

**PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**OCTOBER 3, 2023**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Committee Members present: Scott Creighton, Ketti Green, Kameron Hanson, Doug Peterson, and Megan Weber. Committee Members absent: Cory Ellingson, and Ken Halverson. Also present: Streets, Parks, and Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels and Recreation and Communication Coordinator Corrie Scott.

**3. ADOPT AGENDA**

Committee Member Green motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Committee Member Creighton, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Michels reviewed that approval of the Regular Parks Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes of June 26, 2023 will be brought to the October 23, 2023 meeting.

**5. BUSINESS**

**5A. BUDGET DISCUSSION**

Wegeleben reviewed the current City budget pertaining to parks. Creighton asked if trails are also a part of park dedication funds. Wegeleben confirmed that park dedication funding can be used for parks or trails. Creighton asked when the park maintenance fund began. Wegeleben stated that it was created in 2020. Michels stated that replacement of existing parks equipment cannot be done through the park dedication fund, which is why the park maintenance fund was created. Peterson asked if these funds expire. Wegeleben stated that park dedication funding will not expire. She stated that the CIP funds are at the will of City Council, so there is a chance that if there was a budgeting issue, those funds could be used for other projects.

Creighton asked Michels what his projection is to set aside for each park project. Michels stated that those projections are being worked on and that staff plans to take the park rating scale and include projected dates as well. He stated that parks can degrade quicker

than projected depending on weather and usage, but that he would like to make a projection on a date and then adjust accordingly each year. Michels stated that some parks that aren't ADA compliant could qualify for the park dedication fund to be fully upgraded. Creighton asked about trees and benches and what fund could be used for that. Wegeleben stated that adding trees and benches would be done using the CIP fund. Michels stated that for example a portion of Lakeside Park needs to be replaced, but because it is already ADA compliant and only a portion of the park is in need of replacement, it would be a better candidate for the CIP fund.

Weber asked for an example outside of ADA compliance that park dedication funds could be used. Michels stated adding pickleball courts for example would be an enhancement in an existing park that could be funded through the park dedication fund. Wegeleben stated that it is important to bring goals to City Council so that it shows the CIP fund is needed. Klimmek recommended that the rating sheet could have a projected dollar amount along with the projected year for reconstruction. Weber asked if staff is looking for specific recommendations for what to use each park funds for. Wegeleben stated that having a Strategic Plan will be helpful for her going forward.

Creighton asked if PAC members can request updated balance information for these funds. Wegeleben confirmed that this information can be requested at any time. Wegeleben stated that goals could be set above and beyond current funding and that those projects could be proposed to City Council to see if they are in support. Michels stated that at any time PAC members are welcome to email or call staff with proposed projects.

## **5B. DRAFT STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION**

Michels presented a draft PAC Strategic Plan and requested direction from the PAC regarding changes, additions or omissions. Michels stated that based on feedback, the Plan will be finalized and prepared for final approval during the October 23, 2023 PAC meeting.

Creighton asked about the hockey rink proposal and if it can be added to the Strategic Plan. Michels stated that staff will add the hockey rink to the Strategic Plan. Weber asked about emerald ash borer and if there will be issues with future costs due to its migration to Big Lake. Michels stated that it will be extremely difficult to manage and control. He stated that he has worked with the City Planner to avoid new trees coming in from developers that could potentially be affected by the disease. Michels stated that there are minimal ash trees in the parks system. He stated that maples and oaks are mainly the type of trees found in the park system and that there are about 20 trees marked to be trimmed this winter. He stated that there have been conversations on the County level regarding what can be allowed in the compost site.

Weber stated that she has seen people get creative with what to do with the trees such as building sheds or creating natural playscapes. Michels stated that December and January

is the best time to find emerald ash borer and that they start from the top of the tree and then go down. Weber stated that her biggest concern is the cost of removal of potential trees that are in the park system and how that would affect the finances for the park system. Michels stated that there aren't many ash trees in the park system, but there are a couple of boulevards in the community with ash trees. Green asked about having a hired arborist on staff. Michels stated that there is one staff member that did about 80 hours' worth of training and is working on being certified, but that the test is extremely difficult to pass.

Green asked about River Oaks Park and if it will be added to a Strategic Plan in the future. Michels stated that the challenge with River Oaks Park is that there isn't infrastructure there. Green asked what steps need to be taken to move forward with developing that park. Michels stated that he plans to propose adding an archery range to River Oaks Park. Hanson stated that the park also floods often. Creighton asked about what Public Works plows and what is owned by the County. Michels stated that the whole park is plowed voluntarily. Michels asked the PAC to consider suggestions and bring them to the next meeting. Green asked if the City would consider adding a sidewalk to the water for ADA accessibility and if it was considered, what fund would be used. Wegeleben stated that it would likely come from the CIP fund. Creighton asked if the fishing pier has accessibility. Green confirmed that there is to the pier, but not down to the water.

Peterson asked about the responsibilities of the PAC that are listed in the Strategic Plan. Michels reviewed the PAC responsibilities as set forth by Ordinance 2002-03. Peterson stated that he would like to see the PAC be involved in helping with funding.

