



CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD AGENDA

Wednesday, February 5, 2020



City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Ross Johnson
- Steve Baiamonte

County Members

- Branden Watts
- Leah Norberg
- ~~Ernie Lundberg (Lincoln Parks Board)~~

Joint Member

- School District Representative

Commission Representatives

- Sean Logan, City Commissioner
- Jim McCormick, County Commissioner

Staff Contact

- Spencer Starke, Lewis and Clark County Representative
- Kristi Ponozzo, Parks, Recreation, and Open Lands Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- Kait Perrodin, Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426

TIME: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Visitor(s): Berkley Conrad

• Call to Order

Chairman Pat Doyle call the City-County Parks Board meeting to order at 11:40 am.

• Establish Quorum/Introductions/Review Agenda/Approval of Minutes

- A quorum was not present; therefore, the board was unable to approve the December 2019 minutes. They will be presented again at the March meeting. There was no January 2020 meeting.

• Comments from Persons Present

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

- None.

• Unfinished Business

- None.

• Presentations/Discussion Items

- Welcome to our new Commissioner representatives. Sean Logan will serve as the City Commissioner representative and Jim McCormick will serve as the County Commission representative.

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Jim McCormick

- Jim has served on this board once before. He was on this board his first year in office. Now that he has learned more in his position as commissioner, Jim stated he feels better qualified to serve on this board. Spencer has spent time getting Jim up to speed on some of the items before this board. Jim is very interested with what is going on with parks, particularly the unincorporated areas in Lewis and Clark County. He is also interested in this current board structure and what that looks like from a legal standpoint.
- Jim stated he served as chair of the Helena Citizens Council. He got involved with the HCC as a result of the unimproved/undeveloped parkland in the county. At that time, HCC was tasked with going to those areas where those parks were and put committees of those neighborhoods together to finding out what the residents in the area wanted. In those areas where there was funding available, those parks were improved. Some of what this board is dealing with now is very similar to what HCC dealt with in 2007 – 2009.
- Jim is looking forward to serving on this board.

Sean Logan

- Sean stated he is new to this board. He will take some time to learn the dynamics of the board and the issues at hand. He encouraged board members and members of the community to express concerns or ask questions on what is happening with the city commission. Please send any comments to: slogan@helenamt.gov.
- Sean then stated he looks forward to work with this group.

Update Board Consolidation

- Kristi stated that we are currently looking at the various boards that the parks department staffs. This includes this board, the Golf Advisory Board, HOLMAC, and the Civic Center Board.
- The Civic Center Board was dissolved. Kristi is currently working on putting together a steering committee to help guide what our new Civic Center Advisory Board will look like. We received 15 applicants and those names will go before the commission this evening so they can give us direction on our next steps. The steering committee will help us determine what the advisory function of the Civic Center Board will be going forward.
- The above-mentioned boards have been an agenda item on the City Commission meeting agenda several times. There has been discussion about how we can create efficiencies as far as having more similar bylaws and templates for all of our boards. We are looking at making the structure of our boards more consistent. The city will continue working on this.
- Pat – in regards to the Civic Center Steering Committee – were the applications open to just city residents? Kristi stated the applications were for city residents only.

• Action Item(s)

- None.

• Reports

City Parks and Recreation Director Report	Kristi Ponozzo, Director
City Parks and Recreation Maintenance Report	Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
County Report	Spencer Starke (or Representative)

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Helena School District	Neal Murray (or Representative)
Helena Police Department	Berkley Conrad (or Representative)
BOARDS REPORTS	
Fair Board	Leah Norberg
HOLMAC	Ross Johnson
Lincoln Parks Board	Ernie Lundberg / Nyle Howsmon

