



City of Helena

CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY

Wednesday, July 6, 2016



**LOCATION: Parks Maintenance Building
1201 North Ewing
East of Kindrick Legion Field**

City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Melissa Lewis
- Ross Johnson

County Members

- Jane Kollmeyer
- Dave Payne
- Nyle Hawson (Lincoln Parks Board)

Joint Member

- Kalli Kind, School District Representative

Commission Representatives

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

Staff Contact

- Kevin Hamilton, Deputy Director, Lewis and Clark County Community Development and Planning
- Matt Heimel, Lewis and Clark County Special Districts Planner
- Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- Todd Wheeler, Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

**LOCATION: Parks Maintenance Building
1201 North Ewing
East of Kindrick Legion Field**

TIME: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Visitor(s): Cory Bailey, Debbie Grebenc, Al Knauber, Nicholas and Emily McVey-Touchette, Peggy Stringer, Linda Wilson, Richard Wilson

1. Call to Order

The City-County Parks Board Meeting was called to order at 11:35 am.

2. Establish Quorum/Review Agenda/Introductions

Vice Chairman Pat Doyle established a quorum. There were no changes made to the agenda.

3. Consent Action Items

Approval of minutes: June 1, 2016

With no corrections, Dave moved to approve the June 1, 2016 minutes as presented. Nyle seconded. Motion carried.

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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.

- Linda and Richard Wilson presented. They have lived in East Helena for 33 years. They have overseen the La Casa Grande Homeowners Association for the last 19 years. There were two parks established in East Helena and Richard and Linda presented a projection plan to the City-County Parks Board a few years ago which allowed for an irrigation system for the two parks. While they are very appreciative that they were able to install the irrigation system, they are now finding it difficult to maintain. This has been very taxing on the homeowners association. They met on June 16th and passed an increase of dues from \$4 a month to \$10 a month.
- Linda and Richard are seeking support and guidance from the City-County Parks Board. They have done a few upgrades to include planting trees and adding a basketball court; however, there is much more work that needs to be done.
- Dave stated he understands that they are seeking financial support as much as anything else. Linda said they are seeking both financial and volunteer help. The subdivision members are currently taking care of the park and that only includes about 50% of the members.
- At this time, there are repairs that need to be done to the mowers as well as other repairs. There is not enough money. But the issues aren't just financial. Richard and Linda are looking for suggestions/ideas on how to help care for these parks. They have gone door to door and handed out flyers. The meetings have dwindled down as well.
- Nyle asked for clarification – are these county parks. Linda stated yes but the idea was that the homeowners would care for them. When asked how big the parks are, Linda stated that Woodward Park is approximately 3½ acres and North Park is approximately 1½ acres.
- Linda then stated they have had many difficulties with the sprinkler system that was put in. They had to replace the pump which cost \$5,000.
- Dave asked if they have had any volunteer days. Linda stated that they did last year. They worked on laying gravel around the walking path. They also paid \$600 to have weeds sprayed. The person they hired moved to Colorado so there was no follow up. Only five people attended the volunteer day. Dave then said that this problem is not unique to the East Helena community. The board has been struggling with some answers in helping with the county parks.
- Pat remembered that Richard and Linda presented in the past. The county does have money in their budget for county parks (by regional areas) and he believes the account to include East Helena does have money in it.
- Richard then stated that at this point, they don't know where to turn. He and his wife are taking care of everything. The community doesn't seem to care about the parks.
- Richard is asking for financial assistance as the dues collected from the homeowners association don't even pay the power bills to run the sprinklers in the two parks.
- What would it cost homeowners if the county were to take over the maintenance of these parks?

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- Per Amy – the county relies on the homeowner association to do maintenance in their parks. Unfortunately there is no county staff or county commissioners at this meeting today. She stated we can make sure that the county staff and county commissioners hear your concerns. There has been previous discussion from the county that they were going to develop a process for groups to request money for park improvements and such. Jane recommended that they meet with the county staff/commissioners to discuss their concerns. Amy agreed and told Mr. and Mrs. Wilson that their comments echo what was heard when we did a feasibility study for a regional park district. Relying on volunteer groups for operations and maintenance is very difficult especially when there are capital costs.
- Nyle then asked if the Wilsons are asking for money for maintenance or a particular project. Richard stated they need to do some maintenance on the sprinkler system and mowers and maybe extra money during summer months to cover costs of running the sprinkler system.
- Nyle encouraged the Wilsons to speak with Howard Skjervem, Manager of Community Relations with Northwest Energy (howard.skjervem@northwestern.com).
- Richard said that when they first began the project at North Park, the water/sewer board gave the homeowners association the well.
- Dave suggested that over the next few months Richard and Linda create an expense sheet showing the costs to maintain the parks in an average year. They then can present their findings to city-county parks board of what the shortcomings are and how we can help. We need some background and an idea of what is needed. Richard and Linda can make their requests to this committee and we will take that information back to the county commissioners.

