



City of Helena

# CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, January 6, 2016



### City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Melissa Lewis, Chairperson
- Ross Johnson

### County Members

- Jane Kollmeyer
- Dave Payne
- Lonny Cox (Lincoln Parks Board)

### Joint Member

- John Carter, School District Representative

### Commission Representatives

- Rob Farris-Olsen, City Commissioner
- Andy Hunthausen, County Commissioner

### Staff Contact

- Matt Heimel, Lewis and Clark County Special Districts Planner
- Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

**LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426**

**TIME: 11:30 am – 1:30 pm**

**Visitor(s): Ron Alles, City Manager, Becky Baraby, Quincy Brandenburg, Bill Houston, Thomas Jodoin, Karen Lane, Daniel Pocha, Dave Smith, Stacy Sommer.**

### 1. Call to Order

- o The City-County Parks Advisory Board was called to order at 11:26 am.

### 2. Establish Quorum/Review Agenda/Introductions

- Per Melissa Lewis, Chairperson, a quorum was established.
- Melissa made one recommended change to the agenda. She requested to move Item #6, Tobacco Free Resolution Discussion under Item #5 – Presentations. As there were no objections, that change was made.

### 3. Consent Action Items

Approval of minutes: November 4, 2015

Ross recommended a change to the minutes. He referred to page 7. The first paragraph on this page states: **The City/County Parks Board will approve changes to the current Tobacco Free Park Resolution** – Ross’s understanding from the conversation was that the City/County Parks Board **will consider** a change to the current resolution. Melissa suggested

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we add the words **may consider** in place of will. Jennifer will make said correction. With no further discussion, Jane moved to approve the November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2015 City/County Park Board minutes. Dave seconded. Motion carried.

#### 4. 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.

#### 5. Presentations

##### Tobacco Free Resolution

Discussion on whether or not Native American Ceremonial uses of tobacco should be clarified in existing Resolution.

- Amy recommended we begin this conversation by reviewing a memo dated January 6, 2016 that was submitted to the City-County Parks board members. At the November meeting, staff was directed to come up with some language for a potential amendment as well as to research other resolutions that address the use of ceremonial tobacco in parks. For this effort, staff researched language that is used by the Helena Indian Alliance as well as other community tobacco free park resolutions. We also consulted with the City Attorney. This memo outlines those efforts.
- The first item is the language in the Helena Indian Alliance Tobacco Prevention Policy. That policy states: *"Tobacco may be allowed if it is part of an American Indian cultural activity. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act protects the rights of American Indian providing freedom to worship through traditional ceremonies using sacred objects like tobacco"*.
- The second item in the memo includes an ordinance from the City of Portland. Under item "F" of Portland's ordinance, it recognizes the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. Per Amy – what she found interesting is that in item "G", it states that this ordinance is unenforceable.
- Thirdly, Amy spoke with our City Attorney about his understanding of the American Indian Religious Freedom Act as it pertains to this issue.
- After consulting with the county health department and considering all of the information provided, the staff recommends that if the City-County Parks Board determines they want to make a recommendation to the City Commission to amend the existing Tobacco Free Resolution, that the following wording be considered: *"This resolution does not supersede State or Federal laws"*.
- As there were no questions for Thomas, Melissa opened this topic up for discussion.
- Daniel Pocha, community member is again asking that we put up some type of additional signage that would indicate "respect traditional tobacco". He believes this additional signage would be inexpensive and would not detract from anything.
- Ross stated that it is his understanding that any city or county ordinance can never supersede a federal policy. Thomas said this is correct. He questioned the need to even amend the resolution.

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- Daniel thought that it would be a nice if the City of Helena would respect the traditional use of tobacco and add the additional verbiage.
- Melissa asked if any members or visitors had anything further to add or had any questions for the City Attorney.
- With no further discussion, the committee moved on to the next presentation.