Parks report

- Kristi stated we are working on finalizing the Chapter 7 Draft Open lands Work Plan. We put the draft out for public comment in December. Based on comments, we are working on an appendix outlining a more specific public process for any new major projects and an environmental review process that will go in the plan as well. We will take the draft back to the commission for final review and adoption.
- Golf Course: we have hired a new head golf professional. His name is Conlan Burk. He has been at BRGC for some time serving as the teaching assistant. He will now be working on hiring the assistant golf pro as well as a new teaching assistant.
- Fees: Finance is still working on the book of fees. We hope to get these to the commission as soon as possible for adoption. New fees for Parks and Recreation includes:
 - Adoption of a new fee structure for Open Lands. We didn't have specific fees for open lands.
 - The city commission mad a recommendation that we create resident discount and non-resident fees.
 - We also moved from the pyramid-based fee structure to a more simple structure in an effort to better utilize our online reservation program.
- Pat stated he appreciates the city's efforts in responding to the public comments that were submitted online. He also appreciates the fact that the city response to those comments have been posted on the web page.
- Jim – regarding the proposed fees – will there be public involvement in this process? Kristi stated that we have brought the information to all of the advisory boards. Due to when the season begins, Golf fees were passed in December. The book of fees will go before the city commission for adoption. Going forward, we anticipate that we will revisit (and potentially update) the book of fees every year.

Parks Maintenance – Craig

- Craig stated this is a busy time of year for our maintenance department. They have been taking advantage of the nice weather.
- The tree crew has been doing some formative pruning in some of the subdivisions like the one around Skelton Park. While the trees are young, we prune them to get a good shape. The crew has removed six hazard trees that had cracks in them.
- We will be advertising for another arborist shortly. We are looking to hire one full time arborist and on ¾ time arborist. These new positions are part of assessment increase.
- Staff took a week and did regrinding of chips and wood that is sitting at the shop. As we now have a lot of chips, Craig is looking into doing a “wood chip give-a-way” where people can go to the shop and get wood chips. We are also still offering the chip drop program. People can go to **chipdrop.com**

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and have a load of chips delivered right to their home. You can visit the following website for more information on the chip drop program: <https://getchipdrop.com/?ref=chipdropcom>.

- Craig has been working on budget items, prioritizing some of the major expenses that are coming up.
- Pam Attardo, Historic Preservation Officer with the county has been assisting us in getting a grant for the restoration of the Fire Tower. The grant is \$100,000 maximum and is a two-phase grant. If you get it through the first phase, you have a good chance of getting the funding. The first deadline was in early January. We made it through the first round. We are now working on submitting paperwork for the second phase.
- Crews have been replacing engineered wood fiber chips in the playgrounds. We remove the old ones as they begin to decompose. This gets recycled.
- We have been doing some maintenance at the ice rinks.
- The Rialto owners will be building a patio out in front of their place in the walking mall. This will change routes a bit. We will still have the safety route. The patio will be similar to the one at 10-Mile Brewery.
- We are beginning to see field use and are getting in many applications for summer park and field use.
- They are working at the Centennial trail at Henderson. Steve then asked if there has been discussion of putting a pedestrian crossing sign at the trail at Henderson where it crosses. Craig has been working with Bike Walk of Montana and a station here in Helena. They are working on getting the “Friends of Helena” back together. We also have a city engineer looking at that crossing route. Craig will keep this board updated. They are doing a study which may take a year. We have applied for the easement with the railroad. It has not yet been approved.
- Fire Tower: We had a wood scientist visit last summer. He analyzed all the different pieces of the fire tower. The top of the tower has been rebuilt over the years and is intact; however he identified the main timbers that will need to be replaced. We will try to keep as much of the original structure as we can.
- Sean stated that he has been very involved with the fire tower over the years. The current fire tower does not contain a lot of its original material. The grant has more historical preservation approach toward the tower. It sounds like the proposal Pam put together is a pretty good package.
- Craig stated the next step will be to find an engineer to identify what needs to be replaced and how do we replace it. We hope to begin work this summer.
- There is a new intersection at Women’s and Hill Parks. Concrete will be added to the two corner sections.
- The well project is a work in progress. Northwestern Energy will be hooking up power this week. The well is punched in and now we just need to complete the connections.
- Fountain: The rock base is being built in Maine and the sphere is being built in California. The pieces should be delivered sometime in March.
- Pat – in follow up to the fire tower, he recalled that when the arson happened there was public outcry in the community. A group was created in an effort to raise additional funds for this project. Did that ever happen? Craig stated there was a group formed – “Friends of the Fire Tower”. Since then, some of this group has disbanded, but some are still involved and willing to do some fundraising.
- Sean added that he was involved in part of the grant process as he offered letter of support. Back to the 1970’s, one of the local chapters of the Soroptimist organization took on the fire tower as an

