

City of Wyoming Parks & Recreation Commission

MINUTES FOR THE MEETING OF December 09, 2015

Present: Robert Cook, Oogie Lamar, Ed McGregor, Aaron Velthouse, Doug Wustman, Dave Skinner, Rich Pastoor (City Council Liaison)

Absent: Megan Harley, Ken Hornecker and Doug Broek

Guest: None

Staff Present: Rebecca Rynbrandt, Cindra Barber

- A. **Call to order of the Parks and Recreation Commission** – Chairperson Doug Wustman called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.
- B. **Approval of Agenda** – A motion was made by Ed McGregor to approve the agenda and it was seconded by Aaron Velthouse. Motion carried.
- C. **Approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes of the November 18, 2015 Meeting** – A motion was made by Ed McGregor and seconded by Bob Cook to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2015 meeting. Motion carried.
- D. **Public Comment on Agenda Item (limit to 3 minutes)** – None
- E. **Property Acquisition Proposal for Southlawn Park** – A church in the Southlawn Park area contacted David Niewiek, the owner of Paris Motors, to see if he would purchase a vacant, blighted property across the street from them on the corner of Jefferson and Wilbur Streets. Mr. Niewiek attends the church and has been purchasing and investing in properties in order to clean up the surrounding neighborhood. Mr. Niewiek did eventually purchase the property. He recently contacted Rynbrandt to explain he owned the property but did not have a use for it himself and does not want to convert it to a rental; and since the property connects with Southlawn Park he wondered if the City of Wyoming would be interested in purchasing the property. Rynbrandt explained it is not in the Southlawn Park Master Plan to acquire additional property but she did make the suggestion that he donate the property to the City and she did not think he was necessarily opposed to that idea.

Doug Wustman asked if Rynbrandt knew the size of the property. She was able to look it up on the City of Wyoming's website. She found the lot size to be 120 x 130, which is a relatively large lot. Considering the size and the existing structures on the lot she gave an estimated demo price point of \$15,000 to \$20,000, which included grading, black dirt and the re-seeding of the space.

Rynbrandt suggested the possibility of obtaining a grant through the Community Development Grant Funds to demolish the existing house, out buildings and pool to create a green space. This would be the first step in holding the property until we could have further conversation about the possibility of creating an off street parking lot or possibly purchasing two other adjacent properties.

Rynbrandt's reason for addressing the Commission with this matter is to make sure they see value in moving forward with accepting the donation, if it is presented to the City, and redoing the Adopted Master Plan for Southlawn Park. She will then take the concept to the City Manager and

ultimately present it to the City Council. A motion was made by Ed McGregor to move forward with the Southlawn Acquisition project and seconded by Oogie Lamar. Motion carried.

- F. **Library Millage Expansion Concept** – Rynbrandt stated we have over twenty million dollars of park capital project needs as identified today in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. In addition, we have \$100,000 to \$250,000 in ongoing capital improvement needs every year to repair or replace playground equipment, roofs, parking lots, tennis courts, etc. The Parks & Recreation millage itself has been active at 1.5 mills for 20 years so the operation of the department, including capital, has not had a raise in 20 years. We have made adjustments over the 20 years to be able to realign service in order to maintain our ability to continue to invest in capital or to make grant matches. Rynbrandt used the examples of closing the South Wyoming Senior Center, closing and demolishing the Jackson Park pool, combining Rynbrandt's position and splitting her wages between 5 different departments to save funds as well as combining Parks and Facility staff.

This year the library millage, to pay for the bond, was complete so the bond payment is now going into the overall library millage account. Rynbrandt pointed out the library will turn 15 years old this year and states we will be investing significantly in improvements such as renovating the Book Worm Café, replacing carpeting and several other projects.

Rynbrandt shared the interest of the City Manager in going to the City Council in January to ask if they would consider asking the voters to expand the definition of use of those funds from library capital to library and parks capital. If they are supportive of that idea we expect it to go on the May ballot. Rynbrandt wanted to make the Commission aware that the City will be moving forward with this conversation and if it goes on the May ballot she would ask every member of the Parks and Recreation Commission to become advocates of this plan as well as to promote it to the public. There has already been a meeting with all five primary Superintendents of the 7 Wyoming school districts in which this concept was shared and it will be likely be brought up at the January 8th City Council Retreat where all school district representatives will be present.

Wustman asked what the perceived kick back might be from the general public. Rynbrandt thinks the public might come back and say we should just reduce the millage. With this proposed approach it would allow the City Council to have the flexibility to direct, every year, capital funds between the library and other community services without any increase to their taxes.

Wustman also asked if the Friends of the Library group might be opposed to this and wondered if there has been any conversation between that group and the city. He stated he would hate to see them blindsided by the news when they could be a potential ally. Rynbrandt advised there has been conversation with the Kent District Library, who is in support, but not specifically with the Friends of the Library group and felt that Chairperson Wustman had a very valid point.

- G. **Pinery Park Little League Update** – Rynbrandt stated the City Manager's office is now the strong lead on Pinery Park Little League concerns. The City Manager has received the check book from the league for last year and access to their bank statement accounts to confirm what checks were written. Out of that information he prepared a spread sheet that determined they ran a deficit situation of over \$6,000 for last year. Also, it was determined that their concessions ran a deficit of over \$16,000. The City and Greater Wyoming Community Resource Alliance is now having a weekly financial meeting with our Deputy City Manager, Heidi Isakson, and the Alliance Treasurer, Nancy Bazan. The Greater Wyoming Community Resource Alliance, which is the Cities 5013(c), is now the fiduciary for the little league. In essence, PPLL is now a program of the Alliance for fiscal responsibility purposes. We are also setting up cash handling procedures with the league including inventory for the concession stand and petty cash procedures.

The City continues to reassure the PPLL Board that we are not trying to take over their program and that we are here to help. We are encouraging them to let us take their registrations using our RecTrac System which could help them keep better records. We can also take checks, credit cards and on line registration providing more flexible hours to register.

We have also offered to do all their volunteer background checks since there are some discrepancies as to whether all of their coaches and volunteers have had background checks done in the past. The Parks and Recreations department can do all of the checks and our turnaround time is only three days. Also the State of Michigan has had a concussion law in effect for the past two years. The City has offered to assist them in that training as well.

Lamar asked if they have any positive funds in their account after losing \$16,000 on concessions. Rynbrandt stated, that to the best of her knowledge, they are at a negative \$123.00 in their check book. We have no faith that they have documentation on how they spent past monies or if they ran a deficit every year for the last several years. We do know they had problems, in the past, paying their light bills and porta john bills. We have only received documentation for last year.

Rynbrandt realizes everyone is frustrated with the past practices but the City focus, right now, is on getting this running so kids can play ball in the spring.

Wustman stated he truly appreciates all the effort and "sweat equity" that has gone into the PPLL.

Rynbrandt commented it is a testament to the Parks and Recreation Commission that we are where we are today with the PPLL because they remained advocates for the community and the community's children by requesting continued updates on these concerns over the last five years.

H. **Commissioner Concerns and Suggestions –**

- **FY 2017 Budget Preparation** – Email Rynbrandt any budget suggestions.
- **Recruitment of New Members** – We continue to have two vacancies. Wustman suggested they filter the word out to family, friends and acquaintances to see if they can get some interest.

I. **Public Comment in General (Limit to 3 minutes) – None**

J. **Motion to Adjourn the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting** – Motion to adjourn was made by Ed McGregor and seconded by Dave Skinner. The meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Recorded by 
Cindra Barber
Recording Secretary