

## BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS

### REGULAR MEETING

**Monday, July 14, 2003**

Present: June Bailey, Dennis Brunner, Colleen Craig, Glen Dey, and Janet Miller

Also Present: Ron Doty; Bettiann Smith, Doris Mackie and Daisy Nicholson – Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.; Phil Blake, Doug Brady and Kyle Auchterlonie – Sons of the American Revolution (SAR); Councilwoman Sharon Fearey; Kathy Dittmer; Lucy Burtnett; M.S. Mitchell; and Doug Kupper and Maryann Crockett (staff)

President Bailey called the meeting to order at approximately 3:30 p.m. The minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 9, 2003, were reviewed and approved.

1. **Request from Adjacent Property Owner – 1103 N. Pearce**. Ron Doty, 1103 N. Pearce introduced himself. Director Kupper referred board members to a map of 1103 N. Pearce, which was located adjacent to West Oak Park. Mr. Doty requested that he be allowed to acquire the strip of parkland adjacent to his home at 1103 N. Pearce. He said he believed the area was originally platted for a street. He said he would like to develop the area with landscaping and added that he currently mows and waters the strip. He also stated that the Bermuda grass planted by the City encroaches onto his yard.

Janet Miller opened the discussion by explaining that the Board has been approached on a number of other occasions by adjacent park property owners with similar requests. She said she was concerned that by granting Mr. Doty's request, the Board would be setting a precedent.

There was general discussion regarding the possibility of a road being developed through the area in the future. Director Kupper commented that from a park and recreation point of view, staff would not recommend any through roads in the area. Janet Miller asked about right-of-way. Staff responded that utility and sewer easements could be anywhere from twenty to hundred feet. President Bailey asked about the size of the lot. Janet Miller asked if Mr. Doty's request were granted, would it limit park staff access to Oak Park. Staff reported that park access would not be a problem. Responding to a question, Mr. Doty assured the Board that he would underwrite all costs associated with the proposed park property acquisition.

**On motion by Bailey, second by Miller, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to re-address Mr. Doty's request at the August meeting.** In the mean time, park staff would ascertain the size of the lot (strip of park land).

2. **Proposed Park Naming**. President Bailey reported that the presenter, Richard Stewart, requested that this item be deferred until the August meeting.
3. **Proposed Memorial Bench – Veterans Memorial Park**. Bettiann Smith, President, Gold Star Wives of America, Inc., Air Capital Chapter, began her presentation by referring board members to

a picture of the proposed memorial bench the group wanted to install in Veterans Memorial Park. She also passed out a brochure that explained the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc. organization, its purpose, and its goals. She particularly mentioned the organization's work at the Wichita Veterans Medical Center.

Mrs. Smith briefly reviewed the proposal stating that the organization was currently fund raising to secure monies for construction and installation of the memorial bench. Director Kupper explained that it was standard procedure for each memorial to be maintained by the donor organization. He said the organization needed to maintain an endowment fund to repair or remove the memorial in the event of vandalism or natural disaster.

Mrs. Smith stated that the organization had received an estimate of \$2,500 for construction of the bench; however, that did not include installation costs. She referred to correspondence she had received from Tim Martz, Superintendent of Park and Recreation, and asked where the bench would be located in the park. She requested that it be placed close to the parking lot due to the advanced age of most of the organization members. She concluded her presentation by commenting on how impressed the group was with the way Veterans Memorial Park and other parks in Wichita were being maintained by the Park Department.

**On motion by Miller, second by Brunner, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to recommend that the City Council accept donation of the memorial bench by the Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.**

4. **John S. Steven's Flag Memorial Proposal.** Phil Blake, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), began his presentation by introducing himself, Douglas Brady, Washington Chapter President, and Kyle Auchterlonie, Mr. Blake's grandson. Mr. Blake explained that the SAR was calling their proposal "Operation Ensign" and that it was a proposal to restore/renovate the John S. Steven's Flag Memorial located in Veterans Memorial Park. Mr. Blake provided several handouts including a two-page summary of the group's proposal, a copy of the Constitution of the United States of America, and various other documents on flags, religious freedom and documents on the struggle for independence.

