



City of Helena

# CITY-COUNTY PARKS ADVISORY BOARD SUMMARY Wednesday, January 10, 2018



### City Members

- Pat Doyle
- Ross Johnson
- Steve Baiamonte

### County Members

- Dave Payne
- Ken Wallace
- Nyle Howsmon (Lincoln Parks Board)
- Ernie Lundberg (Lincoln Parks Board)

### Joint Member

- Kalli Kind, School District Representative

### Commission Representatives

- Heather O'Loughlin, City Commissioner
- Susan Good-Geise, County Commissioner

### Staff Contact

- Lewis and Clark County Representative
- Amy Teegarden, Parks and Recreation Director
- Craig Marr, Parks Superintendent
- Todd Wheeler, Recreation and Aquatics Program Manager
- Jennifer Schade, Recorder

LOCATION: City-County Building, Room 426

TIME: 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Visitor(s): **Bill Casha, Deb Grebenc, Lindsay Morgan, David Smith, Thomas Jodoin**

### Call to Order

Chairman Pat Doyle called the City-County Parks Board meeting to order at 11:35 am.

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

- Amy welcomed our new commissioners to the board – Heather O'Loughlin is our new City Commissioner and Susan Good-Geise returns to the board as our County Commissioner. WELCOME TO OUR BOARD!
- Once Pat was able to establish a quorum, he requested a motion to approve minutes.
  - Steve moved to approve the October minutes as presented. Dave seconded. Motion carried.
  - Dave moved to approve the November minutes as presented. Steve seconded. Motion carried.

### Comments from Persons Present

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

### Placer Representative

- Bill Casha is a resident of the Placer. He is president of the "Friends of the Placer" (which is a 501c3 non-profit) and the Condo Association which includes 50 residences and over 20 businesses in the Place Building.

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- He thanked Craig and the Maintenance Department for all their hard work with the landscaping and capital improvements to the stream. He appreciates our efforts in enhancing the downtown walking mall.
- In the master plan, the walking mall is listed as a park/open space. Bill has asked how the Placer can help to enhance the downtown walking mall.
- Amy – the master plan outlines different goals and activities. The city is implementing the master plan through the direction of community development and planning – not parks and recreation. The walking mall is not a park, but a right-of-way maintained by the city parks and public works. It has its own ordinance and is technically a closed street. Parks will be managing it more with our own set of rules and guidelines for use of the pedestrian mall.
- The master plan will be done through the leadership of community development and planning. Amy believes they will look at this goal by goal. The first goal as directed by the city commission is to look at all city-owned properties in the downtown area and see what is available for potential surplus or trade.
- Parks and recreation is contributing to the goals in the master plan. We have increased our level of service and maintenance in the pedestrian mall. We will maintain the inherent qualities that are “park-like” such as landscaping, irrigation, garbage removal, snow removal, etc. Public works will continue to do the things that are inherent to maintaining a street or infrastructure.
- Amy then said that there is a big responsibility of the property owners on the walking mall. The issues we are seeing aren’t necessarily tied to parks level of service, but to enforcement.
- Amy added that parks and recreation have developed a permit application for uses and activities on the pedestrian mall. We are working on this project in an effort to streamline the process for permitting events. This will be administered through the parks and recreation department. In doing this, it is our hope that we will improve coordination of management and activities on the pedestrian mall.
- Amy then recommended that Bill take his concerns to the BID and DHI regarding property owners and their responsibilities.

## **Unfinished Business**

### **Indoor Recreation Facility Update – HRSA**

- Deb gave a report on the HRSA Indoor Recreation Facility.
  - They have formalized partnerships with the YMCA. HRSA is still exploring redevelopment at the YMCA site. They have expanded the vision to include an early learning center.
  - Waiting on final numbers from sports facility experts from Denver.
  - They will be doing a soil test at the YMCA site. This will hopefully provide assurance that there are no hazmat materials in the area. This test is being funded by a grant from the EPA.
  - Before taking this to the public, they are waiting on capital costs with the addition of the learning center.
- Amy expressed concerns that this vision is just going to scratch itch. We are positioning ourselves from doing a broader project. City parks has stated we will not be a barrier to this site, even though it will affect part of Centennial and Bausch Parks; however, Amy will advocate very strongly that the city does not have a stronger role because she does not believe it will feel the larger, broader community. Many people want a bigger facility.