#### American Legion Baseball

Presenter Bill Houston to discuss the Ryan Field Improvement Cost Estimates

- At the November City-County Parks Board Meeting, Bill submitted a proposal on behalf of the local American Legion Baseball organization. As stated previously, Montana is one of two states in the United States that does not have high school baseball. American Legion Baseball has given our young people this opportunity. However, with the added teams and additional pressure on field, we are finding that we are having difficulty maintaining player development and safety with the use of our current field. We need extra space.
- Bill asked for financial support to make improvements to Ryan Baseball Field 13. At that time, Bill was asked to come up with some quotes to make the necessary improvements to that field. He noted that by repairing field 13, we will be able to generate extra income as well as provide a good playing field for our young people in the Babe Ruth program. This field would be designated for Babe Ruth play.
  - Bill received a quote from Fencecrafters. To build the fence, the cost would be approximately \$5,600 which includes materials and labor. The big ticket item will be to improve the infield and 2 bullpens. The infield is currently comprised of decomposed granite. Playing on this surface is very tough on ballplayers. Bill received a bid from Helena Sand and Gravel (they came in the lowest) at \$31,600 for replacing the infield (which again includes material and labor). The total cost of these two items would be **\$37,200**. The dugouts are in place and in good condition.
- Bill's goal was to prioritize immediate needs. Melissa then asked if the quotes are specific to field 13 – per Bill, yes.
- Bill added that he has made arrangements for concessions and additional restrooms and a ticket booth. This has already been taken care of.
- Amy emphasized that the reason at looking at improvements is due to the increased use of Kindrick field that simply cannot be supported.
- Bill stated he will be willing to create a formal proposal for the City-County Parks Board for review and recommendation.
- Bill was then asked who would be responsible for maintenance of the restructured field. Maintenance would be shared with Babe Ruth – Babe Ruth would maintain the entire month of July – Kindrick would take care of it after that. Bill has met with all entities involved (city, county, Brewers, etc.). Everyone is on board.
- Jane – are we trying to get this done by the upcoming season? Amy – yes. And when we say **“we”**, we are stating that this is an American Legion led process. Ryan Field is a county facility with partial ownership by the city.
- With the added team playing on Kindrick field that Bill alluded to, it has added more than 40% more teams playing on the Kindrick Legion field. The city simply cannot support that level of play.

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- Dave Smith asked if we are also looking for outside sources (i.e., grants, etc.). Bill stated that this funding effort would be a combination of outside sources, city funding, county funding, as well as the Brewers.
- Andy asked what is currently available in the county park development fund. Are there other projects pending? We will need a specific proposal with specific amount. This board will then review the proposal and make a recommendation to the county/city for budget.
- Melissa stated we will add these items to the February City-County Parks Board meeting.
- Amy recommended that for the sake of time, Bill create a proposal that will go out with the notes from this meeting. We can then discuss and make a decision for proposal to the city/county at the February meeting. She added that we will need to request that Matt Heimel make the latest county park budget available.

**Action Items:**            **Bill Houston will create a formal proposal for the City-County Parks Board for review and recommendation. We will also bring forth budgets for discussion. Bill will submit the proposal that will go out with the notes from this meeting. (\*Please note – a formal proposal and County budget report are attached to these notes.)**

## 6. Discussion Items

### Parks Board Discussion

- Amy wanted to remind the parks board that we need to continue discussions regarding parks safety concerns. In September, we heard from a variety of community representatives about their concerns regarding issues at Women’s park (as well as others) to include transient use/misconduct, drug use, aggressive behaviors, and high levels of vandalism. We are still looking for suggestions on how to curb some of this negative activity. Chief McGee presented on this in November.
- Jane asked if staff would be coming back with suggestions. The next step is for the City-County Parks Board to further discuss what has been heard, reminding everyone that this is a **community** problem – where do we want to take the discussion? Now that you have heard the issues, where do you as a parks board want to go next?
- Melissa – this board is willing to have open discussion. We would appreciate non-member input as well.
- Pat stated that we could talk about this issue all day. How are we going to measure the success of our discussion?
- Craig suggested we look at our current ordinance. That would be a good starting place. Members agreed, but added that the worst offenders will not care about an ordinance.
- Stacy then stated that some of the campgrounds use of “park hosts” – perhaps older retired people who are familiar with the parks. In one campground by the dam, there is an older gentleman that serves as the “enforcer”. While he can’t enforce laws per se, he is very visible. Maybe we could recruit a retired couple to park their camper in a park during the summer. Look at community members who take a special interest in our parks. Stacy also suggested bumping up our security cameras.
- Security cameras were also mentioned again; however, the issue with this is who would be in charge of monitoring said cameras.

