



Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 7, 2013 - 7:30 p.m.

Municipal Building Commission Chambers

Attended by: Board members Hugh Beal, Susana Montoya, Bill Moorhead, Bruce Parry and John Vogel. Also present were Commissioner Kelly Fraasch and Director of Recreation, David Donnellan.

Absent: Board members Carrie Beck and David Franklin.

I. Approval of the April 2, 2013 Minutes

The minutes were approved as submitted.

II. Citizen Comments

There were no general citizen comments. Citizens were permitted to comment on agenda topics at the time they were discussed during the meeting.

III. Girl Scout Brownie Troop Butterfly Garden Proposal

Local Brownie Troop 51404 presented their proposal for a butterfly garden in Highland Terrace Park. The troop said they would fund, install and maintain the garden. David Donnellan referenced the location for the proposed garden on the drawing for the park. He indicated that the garden would make a nice enhancement to the park. The board was in favor of this addition to the park. The troop will coordinate the installation with Mr. Donnellan.

IV. Municipal Planting Beds (Nancy Smith and Janice Seigle)

Master Gardeners and residents, Nancy Smith and Janice Seigle, reviewed their proposal to improve planting beds maintained by the municipality. Their proposal included identifying 6-10 beds per year for improvement by adding more perennials, water access and improved bed conditioning. The proposal called for increased funding to the planting bed program, and success would be dependent, in part, on holding the contractor that maintains the beds accountable.

Ms. Smith and Ms. Seigle would identify the beds for improvement each year and work with volunteers to monitor the success of the program. They identified 6 beds (#7, #8, #9, #10, #13, and #22) as the focus for initial improvements this year: two beds at Cedar and Greenhurst, upper and lower beds at Jefferson and Washington, Longuevue at Washington

and Parkside at Sunset. Ms. Smith stated that the budget for the first 6 beds was \$2,500. She stated that by improving 6 beds each year, the upgrades to all the beds should be completed in five years.

Ms. Seigle indicated that the Commission had approved the proposal. Mr. Vogel endorsed the bed improvements on behalf of the board. No further action was necessary.

V. Request for Benches in Spalding Circle (Julie Jackovic)

Ms. Montoya told the board that Julie Jackovic, a resident in the Spalding Circle area, is requesting the addition of a couple benches in the lower perimeter of Spalding Circle. Ms. Montoya stated Ms. Jackovic has collected approximately 50 signatures from neighbors in support of the placement of benches in Spalding Circle. Mr. Vogel asked David Donnellan if the benches are allotted in the budget. Mr. Donnellan said the benches are not budgeted, but they are worthy of consideration. Mr. Beal asked Mr. Donnellan for an approximate cost for one bench. Mr. Donnellan said the cost for benches ranges from \$500 to over \$1,000, with the average cost being around \$600, including installation. Mr. Vogel said the board will take this request under advisement when reviewing smaller park improvement projects.

VI. Commission Request to Review Rules and Regulations Concerning Domesticated Animals in Parks.

Citizen Comments:

Cindy Kelley (Abington Drive) spoke in support of permitting neighbors to walk their dogs on a leash in the local parks, specifically Williamsburg Park. She stated that since Bird Park (a passive park), Twin Hills Park (no zoning), and Robb Hollow Park (a diversified park) all allow leashed dogs, then she hopes the Board will consider allowing them in Williamsburg Park. Mrs. Kelley said she has not seen a problem with loose dogs or dog waste in the park, and that responsible dog owners would be good stewards of the park.

Clint Kelley (Abington Drive) also spoke in favor of allowing dogs in Williamsburg Park. Mr. Kelley reminded the Board that this issue was recommended by the Board in February, but was rejected by the Commission. Mr. Kelley said after this rejection, he was upset to hear that the Commission approved dogs in Twin Hills Park. Mr. Kelley said the consistent application of rules and regulations from one park to the next, is appropriate.