5. Park Safety Concerns

Parks Report – Amy and Cory

- While Amy has no formal report, she stated that in a conversation she had with Craig, issues we have been experiencing in our parks seem to be getting better.
- Cory said that in the last month, the police department received 84 calls for service – 10% of the calls were officer initiated. It seems to the PD that the traffic is moving from Memorial Park to Centennial.
- They had two reports at the skate park. One was a report of distribution of dangerous drugs.
- Amy asked Cory now that we have two or three months' worth of data, are we seeing confirmation of trouble parks. Cory stated the majority of the calls for service are coming from Centennial, Memorial, and Women's Parks. There have not been reports of large groups of juveniles congregating at Memorial Park. Amy said that we started to see the shift of juveniles going from Memorial to Centennial last summer.
- We also need to know where we are seeing vandalism. Typically vandalism is reported directly to our office. We had an incident where two boys took tubs of peanut butter and smeared it all over the Barney Park equipment. There was also some defacing of equipment at Waukesha.
- Amy – parks safety is standing topic on this agenda. We are generating data. Is there anything else we should be doing as it relates to this issue? She added that we are putting

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up new signage at the skate park and have budgeted money for the purchase of surveillance equipment. We have also required that the Alive at 5 tent be taken down weekly.

- Would this board be amicable to a 4 or 5 month data report at end of this summer? Jane asked if we will be looking at curfews. Amy stated that the city already has curfews in place for children 14 and under. We are looking at “park hours” but there has been no formal recommendation from staff as of yet. All Amy has done is researched what other communities have done.
- Ross – in your research, you mentioned that some of the communities are doing community safety audits. Ross would like to know more about those and what might be involved in performing that type of an audit. Amy will follow up on that. Ross then asked that we continue tracking data. It is very useful to see what is happening over time. The monthly generated reports have been very informative.
- Amy and Cory will meet before the August or September meeting to discuss findings.
- Dave agreed and added that it is fairly early in this process. Let’s continue to monitor and get more accurate numbers.
- The emails and calls Amy typically receives regarding complaints have subsided.
- Dave then asked about the issue with Marilyn Greely, the homeowner who lives behind the Man Store. Amy said that she and Craig visited the property in question and they are waiting to confirm ownership from GIS. She did state that this is a city right of way and not an official park. Because there may be work done in this area in the future we will be unable to surplus the property. Our maintenance department is maintaining this right of way and we will take care of the tree limb that overhangs on Marilyn’s property. Pat then asked what percentage of city property we maintain that has zero recreation value (i.e., medians and streets). Craig stated less than 10%.
- Jane – since serving on this board under Amy’s direction, we have looked more carefully when developers come in and say “this is park land”. Craig and Amy have also noticed that in the past there has been a trend of storm water or drain ways given to parks to maintain and we have started to push back to public works. Craig added that we do take care of the islands on Euclid and Last Chance Gulch as well as the one in front of the Brewhouse.
- Cory and Amy will provide a data summary report at the September meeting.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Amy will provide follow up information on community safety audits.

FOLLOW-UP ITEM: Cory and Amy will provide a data summary report on safety issues in the parks at the September meeting.

6. Presentations

Eagle Scout Project Proposal – Nicholas McVey-Touchette

- Nicholas stated he is doing a project for his Eagle Scout troop. The project he is presenting is the construction of a Gaga Ball Pit in one of the city parks.
- Gaga Ball is the Israeli form of dodgeball. It is played with one ball. The game combines dodging, striking, running, and jumping, with the object of being the last person standing. Players hit the ball at each other with their hands, and are eliminated if the ball strikes them on or below the knee. The game can be played by a group of individual players or

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with teams, as well as in one-on-one matches. Rules, ball types, pit surfaces, and pit sizes can vary widely at different venues.