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- Dave Payne suggested having a program like the forest service – they have an “Adopt a Trail Program” – perhaps we could do the same for a park. He reminded us that Police Chief McGee again said this is a community issue. We discussed the options of additional lighting or perhaps a curfew on the parks, but we need to be careful about putting too tight of controls on our parks. Dave is reluctant to say “let’s close the parks at 10:00 at night” because there are people who legitimately use our parks that late.
- Ross added that we were asked about being vigilant of trouble spots and perhaps collecting data on which parks are getting hit the most. Thomas stated that the police department can pull data by address of calls/complaints as well as routine drive throughs. Amy will ask the PD what type of information they can provide. Ross added that he too is reluctant to use curfews as a deterrent.
- Melissa suggested perhaps a member from our board could serve on a district school committee to better communicate with teachers and parents the issues we are seeing in our local parks.
- John agreed with this and said that would be a great venue to get information out. Schools have a policy on the “gathering rule”. The challenge to implementing policies is enforcement. Students are not allowed on the school property from dusk to dawn unless there is an authorized event. They have also put in limited video presence. The schools have seen fewer problems in parking lots. But, as with anything else, there has to be a funding source to keep equipment running and replaced as needed.
- Ross added that the chief did say video is good deterrent. Maybe we should consider limited video surveillance at trouble spots. The videos definitely make the investigation process easier saving administrative costs.
- Amy mentioned that four years ago a decision was made to install a camera in memorial park. The city partnered with the Helena Police Department. Unfortunately, what we discovered is that this is not always operational. We did not receive wide support from the commission on this.
- Amy and Craig are currently revamping signs at Skate Park – this area may a good area for video surveillance.
- Craig stated that a neighboring business put up cameras around Women’s Park. He believes this is helping.
- Per John – he recalls that some of discussion pertained to prevention through environmental design. What we been doing in Women’s Park is making a difference (trimming hedges, etc.).
- David Smith addressed the committee and asked what is wrong with the idea of a curfew? We have tried some of the items discussed; however, he is still seeing graffiti and things happening in the parks/parking lots that should not be happening. Cameras can’t capture everything. Dave hopes this committee will agree to do more.
- John then asked if we are referring to concerns at 2 or 3 parks or all of them. Dave recommended we put curfews on a few of the parks to begin with to see if this will help. Amy added the greatest issues we seem to have occurs at Memorial, Centennial, Women’s, Pioneer, Barney and Lincoln Parks – we have had some concerns in Anchor Park in the past. Andy recommended that perhaps we could do a pilot project – pick one park designated with a curfew and see what happens.

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- Amy then referred back to the Chapter 12 – City Park Ordinance handout. She and the parks department agree that we need to review/update this document.
- Ross asked what types of hours are we thinking of in regards to a curfew. Dusk to dawn was mentioned as was 10:00 pm to 6:00 am. However, there are people exercising in the parks as early as 5:30 am.
- Melissa – what are other communities in Montana doing? Amy will be happy to review and will bring the information back for the March meeting.
- Per Jane – have we had any conversation with Carroll College? It seems that they would feel the impact of what is happening in Centennial Park.
- Karen then asked about the status of our volunteer police officers. Do we still have some that would take on a project at our parks?
- John stated that when the school district went through their safety protocol, discussed the following items: Events, severity, frequency, what can be done through policy, equipment, and/or resources. He also reminded committee members that this is an ongoing process.
- Ross sees this as an immediate concern. We need to get more data from the police department and make this topic a regular part of our meetings.
- Amy recommended we list this discussion under the reports section: Park Safety. Jennifer will add this item to the agendas for future meetings.

