

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
REGULAR MEETING  
Park and Recreation Department  
11<sup>th</sup> Floor City Hall  
Monday, November 19, 2007  
3:30 p.m.**

**Present:** Janet Miller, Andy Solter, Bryan Frye, John Stevens and Tom Roth

**Absent:** Glen Dey and Doug Leeper

**Also Present:** Jim Skelton, City Council Member, District III; Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation; Fire Chief Ron Blackwell and Michael Rudd, Wichita Fire Department; Terry Smythe and Jay Maxwell, Ruggles and Bohm, PA; Gary Janszen, Design Engineer, City of Wichita; and Myca Bunch (staff)

President Miller called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m.

**PUBLIC AGENDA**

No Items.

**REGULAR AGENDA**

**Item 1: Approval of Meeting Minutes**

**Motion 1: On motion by Solter, second by Stevens, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board approve the October 8, 2007, Park Board minutes.**

**Item 2A: Fire Department Request for 3 Acres in Planeview to Expand Fire Training Facility.**

Miller said that in 2003, three (3) acres in Planeview Park were sold for corporate expansion of a private business. This development did not happen and the Board encouraged the City Council to re-purchase the property for the exact amount that it was sold for. The land was originally acquired with Land and Water Conservation Funds from the State of Kansas which made it necessary to replace or match the acreage with an equivalent portion of land elsewhere in the City. The Park Department completed this requirement through the development of Stearman Park. Miller said that the redevelopment of the original 3 acres in Planeview became controversial and the land developer (David Norris) chose not to develop in this area and offered the City the opportunity to buy the land back at the original cost plus the amount of any

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improvements he made to the property. At that time, the Board did not agree to these terms and recommended the City Council repurchase the land at the original purchase price only. Kupper said that the developer still feels he has money invested in the land and feels he deserves more than the original price he purchased it for.

Miller said that the Fire Department is now interested in using this land to expand their fire training facility. Fire Chief Ron Blackwell said that acquiring this site is critical to his department's ability to meet current and future training needs. The training tower they currently use located at 31<sup>st</sup> St and Oliver where it has been since 1965.

Blackwell said that Hutchinson County Community College is also offering college credit for those individuals who will be training at the new facility. Solter asked what type of training would be offered. Blackwell said that classroom training might include fire science, fire service management and hazardous materials classroom courses to name a few. These classes would move from the Hutchinson College to the new Fire Training sight. In order to meet these needs, Blackwell said that the acquisition of the Norris property is essential to their plans. He said that if they can acquire the Norris property and replat it, then they would go back and look at what location would be the best for the new facility. Frye asked what would happen to the existing bike path that is located in this area. Kupper said that they would have to move it and he thought it would probably be relocated over the top of the easement on the west side of the property. Blackwell said that the District Advisory Board has been supportive of this proposal.

Miller asked if there were any citizens who would like to comment on the item.

**Debra Foster, 400 W. Central #105**

Ms. Foster, a member of the Greenway Alliance, said that she is concerned about the future of the trail would like the land to be repurchased for fire dept usage, but wants to ensure that the trail is retained. She said that she thought there was a current gas line, which might limit the amount of landscaping that could be placed near the trail. She said they would also like to see a 30 or 50ft easement along the property, which would give them their trail linkage where educational signage could possibly be placed to inform citizens of what the training area is being used for.

Miller asked why the linkage was important on this certain bike path. Foster said that there are many residential neighborhoods as well as the canal and river routes that link close to this area.

**Karol Schlicher, 139 Brendon-Wood**

Ms. Schlicher said that she has been interested in the trail since its conception. She said that she has been involved in the clean up of this area for many years and that the area was one of the first greenways ever planned to be a trail. She said that Project Beauty has been collecting money to provide benches for this area and they would like to know the future development plans of this area. Schlicher said that she always envisioned Planeview Park as it was originally intended and that she strongly encourages the Park Department to repurchase the land to allow the fire dept usage but that they make the bike trail an asset to the park.

Miller asked if the entire facility would be fenced. Blackwell said that is something they will have to look at but that it will most likely depend on the security that is set up around the facility.

**Jim Skelton, Council Member, District III**

Mr. Skelton said that he fully supports the fire department acquiring the land for their training facility. He said that he also rides the bike path located in this area and that he understands the importance of the linkage to other paths. Miller asked if he would support the educational signage in the park. Skelton said that he thought it would be an asset to the area and would raise community awareness for what the firefighters do.