- Nicholas is asking for permission to place a Gaga Ball Pit in one of our local parks. He distributed a handout that included costs. The project will only take a few days to complete. Nicholas anticipates the cost of this project with no donations to be approximately \$527.
- In order to build the pit, Nicholas will need level ground. He would put a weed barrier down so when it is not in use, weeds don't grow.
- Dave asked what the surface of pit is once it has been built. The pit is made up of dirt or sand.
- Jane – Are you asking for permission to build or are you asking for this board to fund this project? Nicholas is asking for permission.
- Amy then asked do kids in our community know what this is – is it a popular trend?
- A couple of the youth groups in town have played it. Nicholas added that after the pit is built, he would have an event to teach others how to play.
- Amy assumed the materials listed include treated lumber. She informed the board that there is a new a product that looks like lumber but is made out of recycled milk jugs. It is very low maintenance and high density. It even has a grain to it. Amy has wanted to experiment with this product to see how it does in our climate. While she knows it may increase to cost of the project, maybe the parks department could pay for the material. Dave stated it would be nice to get something that is maintenance free. Jane recommends we run this by the city attorney as well.
- Ross said that per the handout, it looks like Nicholas would need a 20 x 20 foot patch that is flat. He asked Nicholas if he has any sites in mind. Nicholas has been looking at Barney Park – there is an open section next to the playground.
- Amy added that the other thing we would have to design to this structure is an ADA accessible route from the parking area or a sidewalk. What is your timeframe? Nicholas stated he would like to have the project completed by December.
- Dave asked if there would be a gate to obtain access. Nicholas said there are a couple options. We can design the pit with a gate or we can cut out section that people would step over.
- Amy told Nicholas that in his research, he should show another option of accessibility. Dave then gave kudos to Nicholas for his initiative in presenting today. He asked Amy if this is something the parks board would need to approve.
- Amy and Craig can work with Nicholas on this.
- This is a low cost investment and might be fun to see this in the park. Amy also likes the possible use of Barney Park as we have a summer program that is held in that park and this could be a fun activity for the kids.
- Amy stated that if the parks board is okay, she, Craig and Nicholas will work on this project and Amy will keep the board updated. Amy will provide Nicholas information about the new product and encouraged him to do a cost comparison. The product is a much more upfront investment, but will last a very long time.
- Nicholas will follow up with Amy and Craig.

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7. Discussion Items

Indoor Recreation Facility Update – HRSA

- Peggy Stringer – as a representative of HRSA, Peggy first wanted to commend the city for their commitment to pay \$5,000 towards the feasibility study of an indoor recreation facility. The county has withdrawn their support of the project.
- The preliminary feasibility is done and the board is reviewing it now. It will be released to the public shortly. They are all very excited with what they have been told. We need to reinvest in our community and make certain that we are leaving a legacy.
- Peggy invited everyone to attend the HRSA meetings to learn more about this project. The committee meets 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm the second Monday of each month in the small conference room in the library.
- Dave asked when HRSA learned that the county withdrew their financial commitment. Peggy stated it was a recent decision. At this time, they felt they had more pressing issues such as the jail and fairground bonds being rejected.
- Amy stated the county is having their open budget meeting on July 12th and that is when they will actually pass their budget; however, they did pull the \$5,000 support off of the preliminary budget.
- Deb stated she received the market analysis which was very promising. Helena as a region is well positioned demographically and economically to support a center. They shared a survey and had nearly 900 residents respond. HRSA was thrilled with great results. The survey was posted online for two weeks. Helena Youth Soccer and the Helena Chamber sent the link to their membership groups which increased the number of respondents.
- Amy stated that the reason the city was so supportive in a feasibility study was to get a better understanding what the regional recreation needs are. This survey, with or without a recreation center, will show us where we need to be going in the future for our five/ten year planning. This will be wonderful information and Amy hopes the county sees the value as well. Having the data collected from the survey is worth \$5,000. This could also help with future grant writing efforts.
- Ross – when the study is released, will it also include potential locations for the facility? Deb stated that HRSA will be discussing potential sites at the meeting on July 11th beginning at 5:30. The contract signed with Ballard*King allows us to submit three potential locations for formal site analysis.
- Pat – has the Helena Chamber weighed in on this at all? Deb said that they did send the survey out to their membership; however, they have not come out and supported HRSA in a big way. Pat stated he viewed this facility as one of economic development for not only the city, but the county as well. Deb did add that Helena Tourism Alliance has helped with the process.
- This will remain a regular item on the agenda.

8. Action Items

None.