## **5C. BROM PARK DISCUSSION**

Michels reviewed that staff has been investigating an opportunity to create a neighborhood park on the City owned property at the intersection of Brom Lane and Tarrytown Rd. He stated that the land is generally low and a preliminary assessment indicates that much of the park would be classified as a wetland. He stated that staff is looking to improve the elevation or utilize the natural setting and asked the Parks Advisory Committee to discuss and give feedback.

Creighton stated that in past discussions the PAC was interested in a more natural space. Hanson asked if trails could be installed in the park. Weber asked if there could be anything constructed outside of the 50x50' space. Michels stated that he would have to ask the DNR if that would be permissible. Michels also stated that due to the wetlands, it would potentially cause high moisture and damage to trails or equipment. Green asked if the space is tree covered. Michels stated that there is some open space, but there are quite a few trees in the space. Green asked what would make the park ADA compliant. Michels stated that everything would have to be wheelchair accessible. Green recommended building up like a treehouse. Michels stated that something built up could be a potential liability. Creighton asked if there has been a survey sent out to see what the age range in

the area is. Scott confirmed that there was a survey sent out years ago, but the information might be outdated.

Hanson recommended making the space a dog park. Green stated that with the area being near a wetland it could be an issue with dogs wandering into the wetland. Weber stated that she likes the idea of the dog park. She asked if the 50x50' space would all be fenced in. Michels stated that there would need to be setbacks and sidewalk, so the full space would likely not be fenced in. Weber stated that having a park without a large play structure that is geared more toward smaller children would be nice. Michels stated that he has seen park equipment for smaller children, but that not much equipment would fit into the space at Brom Park. He also stated that there is only street parking so that needs to be kept in mind. Creighton asked about sidewalks in the area. Michels stated that there is a sidewalk on Tarrytown, but not on Brom.

#### **5D. NOVEMBER MEETING DATE CHANGE DISCUSSION**

Michels reviewed that the City Council rescheduled their Wednesday, November 22, 2023 meeting to Monday, November 27, 2023, which conflicts with the regularly scheduled PAC meeting. He asked the PAC to consider rescheduling or cancelling the November meeting.

Klimmek stated that it would be valuable to meet in November as there will be a Joint Committee Workshop in December and that could be a good time to work on the presentation. Scott stated that as per Michels' direction, the November meeting has been publicly rescheduled for November 28, 2023. She stated that an option would be to wait until October and if the November 28 date doesn't work for the majority of the Committee, then it could be rescheduled again at that time.

#### **5E. STAFF UPDATES**

Scott reviewed the status of various programs and recreation taking place in the community's parks. Green asked if Movie in the Park could feature movies that aren't geared specifically for children. Scott stated that when she inherited the program the City was specifically choosing PG rated movies geared toward families, but staff could always consider other ratings or choose movies that are more geared toward adults or couples if that is requested. She stated that there is a survey sent out to the public and that there is an option to make suggestions of movies that aren't already on the list in the survey as well.

Green asked if there could be an agreement made with the new owners of the lot across from Lakeside Park regarding parking during music in the Park. Scott stated that because their business will likely be open during the series, they will potentially prefer to have that parking set aside for their customers, but that the conversation could be had closer to the start of the series. Creighton asked if there is a sidewalk on Sherburne Avenue. Wegeleben confirmed that there is no sidewalk on Sherburne Avenue. Wegeleben

recommended that people park at City Hall and walk to Lakeside Park. Scott stated that although this is an option, parking at City Hall is also limited as there are other businesses open during the series and not everyone is willing or able to walk that far as many attendees are elderly, have handicaps, or have multiple children.

Michels reviewed that staff is working on mulching, pulling swimming buoys, park aerating, fertilizing, and irrigation blowouts. Peterson asked how late the dock will be left out. Michels stated that he tries not to pull the dock until the water temperature lowers as the lake is heavily used by boaters in the fall.

Michels stated that new cameras were installed at Lakeside Park this summer. He stated that there will still be training on how to operate them. He stated that there will also be sidewalks installed at Lakeside Park leading to the park shelters to make it ADA compliant. Creighton stated that there was recent vandalism to boats and cars at Lakeside Park.

Scott asked about soap at the bathrooms at Lakeside Park. Michels stated that the soap dispensers have been ordered and if they aren't installed this year, they will be installed next spring when the bathrooms are opened back up to the public. He stated that the doors on the bathrooms will also be replaced next year.

## **6. COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS**

Green stated that there was a discussion regarding parkways at the Planning Commission meeting. She stated that there will be more discussions on this going forward. Green stated that they are reviewing their Strategic Plan. Green asked if there could be discussions between the City's various Committees mid-year as well as the wrap up meeting in December. Wegeleben recommended that the proposed meeting take place in May.

**7. OTHER** – None.

## **8. ADJOURN**

Committee Member Green motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:13 p.m. Seconded by Committee Member Creighton, unanimous ayes, meeting adjourned.