

APPROVED
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes
May 1, 2007

Chair Wager called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm in the Parks and Recreation Community Room in Mayors' Riverfront Park.

Roll Call:

Members Present: Lance Ferraro, Gary Wager, Michael Dombos, Gina Antoniotti, Griffin Williams and Zachary Greening

Members Absent: Brian Fricke

City Commission Liaison: Barbara Miller

Friends of Recreation Liaison: David Carrigan

Staff Present: Frances Jewell and Pat Vinge

Introduction of Guests: Robert Holmes, Westwood resident; Raoul Yochim, Co-President of the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association; Dick Skalski, Kalamazoo River Trailway City Staff; Tim Gleeson, Parks Sports Supervisor

Changes to the Agenda: Kalamazoo River Valley Trailway Management Agreement added to New Business.

Special Presentations:

Parks and Recreation staff presentation to provide PRAB with a better understanding of what Parks and Recreation staff do in the community.

Tim Gleeson, Parks Sports Supervisor, gave an overview of the Parks and Recreation Adult Sports programs which he coordinates and supervises as well as facility management of Mayors' Riverfront Park.

Approval of Minutes: *The April 3, 2007 minutes were unanimously approved.*

Old Business:

Board Applications – tabled until June. Chair Wager will contact Larry Ross and Holly Ringle to invite them to the June meeting for an interview.

New Business:

Kalamazoo River Trailway Management Agreement

Frances introduced Dick Skalski, a retired City Engineer, who for many years worked closely with the entire trailway development in this area and is now under contract with the City as this portion of the project nears completion. The presentation was to acquaint PRAB with the project and discuss the contract between the City and the County regarding the portion of the trailway that goes through the City. Dick shared that the trailway project is close to an agreement with the railroad for right of way through one portion of City property and that all other properties have been secured. In order to qualify for State DNR funds to build the trailway, the County and the City must have a maintenance agreement on the portion of the trail through the City. The City will build the City portion of the trail and the County is accepting responsibility for maintenance of the trailway. The County already has funds in a Maintenance Endowment which was created for the trailway. ***PRAB unanimously recommended approval of the "Recreation Area Management and Use Agreement between the County of Kalamazoo and the City of Kalamazoo."***

Recommendations

The Board unanimously recommended that the City Manager approve the following event:

- West Main Hill Neighborhood Association – Annual WMH/USTA Picnic, Henderson Park – Tuesday, August 7, 2007, noon-9:30 (event 5-9:30)
- Kalamazoo Gospel Mission, New Life Community Event, Martin Luther King, Jr. Park, Saturday, May 5, 2007, 9:00 am-5:00 pm **[approved by e-mail poll 4/25-26/07; 5 approved, 3 no response]**

Comments:

Citizens – Non Agenda Items:

Robert Holmes shared that his family has participated in City Parks and Recreation programs for several years and has been delighted with the playground program. His concern regarded registration at the King Westwood Mini-Camp Playground site this year. Maximum registration was reached very quickly and a large portion of the registrants were non-residents. He felt it was unfair for non-residents to register in a program when residents were waiting to be in the program. Due to the low cost of the program, he also said that he felt that he was having to subsidize non-residents utilizing City programs. He hoped it could be corrected this year but realized that might not be possible. He suggested that the City look at making the playground program a “break-even” program with financial assistance for City residents and an early registration preference for City registrants. Mr. Holmes gave PRAB a copy of the letter that he sent to the City Commission concerning the Playground Program.

Frances shared that 2007 was a “status quo” budget and that the minimum wage increase impacted the budget by about \$22,000. Also, this year the State started licensing playgrounds that qualify as day camps and requires a 1 adult staff to 10 youth ratio which limited registration. She assured Mr. Holmes that staff would look at the resident/non-resident fee structure next year. **PRAB unanimously voted to request that the City Commission consider and evaluate the 2008 summer playground program regarding fees, residency, and capacity.**

Raoul Yochim, Co-President of the Oakland Drive/Winchell Neighborhood Association expressed appreciation to Frances Jewell and the Parks staff for help with the April 21 Earth Day cleanup of the Parkdale Plat Parks. A huge amount of trash was pulled out of the parks and Park staff hauled it all away. Mr. Yochim said that the cleanup has brought happiness to the area and now the residents need to keep it clean and work at keeping casual dumpers out

Commission Liaison Comments: None

Friends of Recreation Liaison: Gary Wager shared that Friends annual Golf Outing will be held on a Friday this year, July 20, at Eastern Hills Golf Course and that the van is on order.

Parks and Recreation Director – Monthly Report

Fairmount Park’s master plan for the dog park is in the final planning stages. Frances stated that the April 25 public input meeting drew 25-30 citizens. The \$600,000 funding for the park will be done in 3 phases, with the \$125,000 first phase consisting primarily of parking lot upgrades and fencing. Three parks (LaCrone, Woods Lake, and Fairmount Parks) now have master plans completed and will be eligible for State grants once they are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation 5 Year Master Plan.

Frances gave members a copy of the " Purpose Statement" of the Bronson Park Fountain of the Pioneers Resolution Group that was presented to and approved by Resolution by the City Commission at their April 30, 2007 meeting.

Frances handed out a copy of the Parks and Recreation memo to the Clerk's Office, outlining Parks and Recreation events in the parks. She also shared that street improvements on Kilgore Road will impact some trees in Milham Park which are located within the street right of way.

Frances commended Griffin Williams for his participation as a Kalamazoo Central volunteer for the Special Olympics Area Swim Meet, for which Frances is a coach.

Staff Comments: None

Board Member Comments: Lance Ferraro shared a letter to the editor that he had written to the Gazette regarding opposition to the potential sale of Eastern Hills Golf Course. A copy of the letter is attached with the minutes.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Vinge, Recording Secretary

attached:
Letter from Lance Ferraro opposing sale of Eastern Hills Golf Course