

MINUTES
CITY OF WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, MONTANA
PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
AUGUST 8, 2023

ACTION ITEMS

All:

- Complete your “unfinished business” at McStravick Park. (See detailed list in Task list.)

Jen Frazer

- Speak with Golf Board about formalizing cross country skiing on the Golf Course.
- Get on City/County Planning Board agenda.
- Request outline of content of pickle ball clinic.

Carol Berg

- Signs installed/secured at Bump Track/ maintenance needs at Bump track?
- Duck Race?

Kelly Huffield

- *Adopt a Spot*: Agreements signed & binder & agreement to City, order recognition tags.
- Follow up with Community Foundation on balance in Beautification fund.
- Work with Stacy Eaton-Menard on the basketball tourney?

Pattie Berg

- Prepare budget request/report for Council
- Follow up on Committee recommendations
- Get draft Parks Code and application on Council agenda
- Schedule scoping meeting with Great West
- Prepare draft Recreation Master Plan

Call to Order and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 4:40 p.m. by Chair Tressa Blair.

Members present: Chair Blair, Jen Frazer, Jordan Kibbee, Kelly Huffield.

Others Present: Mark Pryor (City of White Sulphur Springs Parks/Animal Control), Muriel Pryor, Pattie Berg (City Council Liaison).

Proxies: Carol Berg assigned her proxy to Kelly Huffield.

Approval of Minutes

Jen Frazer made a motion to approve the Minutes of the July 11, 2023 meeting, as presented. The motion was seconded by Kelly Huffield and passed unanimously.

Update on the Status of the Draft Parks Code

Liaison Berg reported that, on June 19 and July 5, 2023, she sent the Mayor, Mr. Pryor, Clerk/Treasurer Stidham and Assistant Clerk West the draft code and application form and requested their comments. She has received no response. Berg also advised the Mayor at a meeting in late June that, if no one responds, the Committee has expressed an intent to have these documents placed on the Council agenda without Mayor and staff comments.

Discussion:

- A recent report in the Meagher County News’ Sheriff’s Report said one of the officers had spoken with a party camping at Radar Park, and had decided to let them stay there rather than moving them on.
- Mr. Pryor noted that, very recently, two motorcyclists were camping at Rader Park. When he spoke to them and showed them the “No Camping” sign, they claimed to not realize it was illegal to camp there. They told him they had paid for camping at the Spa and, when it rained, they had moved to the shelter. Mr. Pryor said the Spa is collecting \$25 a night to camp and, many times, people are using Radar Park, but the City is not being paid for the use of its park. Mr. Pryor said he would be speaking with the

owners of the Spa about this “again”. It was suggested that the Spa provide property maps showing where people can and can’t camp.

- It was noted that, over Red Ants Pants, people were camping at the school and in many other odd places around town.
- Without a Code prohibiting camping in the park, neither Mr. Pryor nor the Sheriff can enforce no camping signs, and they cannot remove campers from the parks.
- A recent 9th Circuit Ruling placed a limit on a city’s ability to ban camping. However, since the proposed Parks Code would only ban camping in the City’s parks, not citywide (which was one of the elements of the 9th Circuit decision) the Committee is confident the proposed language would pass court challenges.

Jen Frazer made a motion directing the Council Liaison to ask that the draft Parks Code and application form be placed on the City Council’s September 19, 2023 work session agenda for review and direction. Kelly Huffield seconded the motion and it passed unanimously. In Liaison Berg’s absence, Jen Frazer offered to make the presentation to the Council.

FY 23-24 Planning Discussion/Request

Liaison Berg explained that she had prepared the draft budget request based on:

- 1) Committee projects funded but not completed during the fiscal year 22-23; and
- 2) Committee comments and projects/needs identified since the last budget request, and which need addressed sooner rather than later, as well as the Master Plan-related costs initiated through Great West discussions.

The Committee conducted a project by project/line by line review of the draft budget and made necessary updates. The Committee’s intent was to request funds sufficient to get the work done right the first time and avoid ‘bandage’ projects.

Jordan Kibbee made a motion to adopt the work plan and budget request. The motion was seconded by Tressa Blair and passed unanimously.