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ongoing project for them for many years. In recent years, they have minimized their involvement with the fire tower; however, they still have some of the cash they raised for this project. Sean has maintained contact with some of the members. Sean reached out to them and was able to connect that money (around \$3,000 - \$4,000) with Pam's application as matching and community support.

County Report – Spencer Starke

- County staff are looking at how to best move forward statutorily with this board as it currently isn't set up the way it needs to be. There are a few options. They are looking at our Interlocal Agreement and perhaps will be able to add in some language. With some of the transitions in both the city and the county, we are at a standstill.
- The gentleman who presented at the December meeting regarding options for Pickleball courts reached out to Spencer about Ryan Fields. Babe Ruth has a maintenance agreement with the county. It is a budgetary item where the county gives the Babe Ruth organization a set amount of money each year for maintenance costs. There is some joint ownership of the park between the city and the county. Spencer is recommending that the Pickleball organization coordinate with Babe Ruth on a potential site plan and proposal. We will also need some type of maintenance plan going forward.
- Ross asked if the county has received any requests for cash-in-lieu. Due to statutory reasons, Spencer has not advertised that money is available. Staff is still working with the county legal department on authority and statutes.
- Spencer then provided a background of the role of the City-County parks board for the new commissioner representatives. There are some deficiencies in the statutory structure. Sean then asked if the city has the same difficulties as the county in relation to decision making. Spencer hasn't really looked at the city statutes.
- Pat asked if this board on the county side doesn't have authority to approve cash-in-lieu, how does this impact subdivision planning/review? Who would need to approve this? We will continue to make advisements to the County Commission and they can make the decision. Money is still being collected.
- Ross asked if the county has looked at what other counties in Montana are doing.

Police Department – Berkley Conrad

- Berkley presented parks statistics for the last three months.
- The police department received the following in calls for parks:
 - ✚ January: 51 calls for service
 - ✚ December: 22 calls for service
 - ✚ November: 33 calls for service
- Most of the calls were welfare calls and walk-throughs.

Recreation Report – Kait Perrodin

- Kait's main focus this winter has been on the Memorial Park Ice Rink. She installed lights around the rink and focused on more events. They had a Neon Lights night and recorded 266 attendees
- We will close the rink down on February 23.

Fair Board member – Leah Norberg

- Nothing to report.

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- Pat will follow up with Leah on attendance.

HOLMAC

- We are finalizing the rewrite of the Chapter 7 portion of the Recreation Plan.
- The Helena Rotary Club did a presentation on potentially installing an ADA trail on Mount Helena, ½ mile west past the water tank. They will raise the money and do the work. They would like to do this project this summer.

Lincoln Parks Board – Ernie Lundberg

- Nothing to report.

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

- Board Consolidation/Efficiencies Updates
- Continued County Discussion on Statutes
- Jim stated he is a new representative on the Weed Board. The county is willing to assist the city with weed management. Kristi and/or Craig will make every attempt to attend the weed board meetings.
- Sean asked of the expectations of the commissioners on this board. Pat stated their presence at these meetings is very welcome.

- **Next Meeting Date**

- March 4, 2020

- **Other**

- **Adjournment**

- With no further business, the City-County Parks Board adjourned at 12:31 pm.

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