

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR THE
MEETING OF

January 12, 2011

Present: Rhonda Buck, Bob Cook, Megan Harley, Eric Hartfield, Dan Lavengood, Rod Van Oeveren, Doug Wustman

Absent: Jim Austin, Jerry Hopkins, Dave Skinner

Staff Present: Nancy Parent, Rebecca Rynbrandt

City Council Liaison Rich Pastoor

Call to order of the Parks and Recreation Commission – Chairman Lavengood called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Agenda – Motion was made by Rod Van Oeveren, seconded by Doug Wustman to approve the agenda. Carried.

Approval of the Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes of the November 10, 2010 Meeting - Motion was made by Rod Van Oeveren, seconded by Rhonda Buck to approve the minutes of the November 10, 2010 meeting. Carried.

Public Comment on Agenda Item (limit to 3 minutes) – None.

Oriole Park Rededication Ceremony – The ceremony is scheduled for May 26. We are still working on the time. Becky asked the Commissioners to block from 1:00-3:00 pm. Macatawa Bank will provide ice cream. We have partnered with Oriole Park Elementary School and are trying to coordinate the time with a field day with the school. The splash pad will not be activated as we open our splash pads on June 1.

Greater Wyoming Community Resource Alliance – Grant Submittals

The Alliance is the City of Wyoming's non profit organization. This is the outcome of experiences with Frog Hollow where we were denied some grants because we weren't a 501c(3). The Alliance's mission is to raise money to provide scholarship and grants but also to provide a vehicle for other non profit organizations such as parent/teacher groups, neighborhood associations, etc. to gain grants. Becky asked that the Commissioners spread the word to any groups that might be interested. The following Alliance requests have been made which have affiliations to the Parks and Recreation Department and its services:

Stepping Stones – A grant request was submitted for Stepping Stones for operational expenses. This need is a result of declining KCSM grant funds related to declining property tax income.

Family/Youth Programs – The Parks and Recreation Department also submitted a request for Project Bounce to purchase a bounce house to use with our TEAM 21 and other programs as well as make available for rental by the public in conjunction with park reservations.

Cultural Enrichment Commission – The CEC has submitted a grant to replace their aging sound equipment used for Concerts in the Park, the summer concert series held in Lamar Park.

DNRE Trust Fund Grant 2011 – Acquisition for Ideal Park Proposed –

We have the opportunity to acquire property immediately adjacent to Ideal Park. Pictures of the property were distributed. With Commission support, we will make an application to the DNRE Trust Fund Grant and we would only use our fund balance for grant match for this purchase. Previous to 2000 we were able to use HUD funds to purchase property, but we are unable to do this now because the people in the housing area do not qualify for the income level to receive the HUD monies. The property will probably cost \$90,000-105,000.

Motion was made by Rod Van Oeveren, seconded by Eric Hartfield to concur with the recommendation to purchase this property adjacent to Ideal Park. Carried.
We will get an appraisal on the property and update the master plan. Only a grant match will come out of Parks and Recreation funds.

Capital Projects Update

WSC Phase II Renovation – This project is out to bid. Over 20 companies attended the pre-bid meeting. The market is still in our favor. Bids will be returned in February or March with construction to begin in April.

Pinery Park Parking North Lot Reconstruction – This project will be part of our budget request. The City Manager is supportive of this. The project includes the two north parking lots and reconstruction of the trail. We are widening the trail going from walk path standard to bike path standard.

Housekeeping/Informational Items –

Budget – Becky reviewed the graph that was handed out for long term forecasting out to 2025. We will be getting our more detailed budget information January 24. We expect a budget reduction of tax revenue of about 6% for 2012. We project that we will bottom out in 2014-15 and will slowly start coming back. We can only come back at the rate of inflation. We suspect it will be 15 years before we are back at the 2008 level. Expenses on the model graph don't include anything for capital. Becky also reviewed the staffing handout. We are approaching 15 years on our Parks and Recreation millage. We made changes which saved money such as closing the South Senior Center and Jackson Park Pool. In the future we will need to add a capital millage, increase our Parks and Recreation millage or cut services. We are currently working on an internal consolidation of our city's park maintenance and facility operations. This will capture 25-30% savings on the administrative side. The target goal is a net reduction of two maintenance positions by 2015. We are currently hiring a maintenance helper. In November we will have another retirement from the maintenance crew and will evaluate filling that position at that time. At the end of 2012 we are projecting two more retirements. We will then be able to merge skills and employees of the park maintenance and facilities and reduce our staff by two people for cost savings.

Legacy costs – all new hires are now defined contribution instead of pension. All staff participate in health insurance co-pay. Becky asked the Commissioners to think of other ways for long term sustainability.

We previously talked about making the Ranger program a volunteer effort. What other avenues are we pursuing for volunteer help? We have volunteers at the senior center

and in our TEAM 21 and Adopt-a-Park programs.

Commissioner Concerns and Suggestions – Doug Wustman asked about the status of the KCSM grant because of being two minutes late in the electronic transmission time. We received a grant but are being asked to fundraise \$1,200. Harold Voorhees was a great advocate for us with the Kent County Senior Millage.

Doug Wustman also asked if there has been any additional dialog with the mountain biking group. Becky informed that the biking group is aware of the property by the YMCA. They are currently pursuing an area in Kentwood. Also when Gordon Food Service builds their new building, they are proposing a bike path, baseball and soccer areas as they are into fitness.

SKRA and Pinery Park Little League both had problems meeting their payments. We have worked out payment plans and they are now current with payments.

Question was raised if there has been any discussion of collaboration of services with other local communities. Yes, discussions are ongoing. The biggest challenge that was discussed is that some communities have no dedicated funding source for operations; others have dedicated millages for capital needs, and others share dedicated parks and recreation millages with area school districts. We would have to do an assessment on all facilities. We have done collaboration on some recreation programs in the past, such as senior softball, which ended up with Wyoming funding most of the program but yet having to split the income so this was discontinued. Joint purchasing of supplies has been a successful, cost reducing partnership currently in operation.

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

Motion to Adjourn the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting – Motion to adjourn was made by Megan Harley, seconded by Rod Van Oeveren. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Recorded by _____
Nancy Parent
Recording Secretary