Ms. Fraasch explained that Twin Hills Park was considered a passive park, as are Bird and Robb Hollow, and that is why the Commission approved permitting dogs in Twin Hills. She also indicated the Commission received a lot of negative feedback from residents opposed to dogs in Williamsburg Park.

The board agreed that further discussion was necessary to make a recommendation to the Commission on the issue of permitting dogs in parks.

VII. Review and Prioritization of Smaller Park Improvement Projects

David Donnellan presented a list of potential smaller park projects for the Board to consider. He indicated the list was in no particular order and that the board could suggest other projects, but it was important to prioritize a list for the Commission to consider.

Jonathan Farrell, a volunteer with the Mt. Lebanon Nature Conservancy and an environmental consultant with Civil and Environmental Consultants (CEC), presented a proposal to the Board for trails and natural areas mapping in the parks. He indicated that the purpose of the proposal was to identify and document trail maintenance needs and ecological problem areas. Mr. Farrell stated he has been working with the Conservancy on this project on a volunteer and is now seeking funding (\$2,700) in order to consolidate this data into a package that can be used as a tool for management of the parks. Mr. Farrell said his research will provide the Board and Public Works with the initial field mapping and base data to make informed decisions regarding the allocation of resources to address public safety, recreation, site-planning, and ecological issues in passive use park areas. He added that the field mapping and data collection will be useful when working on the natural areas study and the sustainable management plan for Mt. Lebanon parks. Mr. Farrell also gave the board a 'wish list' of small, parks trail and restoration projects.

The board agreed to discuss the proposal further at their next meeting.

Ms. Montoya stated that she would like maintenance issues at Meadowcroft Park added to the list including repairs to the fencing, painting the electrical box and repairing the eroded sidewalk. She also mentioned the need for signage to identify the access road to the soccer field at Bird Park for the mobility impaired and a new concrete pad below the arbor at Church Place Park.

The board agreed that prioritization of projects will be held until the next meeting.

VIII. Home Rule Charter Review

Mr. Donnellan reminded the board of the need to designate a board member to attend the Home Rule Charter Meeting. Ms. Fraasch stated the meeting will be on Wednesday, May 15, at 7:00 p.m. in Commission Chambers. Mr. Vogel volunteered to attend the meeting, if no other board members were interested.

IX. New Business

Ms. Fraasch distributed information to the board regarding dog parks, and discussed the potential for a dog park in Robb Hollow. The park would be located beyond the Public Works facility, towards Gilkeson Road, along Cedar Boulevard. She shared policies and procedures for the operation of dog parks in neighboring communities.

Ms. Fraasch reported the estimated cost to build the dog park is approximately \$265,000. This includes grass, fencing, parking, and an access road. On-going costs may include enhancements and maintenance.

Ms. Fraasch stated that the Commission requested she meet with a group of citizens to gather recommendations for the proposed dog park. Ms. Fraasch reported that the group recommended that small children and babies not be permitted inside the dog enclosure, sunrise to sunset hours, requiring dogs to be licensed and vaccinated, FOB access, and

resident only access and a \$30 fee for the first year. Non-residents at a higher fee could be considered the second year. The group also discussed a 'Friends of' group to help with ongoing costs. The group suggested special programming for the dog park, including dog birthday parties. Ms. Fraasch will share the outcome of the meeting with Commission. She said the majority of Commission is in support of the dog park. Ms. Montoya suggested having green space near the dog park. Ms. Fraasch stated that she hoped the dog park project would go out for bid as early as this summer or fall.

Mr. Beal asked Mr. Donnellan if the Mt. Lebanon Recreation staff is equipped to handle the registrations for, and administration of the dog park. Mr. Donnellan assured the board that his staff will be able to handle the administrative work involved.

Ms. Fraasch stated that the Commission approved the purchase of 2.2 acres of land adjacent to Robb Hollow Park. She added that recent tree cutting on this property was done by the current owner.

X. Announcements

There were no announcements.

XI. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:31 p.m.