Miller returned the discussion to the Board.

Stevens asked if the money to move the path could be paid for out of Fire Department funding. Norm Jakovac said that he and Kupper were already working on the possible funding and that it would not be a problem for the Fire Department to pay for the moving of the path. Kupper said that the original agreement with the developer said that he had to sell it back to the City at the original purchase price. Jakovic said that they are willing to negotiate on the purchase price and that the money would come from the City or from Fire Department CIP Funds.

**On motion by Solter, second by Stevens, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the three (3) acres located in Planeview Park, be repurchased using City money instead of Park funds and that it be used for the purpose of a fire training facility with the stipulation that the current bike path be moved to the perimeter area and remain as a linkage to other paths. Motion passed 7-0.**

**Item 2B. Easement in Minisa Park for Gas Line Relocation**

Gary Janzen, City Chief Design Engineer, informed the Board that in one month they would begin construction on the bridge at Minisa Park. To do this, they are requesting a 15' permanent easement on Minisa Park property. Janzen said that Aquila Gas Company wants to remove the current gas line that is located on the bridge and run it under the river. He said he has met with Tim Martz and members from Aquila at the site and found that only minimal changes to the Park would be made if the easement were allowed. Kupper said that this was the easiest solution for all parties involved and that it does not dramatically damage the park. Janzen said that the parking lot in that area would remain open during the construction and that the construction on the bridge will take approximately 6 ½ months.

**On motion by Frye, second by Miller, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED by the Board to approve the request for the easement in Minisa Park. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Item 3A. Concept for Country Acres 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Additions**

Terry Smythe, from Ruggles & Bohm, P.A., presented the Board a different idea of using the property in Country Acres. The new concept would connect Country acres land with land to the south for a larger development. He said the concept includes a bike path

connect the Zoo, W. Urban, the new development, Central Street, and possibly even down to Maple in a later phase of construction. He said that this proposal differs from the original proposal presented to the Board by Poe and Associates in October 2007, in that in this proposal the houses in the area look more appealing to those residents looking at them from the Spinnaker Cove side of the water. That's because the patio homes and duplexes are designed to look like large, more upscale single family residences.

Miller asked about possible flooding in the area, as it was originally platted as a drainage area. Smythe said they would be lowering the density of the area, because the assisted living center will move out near the Huntington Apartments and they will put in duplexes and patio homes.

Solter said that this proposal gives a good ecological and visual balance in what happens with the new additions and likes the idea of having the bike path connect to other areas. Smythe said that is the overall intent of the proposal.

Miller said that the Board had decided in the past to keep both parcels of land they own because they eventually wanted to develop a bike path with a public access easement in the future. She said that this has not happened yet because there is poor access to the area. Kupper also added that bike paths cost about 9K per linear mile. Smythe said he would ultimately like to build the bike path so that it runs along the water's edge.

Miller asked what the Park Board would gain in return for donating the land. Smythe said that they had not discussed this matter as of yet, but that he has met with Council Member Longwell, Tom Winter from Sedgwick County and members of the Wichita School Board, about how to possibly fund the project. He said that the best idea for them is to trade the two parcels of land and for them to put in the bike path.

Based on the information provided, Solter asked that Smythe and his staff bring back a proposal with the concepts further developed for the Board to review. Frye mentioned that he would also like to see better public access to the path better identifies. Kupper suggested the proposal show all possible ideas for usage of the land.

**Item 3B. Future Renaming of Park Facility for Tommy Allen**

In May 2007, Tommy Allen and his family came to the Park Board and asked to have Auburn Hills Golf Course renamed after Mr. Allen upon the occurrence of his death. At that time, the Board said they would consider naming a Park facility after Mr. Allen, but that they first wanted Park staff to comprise a chronological list of all of Mr. Allen's accomplishments during his tenure as the department director. The Board had also asked staff to develop a way to track all future park naming requests of this type.

Kupper presented the list pertaining to Mr. Allen's accomplishments. He said that the total acreage of the Park system increased from 2,600 acres to 2,900 during Allen's tenure. Mr. Allen also oversaw the development of over half of the recreation centers, all of which are still operational today. Kupper said that during part of Mr. Allen's tenure the Park Department was structured differently then it is today and also included the Airport as one of its responsibilities.