Mr. Blake referred to a Power Point presentation consisting of numerous photographs of Veterans Memorial Park and the John S. Steven's Flag Memorial in particular. The photographs made it obvious that the flag memorial was in need of extensive repair. Mr. Blake stated that the memorial was built in 1977 and; therefore, was over twenty-six years old. He commented on the condition of various components of the memorial and suggested alternative composition materials as follows: the rust on the steel cabinets and how that occurred; installation of cast aluminum; alternative design for the flag poles to prevent theft of the flags and vandalism by placing the lanyards inside the poles; reinstallation of the American Flag on the elevated dais; installation of bronze plaques; and repair of the concrete stairs and railings.

Mr. Blake stated that the group would like to have an engineering evaluation performed of the work to be done and a cost estimate; raise the needed funds to contract for the repairs; and accomplish the needed refurbishment and repairs by Flag Day on June 14, 2004. He asked the Board if there were other plans for the park that conflicted with their proposal. Staff responded that there were no plans to refurbish the memorial. Mr. Blake said he would like the Board's approval to proceed to obtain an engineering estimate. He also requested permission to contact

various other veteran's groups who maintain memorials at the park, along with other civic-minded groups and private individuals to help raise funds for the proposal.

Responding to a question, Director Kupper explained that the flags at the memorial were raised only on various holidays and not on a daily basis. He also added that no funds were programmed in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget to refurbish/renovate the memorial. There was discussion concerning SAR establishing an endowment fund for continued maintenance and repair of the memorial; design approval; and the various steps the organization will need to take to accomplish their proposed project. Janet Miller thanked Mr. Blake for the organization's proposal.

**On motion by Miller, second by Dey, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve the SAR proceeding to get a cost estimate to refurbish the memorial at the group's expense.**

5. **Alternative Revenue Task Force**. Janet Miller reported that she has been appointed to the "Alternative Revenue Task Force" and that she wanted to clarify the Board's previous discussions on policy issues related to park and recreation fees. She said the task force was scheduled to meet August 11, and that they would prefer to recommend a specific policy to the City Council. There was discussion regarding the fee study that was completed by Management Partners last year, adult athletic fees, children's sports leagues, staff and program costs, facility costs, commodities, facility fees, and cost recovery calculated at 100%, 50% and 25%.

Several suggestions were discussed including 100% cost recovery for adult programs/athletic leagues, 50% cost recovery for children's programs/sports leagues, and 100% cost recovery for non-residents. Janet Miller suggested that any proposed increases be phased in over time. She also added that from a philosophical standpoint, she felt that programs like Summer of Discovery should be left out of the policy. She said she felt it was the Park Department's responsibility to provide recreation opportunities for kids who otherwise would have none.

Janet Miller also reported that the task force was looking at other funding alternatives such as tax on rental cars and other fees and permit charges assessed by the City including building permit fees, business operating fees and others.

President Bailey asked how Wichita ranked compared to other municipalities? Director Kupper reported that to the best of his knowledge, no other city charged 100% cost recovery. President Bailey asked that board members be provided a copy of the fee study report. Glen Dey asked if the City had any models to formulate a policy. Janet Miller commented that the task force had reviewed revenue policies from other municipalities.

6. **Director's Update**. Director Kupper reported briefly on the following items:
- Director Kupper referred board members to the article from the *Wichita Eagle* dated July 3, 2003, entitled "Flexible – City smart to re-examine cell-tower issues". He confirmed that the Board still wanted each request for construction of a cell tower on park property to be reviewed by them on a case-by-case basis.
  - Water Lift Station in North Riverside Park. A status report was requested by Janet Miller as follow up to the discussion at the May Park Board meeting. Director Kupper explained that after the project was completed there was some compaction of the soil in the area that caused

drainage problems; however, staff reports that with proper soil aeration, percolation and plantings, that problem should solve itself because of the sandy loam soil in the area. He added that additional landscaping would be added once the drainage problem had been addressed.

