original board was formed. He has been attending meetings for 17 years. The discussions have always been “what can we do for the community?” We will miss John’s institutional history and all the wisdom he has brought to this board. He is the only board member that didn’t get termed out. John then stated he will make certain we get another school district member. He added that he has appreciated and who are serving on this board and who have served in the past.
- The National Arbor Day event was held on April 29<sup>th</sup>. This was a great opportunity for the parks maintenance department to talk about our urban forestry program and to highlight our new bucket truck as well as showcase the new playground at Barney Park.
- July is National Parks and Recreation Month. We will be doing our tobacco-free awareness campaign. Amy is working with sub-committee. We will be doing a lot to promote awareness. Amy presented the new logo. There are four key messages.

#### *Tobacco-Free Parks:*

-  *Foster a healthy community*
-  *Send a health message*
-  *Provide a clean place to play and relax*
-  *Save money*
- We will purchase trinkets as part of this promotion.
- This sub-committee includes Amy, two representatives from the city/county health department, one representative from the Helena Indian Alliance, and Sarah Elkins from the City Manager’s office.
- 6<sup>th</sup> Ward Garden Work Parties – there will be one held this Saturday. There was a work party on April 16<sup>th</sup>. They did a lot of planting and worked on irrigation. The NCC crew was present. All the garden boxes were built. This park also had an Arbor Day event last Saturday. Things are moving forward.

### Jane – HOLMAC

- Interior Secretary, Sally Jewels spoke at an event yesterday. She is commissioning information nationwide to show value of parks and recreation in the community. She wants

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to bring this to the forefront before the administration changes. Amy added that she heard the Governor's office may be filling a Recreation Advisory position to talk about what the value is of recreation to our state.

#### Nyle – Lincoln Parks Board

- Nyle stated they cleaned up the park and it is scheduled to open the last week of May. Melissa asked about the fishing pond project discussed in a previous meeting. Nyle – that has been put on hold.

#### Dave – Fair Board

- Nothing to report.

#### John Carter – School District

- The school district continues to work on a MOU with the county and city and softball association who met with John to discuss improvements to Northwest Park as well as shared maintenance with several user groups. They discussed a platform for capital improvements and long term maintenance.
- John then asked that when Ballard\*King does their needs assessment; he would like to see this assessment focused to the point where we can use the assessment for land and water park grant funds. We have to do a survey every three years and this is coming up. The reason this is mention with NW Park is because, John knows that the user group wants the city and/or school district to sponsor land water conservation fund grant for the improvements they have proposed. Part of their challenge is the survey is outdated.
- Amy said they applied in 2014 so now it would be outdated. Amy has talked to Ballard\*King which is one of the reasons the city may contribute to the consultant as we can use this information from the survey.
- John would like to get this in place before he retires. This could be a model for what we discussed earlier regarding the county and Babe Ruth.

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

- City Parks and Recreation Budget Presentation – Amy
- Starfish Aquatics Institute Presentation – Todd

#### **Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 1, 2016**

At this time, Jane proposed that we do an offsite meeting. Amy suggested we visit the new parks maintenance building. Jane's term on the board ends in September. All agreed that we would meet offsite for our July meeting. Amy and Jennifer will work on this.

#### **Adjournment**

With no further business, the City-County Parks Board meeting adjourned at 12:50 pm.

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Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the City's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact the City's ADA Coordinator, Elroy Golemon, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following:

(406) 447- 8490  
TTY Relay Service [1-800-253-4091](tel:1-800-253-4091) or 711  
[citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov](mailto:citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov)  
316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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