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- Heather asked to see the needs assessment and summary. Jennifer will add the link to the minutes. Please see below:
  - <http://helenasports.org/study-completion-guides-sports-facility-vision/>
  - <http://helenasports.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/hrsa-phase3-report-final.pdf>
  - Helenasports.org

## **Presentations/Discussion Items**

### Regional Trail Planning Concept – Amy

- Amy stated that there are efforts under way between the city, US Forest Service and Prickly Pear Land Trust (PPLT) to start looking at a multi-jurisdictional trail system. We want to have a collective vision for the trails in our community that cross multi-jurisdictional boundaries. The goal is to have collective management, collective promotions, and to do things in a well thought out manner, because while we each entity may have trails we manage, they are used as a broader system.
- There are opportunities to do regional planning that will help to ensure that we have a sustainable trail system to meet the demands such as hiking, mountain biking, etc.
- The group Amy has been meeting with is working on a mission and vision statement and will be making a presentation to the parks board in February. One of the things this group will ask is that the city and county commissioners consider a resolution establishing a regional steering committee that looks at the broader trail system which in turn will work with the City-County Parks Board to be a guide for trails in our regional area.
- Susan asked about the potential of a trailhead at the end of Beattie Street. Amy stated that HOLMAC (Helena Open Lands Management Advisory Committee) has been working with our Open Lands Manager on this project. HOLMAC will roll out two different concepts. We extended the comment period on the work plan and will meet with the neighborhood and community at large. Beattie Street Trailhead is the highest used trailhead for accessing Mt. Ascension. The goal is to accommodate the existing use (not to make it bigger). Currently the parking area is a right of way and that is being condensed. We believe it is reasonable management to build a parking area up on open lands that includes a restroom, ADA accessibility and a kiosk and parking. The city has done traffic studies and the studies do not support traffic calming efforts. Amy added that we have had discussions about this project for over a year. There is a high percent of residents that support what we are doing. Our intent is good. We feel this is responsible management. We are taking a pro-active approach. Our trail system is only going to increase.
- To review the work plan, please go to:
  - [http://www.helenamt.gov/fileadmin/user\\_upload/City\\_Parks/Open\\_Lands/Documents/Work\\_Plan/DRAFT\\_2018\\_Work\\_Plan.pdf](http://www.helenamt.gov/fileadmin/user_upload/City_Parks/Open_Lands/Documents/Work_Plan/DRAFT_2018_Work_Plan.pdf).

### Park Safety – Code Revision Discussion – Continued

- City parks and police began documenting calls for service in city parks in May 2016. The results of this process are included in a memo dated October 11, 2017. This memo documents what we have been experiencing in parks as it relates to issues and concerns. There were a total of 1,050 calls for service; 681 were citizen-initiated, 135 were initiated by police patrols and 234 were unknown. Most of the calls came in the spring/summer months. In August 2017, we saw a significant increase. As the weather got nicer, so did the calls for service.
- The parks with the highest number of calls for service included:

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PARK	TOTAL CALLS	COMMENTS
Centennial	195	Experienced less dumping and littering in 2017
Memorial	160	None noted
Woman's	110	Complaints of undesirable transient behavior by adjacent businesses
Cruse	75	Majority of users are from God's Love or transients
Skate	63	None noted
Nature	56	Arson fires, warming fires, and camps