**ACTION ITEM(S):**        **Jennifer will add this continued discussion under the Discussion Items section: Park Safety. Amy will visit with the Helena Police Department to see what type of data we can obtain from the PD regarding incidences in our parks.**

**7. Action Items**

- None

**8. Reports**

City	Amy Teegarden	Parks	Craig Marr
County	Matt Heimel	Fair Board	Dave Payne
HOLMAC	Jane Kollmeyer	Playgrounds	Stacy Sommer
Lincoln Parks Board	Nyle Howsman	School District	John Carter
Recreation	Todd Wheeler		

**City Reports:**

- Amy reminded the committee that there will be a Celebration of Life for Carol Kirkland next Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> beginning at 6:00 pm.
- We have hired our new Recreation and Aquatics Program Director and he will begin January 19<sup>th</sup>. He comes to us from Colorado. His name is Todd Wheeler and he brings experience in risk management and accreditation.
- Amy is working on a master parks agreement with the Helena School District.
- We have begun the FY17 budget process. We hope to have this ready to present to the board at the May or June meeting.

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- Amy mentioned that the tobacco free subcommittee has included the key messages for the tobacco free awareness campaign.

**County Reports:**

- Matt announced the submission of a resolution to be submitted Jan 19<sup>th</sup>. This is regarding funding for the Welch ranch project – 125 acres outside of York. You can go to the open lands site for further information.

**HOLMAC Reports:**

- Per Jane – nothing to report.

**Lincoln Parks Report**

- The bathrooms are in the process of being completed. They are working on the irrigation well.

**Recreation Report:**

- The ice rink was really popular over Christmas. There have been many private parties held.

**Parks Report:**

- Craig echoed what Amy said – this is the rinks best year yet.
- We obtained a new shop space so we've been busy cleaning and moving items. Amy suggested that we may want to have a parks board meeting in the new facility – perhaps May or June.
- Parks maintenance is doing a lot of ice removal.
- Parks is working on budget as well.
- We have an agreement in place with Northwestern Energy – they will reimburse us for trees they are removing.

**Fair Board Report:**

- Dave passed out a schedule of events currently taking place.
- Because the fair bond didn't pass, the fair board is attempting to reinvent the fairgrounds. They are working on improving the playground, and perhaps the possibility of an event center. They are focusing on needs in the community. Their next meeting is next week.
- Amy mentioned that she knows of a non-profit organization looking to do a sports complex. Amy will send Dave the contact information.

**Playgrounds Report:**

- Stacy announced that they are in fundraising season. There are several upcoming events scheduled. : February 13, 2016 – Zombie Prom; March 6, 2016 – Princess Tea Party; May 2016 – Superhero and Daddy Daughter Ball.
- Playable Playgrounds recently purchased a trailer to haul the imagination playground. It is currently being used by the winter school aged children program. The week before that, it was at Smith school. All PE instructors did hands-on training with the playground. Kay McKenna has already scheduled the playground for use this summer.

**School District**

- John stated they partnered with the Helena Trap Club (as well as received grant monies) and have put up fencing at the downrange side of the trap club in between Rossiter Elementary School and CR Anderson Middle School. The Helena Trap Club donated 25%, the school district paid 25%, and the balance came from grant money. This project was completed right after Thanksgiving.

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- As the schools are part of our recreational programming plan, the community is asking about the bond moving forward. The school district has held listening sessions in an effort to get community input. There will be a survey conducted by an independent company by end of month to narrow down the communities thoughts on our schools. As we try to move forward with a plan, John encourages everyone to get involved.
- We will provide the gymnasiums for the upcoming Swish Tournament.

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

- American Legion Proposal – Ryan Field Improvement
  - City-County Parks Board to discuss proposal and make recommendations
- Discussion with Helena Police Department regarding Park Data
  - Amy to report on data available through the police department

#### **10. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, February 3, 2016**

#### **11. Adjournment**

With no further business, the City-County Parks Board Meeting adjourned at 12:39 pm.

#### **ADA NOTICE**

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[citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov](mailto:citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov)  
 316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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