Director Kupper also explained that staff was reluctant to raise the height of the wall surrounding the lift station because it was felt that it might jeopardize the integrity of the structure. Miller stated that since the neighbors have already been informed that the height of the wall would be raised, and since the lift station as constructed is not the design that was presented to the District Advisory Board (DAB) and neighborhood associations; she requested that Director Kupper re-address the issue of raising the height of the wall with the appropriate City staff. Director Kupper commented that he would report back to the Board at the August 11 meeting.

- July 4<sup>th</sup> Pancake Breakfast and Children's Parade. Kathy Dittmer, President, Riverside Citizens Association (RCA), reported that the July 4<sup>th</sup> Pancake Breakfast and Children's Parade fundraising event held at Exploration Place and co-sponsored by the Coleman Company was a great success. She said over 751 breakfasts were served by Chris Cakes and the event raised approximately \$1,300 for the Kansas Wildlife Exhibit at Central Riverside Park.
- August 11 Park Board Meeting. Director Kupper reported that the Monday, August 11, 2003, Park Board meeting would be held at the Water Area Treatment, Education and Remediation Center at Herman Hill Park, 101 E. Pawnee. He said as part of the meeting, the Board would be given a tour of the facility.
- Grove Park. M.S. Mitchell, former Park Board member, referred board members to two articles, which appeared in the *Wichita Eagle* concerning Grove Park. One, dated June 27 entitled "Pick jobs over weeds" and another dated July 10, entitled "Dead dogs dumped in weed-filled Grove Park".

Mitchell said he had thirty-six separate items pertaining to the Park Board and City's efforts to develop Grove Park and the "Grove Park Master Plan" dating back to April 1998. He briefly reviewed the items including, but not limited to: construction of a new football field, completion of a paved road from Hillside through the park, construction of a new children's playground and future plans for construction of a new concession building, restrooms, and nine hole golf range. He also commented on the contribution of the National Guard to the project and the fact that the Guard was unable to perform scheduled tasks because of inclement weather two consecutive weekends in a row.

Mitchell referred board members to a draft response to the articles where he highlighted the community-wide effort on the project, including dozens of meetings with various neighborhood groups and local merchants to obtain donations of plant materials and in-kind services, and efforts to obtain financing for the project in the amount of \$750,000 in Capital Improve Program (CIP) funds and \$130,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) monies.

Glen Dey commented that the Grove Park project had experienced several set backs including delays in development of the K-96 bike path. However, he said he felt the community-wide effort had made great strides in development of Grove as a regional park. Dey also made

several comments relative to native plant species and how parts of the park were designed for development of native grasses.

There was general discussion regarding the role of advisory boards in responding to newspaper articles and other media; the procedure for requesting information from the City; marketing and publicity and how to best get the word out to the public on the status of various park projects. It was the general consensus of the Board to request that Mr. Kupper and staff ask the City's public information/public relations coordinator to respond and clarify misinformation and misconceptions in the referenced articles.

President Bailey said she felt it was important for the Board to make it clear that they stand behind the decision they made in 1998 regarding Grove Park and selling parkland for development of a manufacturing plant. Lucy Burnett, former Park Board president and member, stated that she stood by her decision and the remarks she made regarding the issue five years ago.

President Bailey mentioned the need to update the City's Web site with information on project development. Dennis Brunner asked about the possibility of broadcasting information on City Channel 7. President Bailey also requested that the director of the City's Public Relations Office be invited to attend the August meeting to discuss these issues with the Board.

- August Elections. Director Kupper suggested that elections be held in August instead of September, due to the departure of the First Vice President Trix Niernberger. It was the general consensus of the Board to hold elections at the August meeting.

#### **Informational Items**

- New Board Member Listing.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 5:45 p.m.

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June Bailey, President

ATTEST:

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Maryann Crockett, Clerk  
Recording Secretary