Miller said according to the City Ordinance, the Board couldn't name a park or a park facility after a living person. She said that Mr. Allen's family understood the ordinance but they requested that the Board go ahead and reserve a certain park or facility to be renamed in their father's honor upon his death. Mr. Allen suggested at the May meeting that Auburn Hills Golf Course be renamed in his honor.

Kupper said that any action the Board makes involving future park naming will now be located in the Park Board files and kept electronically within the same spreadsheet as the Park Board suspense roster. This will ensure that all future Boards are aware of the decisions.

Kupper said that if another prominent official were to pass away before Mr. Allen then the City Council could override the Park Board request and proceed with renaming the facility after the person of their choice. He said it would not necessarily matter who had made the first request.

**On a Motion by Miller, second by Roth, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED that the Board approve the request that upon Tommy Allen's death, the Park Board in place at that time recommend to the City Council that a Park or Park Facility, be renamed after Mr. Allen in recognition of his many accomplishments during his tenure. Motion passed 5-0.**

**Item 3C. Park Board Goals for 2008**

Miller reviewed the 2008 Park Board Goals with the Board and asked that each Board member notify her of which Goal they would like to oversee and lead for the upcoming year.

**On motion by Solter, second by Frye, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve the 2008 Park Board Goals as they are currently written.**

**Item 4. Review of Pending Issues**

**Watson Park Gate Request**

Miller said that, before deciding how to proceed with the request, they must first examine the results of the studies that were completed by Park staff concerning the traffic in the area of the Park. She asked that this item be brought back to the Board at the December Board meeting.

**Item 5. Updates from the Director and President**

**Historical Firefighters Museum Expansion**

Miller said that in 2005, the Historical Firefighters Museum staff asked the Board to allow them to expand their facility into Lincoln Park. The Museum staff showed the Board a footprint of what the proposed facility would look like and said that the expansion would not exceed 50 x 100 ft. The Board approved the expansion of the Building, with the stipulation that no parking be built in Lincoln Park.

Miller said that the Museum staff has now gone back to the City Council asking for a lease extension to total 99 years. At their most recent visit to the City Council they presented a different footprint of the proposed facility that differed in size from what was originally presented to the Park Board in September 2005. The new proposed facility shows an 80 x 100 ft expansion. Kupper said that he sent the Museum staff a letter reminding them of their original proposal and asked that if they had any different ideas for use of the park and the size of the proposed building that they formally submit another proposal to the Park Board.

Solter said that he met with the Museum staff and said that they did not indicate any restructuring of the building. He said they seemed surprised to learn that their new design differed from their original request and that they do not necessarily need the building to be in the "L" shape as it appears on the new footprint. Miller said it could be that they forgot what their original request was. Solter said that he would call the individuals from the Museum staff and let them know of the Board's concerns and see how they wish to address the matter.

#### **Wireless Amendment Plan**

Miller said that this Wireless Amendment Plan proposed by the Planning Department went to the MAPC, but their vote to approve the amendments was not binding as there were not enough MAPC Members present. Miller said following the meeting, she and Director Kupper met with Planning staff and obtained a large map showing all park property that qualifies for administrative approval of cell towers. Miller said she has met with Vice Mayor Fearey and voiced the Park Board's concerns. Fearey recommended that the item be placed on a City Council workshop for discussion.

#### **Proposed Vietnam War Memorial**

Miller said that in August 2006, the Board approved the request for a Vietnam War memorial honoring American and Vietnamese soldiers to be built in Veterans' Memorial Park. She said that in September 2006, the Board heard community input on the issue, but did not overturn their original vote to allow the memorial to be built. She said that the Vietnamese Community group has provided, and the Park Department approved, the wording for the memorial's plaque. Miller said that this item would go to the Design Council as early as December for approval of the design. The final approval of the memorial will be made by the City Council at a future date.

#### **Watson Train**

Kupper said that they are currently laying the new track for the Watson Park Train.

#### **Land at 159<sup>th</sup> St East and Pawnee**

Kupper said that the Board previously voted to allow the purchase of a parcel of land at 159<sup>th</sup> St. East and Pawnee known as the Means Family Farm. He said they will soon close on the sale of the property and will take the item to the City Council for final approval. Kupper said that the land is a total of 150 acres but that they do not know if it will be designated as parkland by the Council.

**Item 6. Issues on the Horizon**

No Items.

**Item 7. Adjourn.**

**Miller adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:15p.m.**

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Janet L. Miller, President

ATTEST:

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Myca J. Bunch, Recording Secretary