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9. Reports

City	Amy Teegarden	Parks	Craig Marr
County	Kevin Hamilton	Fair Board	Dave Payne
HOLMAC	Jane Kollmeyer	Playgrounds	Stacy Sommer
Lincoln Parks Board	Nyle Hawson	School District	Kalli Kind
Recreation	Todd Wheeler		

City – Amy

- Amy stated we have had a very busy summer.
- Amy reminded everyone that July is National Parks and Recreation Month. As part of our recognition, City of Helena Parks and Recreation will be sharing our tobacco free parks campaign. Teen groups will provide information at booths during the Alive at 5 events. We have purchased give-a-ways in an effort to promote this campaign.
- Amy announced that the Midtowne Sixth Ward Neighborhood and the City of Helena Parks and Recreation Department will co-sponsor the first Railroad Rendezvous at Beattie Park. This family friendly event will offer music, food, flea and farmers' market items, as well as outdoor games for both children and adults. The city will open up the locomotive engine that is on display to the public and there will be tours at the 6th Ward Garden Park. This event aims to draw attention to the Helena historic district. There is no charge for the event. There are two events scheduled for this summer – the first will be held Thursday, July 21st and the second will be held August 18th. We hope to make this an annual summer event that will occur once a month.

County – Kevin

- None.

HOLMAC – Jane

- HOLMAC's ongoing process is to review the trails and determine which ones we want to keep and which are redundant.
- Ross asked if Jane knows anything about the closed extension of Centennial trail next to the area out by Fort Harrison. Jane stated that PPLT is working on a plan trying to get funding.

Lincoln Parks Board – Nyle

- Nyle stated Lincoln had their annual rodeo, parade, and fireworks display. The park generated about \$2,000. They had some issues as the electricity went out for approximately three hours.

Recreation – Todd / Amy

- It has been an extremely busy time at the Pool. Swim lessons are going well. Online registration is also going well.
- We are seeing high attendance at Kay's Kids. Amy attributed some of this to the Helena School District's Summer Feed and Fund Program which offers free lunch in the parks. Kudos to Robert Worthy for his efforts in getting this program into our parks. We are seeing high numbers at all our recreation sites.

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- Tennis is going well.
- We do need more lifeguards. We have had to close sections of the pool at times because we don't have enough staff.
- We do have a certified lifeguard program that our staff has to complete. Todd Wheeler is teaching this (Starfish Aquatics program).

Parks – Craig

- Welcome to the new facility
- There was a health inspection at the pool which we passed with no issues or concerns.
- Crews are doing normal mowing and irrigation. Craig echoed what the people from East Helena stated in that they are doing irrigation repairs almost on a daily basis.
- The urban forestry crew is finishing up on Rodney Street. They have been pruning and doing removals, stump grinding and some planting.
- One of Craig's mower operators was mowing in Wesleyan Park and noticed a tree that had a bad crack through it. That was a real hazard so we removed the tree that day. That was a good observation on the mower operator's part.
- We have some new agility equipment and a leash rack at the dog park. These items were donated by Helena Building Industry Association in memory of Joslyn Murphy.
- The Barney Park Tennis Courts have been resurfaced. We added pickleball lines on three of the courts.
- We are trying to do better on water conservation as far as our irrigation systems. With that, we are working to get some of our parks on a well as opposed to city water. Parks we are looking at include Lockey, Jaycee, and Skelton parks. The parks department has been working with Hydrosolutions in completing paperwork, etc.

Fair Board – Dave

- Dave stated that there is a strong push in the last couple months for membership drives by Friends of the Fairgrounds. Dave reminded everyone that money available for improvements and facilities and maintenance is largely supported by membership dollars.
- The Last Chance Stampede and Fair will be held July 27 – July 30, 2016.

Playgrounds – Stacy

- None.

School District – Kalli

- Kalli announced that the school district will be doing a reroofing project at Rossiter and the west parking lot at Rossiter will be blocked off for staging materials.
- The district is still in conversations about doing some fencing at Lincoln School.
- Kalli is planning on giving a GIS demographic mapping software presentation in August. This information is useful in determining demographics of our children in the community. It may be a good tool for parks use as well.

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10. Communications and Future Agenda Items (Board Members)

11. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, August 3, 2016

12. Adjournment 12:47

With no further business the City-County Parks Board meeting adjourned at 12:47 pm. Those who could stay were invited to a tour of the new maintenance facility.

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TTY Relay Service [1-800-253-4091](tel:1-800-253-4091) or 711
citycommunitydevelopment@helenamt.gov
316 North Park, Avenue, Room 440, Helena, MT 59623

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