

APPROVED
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes
October 2, 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: Gary Wager, Lance Ferraro, Gina Antoniotti, Michael Dombos, Zachary Greening and Griffin Williams

Members Absent: Brian Fricke

City Commission Liaison: Barbara Miller, absent

Friends of Recreation Liaison: David Carrigan

Staff Present: Frances Jewell and Pat Vinge

Introduction of Guests: Elaine Wickstrom, vice president of West Main Hill Neighborhood Association; Jeff Sherman; John and Carol Booden, Milham and Blanche Hull Parks volunteers

Changes to the Agenda: Lovell Street Park project 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.

Pete Aerts, Youth Program Coordinator, discussed the various youth programs he coordinates, supervises, and runs.

Approval of Minutes: *The September 4, 2007 minutes were unanimously approved.*

Old Business:

Henderson Park Signage

Elaine Wickstrom, vice president of West Main Hill Neighborhood Association gave a brief presentation on signage they are requesting for Henderson Park at the convergence of Grand Avenue and West Main. The sign would be one sided and fabricated from cedar by Sign Writers and paid for by the Neighborhood Association. It would be set well back on the greenspace triangle and additionally have low growing salt tolerant ground cover which would be colorful in the fall and a flower bed around the sign; the landscaping will require the removal of some existent bushes. The Neighborhood has already received approval from Community Planning and Development/Zoning and the Historical Preservation Coordinator. They will meet with the Traffic Board next. Ms. Wickstrom said that they have had discussion with Mark Polega, Parks Manager, who supports their plans and has agreed to work with them on the landscape design. The Neighborhood is requesting an approval recommendation from PRAB. PRAB unanimously passed the following motion: ***PRAB recommends placement of a sign in Henderson Park in accordance with City requirements and approves the removal of several existent shrubs.*** Frances told Ms. Wickstrom that the work the West Main Neighborhood Association is doing is truly appreciated.

Board Application – Larry Ross

After brief discussion, ***PRAB unanimously recommended that Larry Ross be appointed as a board member for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.***

New Business:

John and Carol Booden (volunteers) Milham & Blanche Hull Parks Master Plan

The Boodens were born and raised in Kalamazoo and have had a lifelong enjoyment of Milham Park. They said that today Milham is tired park, in need of much work. They shared that New York's Central Park used to be a dangerous place and now is a beautiful venue that can be used by everyone. Their vision for Milham Park includes much public input to discover the community's vision for Milham and Blanche Hull Parks which comprise 117 acres of the City's parkland! Several years ago, the Boodens took their interest in Milham Park to the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, Pat DiGiovanni, and Frances Jewell. This interest has grown and Friends of Milham Park was created. In 2005, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation gave \$5,000 to the City for the development of a Milham Park Master Plan and the City has committed \$20,000 toward the estimated \$80,000 required for a Master Plan. The Milham Friends group recently spoke with Ken Collard and plan to talk to many other stakeholders. The group understands that the City budget has no funds for redevelopment of the Park, however, there is much support from City staff. The group seeks to create an endowment which would provide funds for construction and would continue the support and maintenance of the Park. They observed that this is a long term project, that might not reach completion in their lifetimes, but that it would be a wonderful gift to future generations in the Kalamazoo community.

The Boodens wanted to share this vision with PRAB and seek PRAB's support of this vision. Lance applauded the Boodens for the new ideas and their work and energy directed towards Milham and Blanche Hull Parks.

Lovell Street Park Project

Jeff Sherman, a resident of West Main Hill Neighborhood, presented a draft plan for landscape work in the Lovell Street Park which would involve redesigning a current flower bed into a raised bed and a small fieldstone retaining wall. Frances indicated that there were no current funds available in the Parks and Recreation budget for this project. ***PRAB unanimously moved support of the concept of a raised bed with retaining wall in the Lovell Street Park.***

Recommendations for Approval:

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

- New Year's Fest, Bronson Park, December 31, 2007, 5:30 pm to 12:30 am (set up beginning at noon)
- Annual John Daley Memorial One/One Run, Spring Valley Park, January 1, 2008 from 1:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Comments:

Citizens – Non Agenda Items: None

Commission Liaison Comments: None

Friends of Recreation Liaison: None

Parks and Recreation Director – Monthly Report

Frances shared that the skatepark contract for Upjohn Park was approved by the City Commission on October 1, 2008. The total Upjohn Park/DNR grant project is moving

forward but due to increased costs, has less than 1% contingency for any unknown costs. Work at Southside Park is progressing well and Spring Valley Park bridge demolition has gone out to bid.

The City Commission proclaimed October 2007 as “Kalamazoo Farmers Market 60th Celebration.” Pat Roush, Market Master, was at the Commission meeting to accept the Proclamation.

Work on the Parks and Recreation FY2008 budget is moving forward with a directive from Finance allowing only a 2% increase over the FY 2007 adopted budget. Frances shared that we are fortunate that the directive is not a decrease, however, the 2% will not cover contractual wage increases, utility increases and other costs that are out of our control, so cuts will have to be made to meet the directive.

Staff Comments: None

Board Member Comments: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Pat Vinge, Recording Secretary