As a result of this discussion, the Committee agreed to:

- Adopt a FY23-24 goal to fundraise for new equipment at Springs Park.
- Recruit volunteers and adjacent landowners to assist in fencing the north side, and placing t posts and signs on the south side, of Spike’s Happy Trails after the property has been surveyed.

During this discussion, the Committee identified the following ‘executive branch’ issues:

- The placement of the outhouse at McStravick Park makes it difficult use the ADA designated parking spot. The parking lot is also eroding. The Committee would like the City to take a look at the parking lot design and make it less likely to erode and more accessible.
- There is no formal contract with Smith River Floaters; the company which maintains the City’s porta potties in exchange for the use of the lagoon. There is a concern that there is nothing formal that clarifies roles responsibilities and legal requirements. Jen Frazer made a motion recommending that the City enter into a formal agreement with Smith River Floaters. Jordan Kibbee seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.
- Mark Pryor described a new plan to handle the drainage issues at Bair Park, which would re-route water coming from the north/east to an existing ditch. The Committee told Mr. Pryor that whatever the City decides is fine, but the Committee’s interest is to see safe ground covering installed because this is a very busy park with no ground covering creating a continuing liability. It was suggested that, if the repairs don’t get made, the Committee may need to recommend closing the Park until such time as it is a safe facility.
- There is a dangerous hole next to the faucet at McStravick Park that needs filled in to avoid an injury to a member of the public.

Liaison Berg will forward these requests/recommendations to the Mayor.

Capital Improvement Program Priorities

Deferred due to time.

Master Plan Discussion:

Liaison Berg explained that:

- On August 4th, Great West Engineering had notified her that a Recreation Master Plan is not an eligible MCEP program (see July 11, 2023 discussion) and now recommends applying for a CDBG grant to fund the Plan. These grants require a 3:1 match and are due November 1, 2023.
- Great West had asked for some dates for a scoping meeting.
- The scope will affect the total project cost.

The Committee directed the Liaison to contact Great West and schedule the meeting for September 28 or October 12, 2023. In the interim, the Liaison will take the information learned from the CORR process and prepare a very rough draft Recreation Master Plan. This should help identify who needs to do what during the scoping discussion.

Discussion then followed regarding how much money to request for matching funds. The Committee is not interested in a “Lamborghini” Master Plan, so the plan should not cost \$62,500 (as Mr. Erickson’s example described), but until the scoping meeting is over, we can’t know what the plan will cost. Based on Craig Erickson’s example, Tressa Blair made a motion to “request up to \$12,500” for a match. The motion was seconded by Kelly Huffield and passed unanimously.

Kelly Huffield made a motion to request \$47,500 for Committee projects during FY23-24. Tressa Blair seconded and it passed unanimously.

Note to Committee members: There were some ‘user errors’ on the spreadsheets, and the Terracycle request had not been included on the initial draft. With these changes, the final request was \$51, 498.42, and included completing the ADA work at Bair Park, and the cost of the smoking stations for the Terracycle program. All Committee members were sent the final request, and a majority approved the submission.

Liaison Berg spoke with Burt Hurwitz about getting on the City/County Planning Board agenda to discuss a City/County Recreation Plan similar to the City/County Growth Policy. Hurwitz told Berg to call Board Chair Jess Secret. Jen Frazer will spearhead this as she has other business before this Board.

Public Comment

No public present on zoom. No public comment made.

Meeting Schedule Discussion/Set Meeting Schedule

Chair Blair said she would like to hold meetings on Thursdays at 4:30 p.m. Monthly meetings will be the 2nd Thursday of each month, with any additional meetings being scheduled as needed. The Committee concurred.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, September 7, 2023 at 4:30 at City Hall. It will focus on setting CIP priorities and closing out the ‘Executive Branch’ Action Items. Ms. Blair will be unable to attend so Vice Chair Carol Berg will be in charge of preparing the agenda for, and running, this meeting.

Action Item Updates from Committee Members

Mostly deferred.

- Kelly Huffield asked whether the irrigation system is working correctly at City Hall: she feels the newly planted plants aren't looking great. Mr. Pryor said he is monitoring it; he thinks the plants may just need some time recover.
- The equipment storage is in place at McStravick Park! Thanks to everyone who made this happen!!!!

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 6:05 p.m.