- One of the reasons we went through this process was the suggestion of establishing park hours. We currently rely on curfew; however, we have heard more complaints of issues in neighborhood parks having late night activity. It was then suggested that we establish "quiet hours".
- Moving forward, it is the city staff recommendation that with updating our comprehensive parks plan, we review our park codes and address the issues of quiet/park hours. This would be an action item in the comprehensive plan for next fall.
- Amy was asked if the board voted not to establish park hours. There has been no motion before this parks board. There has only been discussion. The board's recommendation was to track calls for service.
- Amy – when we look at the calls for service and what they were and where they are at, Amy does not believe that park hours will change the behavior but it could be a help for enforcement.
- Dave – 4p to midnight most likely captures 60-70% of the calls.
- Amy is suggesting that we don't do a revision of park hours right now, but instead do this as part of the greater comprehensive parks plan.
- Dave Smith asked what our next step is.
- Pat agreed with Dave – when looking at codes, we need to do a broader planning effort. Pat recommended a parks enforcement officer who can monitor the parks on a seasonal basis. Craig stated that Billings just hired a parks police officer.
- Steve – as an officer who has served for 20 years, having hours in parks gives the police department full rights to enforce. They can use their discretion to determine "this person is vandalizing" vs. "this person is walking their dog". Park hours are an enforcement tool. It allows a police officer to stop someone if they have probable cause to check on a situation. Park hours set an expectation.
- Heather - is there a downside of setting park hours? Amy stated the downside is the fact that we never have had park hours. We have runners in Centennial Park at 4:00am. The police that have been in attendance at these meetings have indicated that they don't have discretion in stopping a person doing malicious things vs. a runner. They may potentially be punishing folks that aren't a problem.
- Craig – every other city has figured these issues out with park hours.
- Ross stated he would like to see this issue included the comprehensive plan planning process. Pat and Dave agreed but added that we not take a long time to make decisions.
- Steve – have you explored quiet hours? Amy stated not yet. This would be more of an educational item vs. an enforcement issue.

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- Amy stated that she and Lindsay with the county prepared a memo regarding the Park Planning Consultant recommendation.
- Together, the City and County sent out a request for qualifications to prospective planning consultants for updates of their jurisdictional comprehensive parks plans by combining planning processes and services. They received four proposals. A committee consisting of Lindsay Morgan, Greg McNally, Ross Johnson and Amy reviewed, scored and discussion qualifications of a consultant. Based on pros and cons identified by reference checks (summarized in the memo) and the scope of services/deliverables and costs proposed, the recommendation is to enter into a contract with GreenPlay, LLC.
- This will be a 2-phase process. The first phase would be completed this year; the second phase would be included in the budget for next year. Phase 1 is where we can look at park hours.
- Ross added that GreenPlay brought some unique skills. The staff is well qualified. They were very straight forward.
- Lindsay added that all their references said that everything they did was completed on time and on budget. Amy agreed with Ross and Lindsay and added that they will be excellent consultants to city and county staff and the parks board.
- Amy is recommending we enter into a contract with GreenPlay. They are working on their scope of services. We are looking to kick-off in February or March. Phase 2 – we will put this in our budget planning for FY19. We will renegotiate a second contract.
- For more detailed information on process and scope of services, see the attached pages at the end of this summary.

**Action Items**

**Reports**

City	Amy Teegarden	Parks	Craig Marr
County	Representative	Fair Board	Pat Doyle
HOLMAC	Dave Payne	Playgrounds	Stacy Sommer
Lincoln Parks Board	Nyle Howsmon	School District	Kalli Kind
Recreation	Vacant		

**City - Amy**

- None.

**County – County Representative**

- None.

**HOLMAC – Dave**

- Dave referred back to the work plan mentioned at the beginning of the meeting. Links have been provided.

**Lincoln Parks Board – Amy**

- Per Ernie: they are still waiting for a response from the bathroom contractor this month. If they don't hear from them soon, legal action will be taken.

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- Snowmobilers are parking at the park and venturing out from there. Lincoln has had a lot of snow this year.

#### **Recreation – Vacant**

- None.

#### **Parks – Craig**

- The parks department has been very busy with snow removal.
- Urban forestry is grinding and making mulch for summertime projects.
- Craig is working on budgets and doing his CCIP (Comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan).

#### **Fair Board – Pat**

- The big event last weekend was first annual Helena Skijoring event. Pat stated there were over 4000 people in attendance for the 3 day event.

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

- Regional Trails Plan

**Next Meeting Date: February 7, 2018**

#### **Adjournment**

With no further business, the City-County Parks Advisory Board meeting adjourned at 1:05 pm.

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Persons with disabilities requiring accommodations to participate in the County's meetings, services, programs, or activities should contact Aaron Douglas, as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to arrange for the requested accommodation, at any of the following: (406) 447-8316, 316 North Park Avenue, Room 303, Helena, MT 59623; ; TTY Relay Service [1-800-253-4091](tel:1-800-253-4091) or 711, [adouglas@lccountymt.gov](mailto:adouglas@lccountymt.gov).

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