

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
Park and Recreation Conference Room
455 N. Main, 11th floor, City Hall
Monday, November 15, 2010
3:00 p.m.**

Present: Bryan Frye, Cindy Claycomb, Tom Roth, Andy Solter, John Stevens, Matt Goolsby, Randy Brown

Absent: None.

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation, Sharon Dickgrafe, Assistant City Attorney, Lee Ann Sack, Clerk, Scott Knebel, Planning-MAPD, Barry Downing, TOPS Project, Lestor Limon, TOPS Project, Richard Schodorf, Sunflower Title, Jeff Fluhr, Project Downtown, Suzie Ahlstrand, Project Downtown, Mike Barushok, Citizen, Larry Ross, Citizen

President Frye called the meeting to order at approximately 3:00 p.m. and welcomed all visitors to the meeting.

PUBLIC AGENDA

None.

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 1: Approval of Minutes

Motion by Goolsby, second by Stevens, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE the October 18, 2010 regular meeting minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners.

Motion by Goolsby, second by Solter, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE the November 2, 2010 special meeting minutes of the Board of Park Commissioners.

Item 2A: Proposed Partnership for TOP Project at Evergreen Park

Kupper introduced Barry Downing representing the Wichita TOP Children's Fund and the Downing Foundation. TOP is requesting a land lease in Evergreen Park in the same basic location as a proposed project from El Zocolo, which unfortunately dissolved. The area is not part of the general obligation for land and water conservation in Evergreen Park.

Downing said TOP acronym stands for The Opportunity Project which is early learning centers for low income children age birth to five years. Existing locations are at 21st and Grove and on south Oaklawn. 441 children of poverty are currently enrolled. TOP provides educational daycare and preschool. The project's mission is to have 5 centers serving 1,000 children in Wichita. The centers are operated 5 days a week, 10 hours a day year-round. All classrooms have current technology capability. The proposed facility will cost \$3 – 4 million, fully funded through the foundation and corporate and individual

donations. The TOP building is designed with a home-like appearance to appeal to children. Research has determined that \$1 invested in early childhood education saves the state \$7 - \$8 in social costs later in life. Parents are required to participate in educational learning. On-going operations are projected at \$1.5 million per year. Funding is provided through grants and endowment. In-kind community partnerships are significant.

Downing cited Evergreen Park as an ideal location for a north location in Wichita. The available land is large enough and the neighborhood demographics show a need for the center. Second language education will be emphasized.

Solter asked if the center is directed toward non-English speaking students or if it is open to all students.

Downing stated parents apply for enrollment at TOP through Head Start and USD 259. The area will obviously be 2nd language due to the demographics but it is open to all.

Goolsby asked who will be responsible for grounds maintenance.

Kupper said TOP.

Frye said the area enclosed by a wrought iron or chain link fence will be maintained by TOP. State childcare regulations require the area to be fenced.

Frye thanked Downing for his investment in Wichita and bringing the opportunity to the Park Board. The addition of a TOP center at Evergreen will improve attendance at the Recreation Center.

Stevens asked if Downing is requesting a land trade or land lease.

Kupper stated the Park Board would lease land to TOP. If the neighborhood is accustomed to using the area, it could become a feeder to the SOD program at Evergreen Recreation Center which can use SRS funds. This can create a solid partnership to sustain SOD.

Goolsby stated with a land lease TOP would pay for the building and if it were ever closed and abandoned it would be owned by the Park Board.

Solter said this is an excellent opportunity which he supports.

Frye asked for public comment.

Janet Miller, 1102 Jefferson, as a previous Park Board member, she asked the Board to check Evergreen records to see if acreage located at 18th and Arkansas, south of 18th, was added into park inventory from city land to offset the El Zocolo acreage.

Kupper stated the records will be checked but he does not anticipate a conflict. Kupper stated his recollection was that the transfer would only take effect if the El Zocolo project was completed. State Park and Wildlife has confirmed the land is not part of Land Water Conservation Land.

Dickgrafe said she has a draft of the lease but a few items still need resolution.

Kupper stated a storage building leased to the Boxing Club which is pre-paid through 2011 is located in the lease area. Kupper is trying to relocate the storage and is resolving a compromise with the Boxing Club so the building can be removed.

Motion by Claycomb, second by Solter, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE staff to work with the TOP school project on a land usage lease located on the east side of Evergreen Park. The lease is to come back to the Board of Park Commissioners for final approval.

Item 2B: Amend January 2011 and February 2011 meeting dates

Frye suggested moving the January and February meetings to the second Monday's of those months due to state holiday conflicts.

The Board supported the change in meeting dates.

Motion by Frye, second by Solter, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE amending the January and February 2011 Board meetings to the second Monday of each month: January 10 and February 14.

Goolsby encouraged the Park Board to meet elsewhere. He stated he is tired of security and now City Hall parking has been restricted. City Hall is unfriendly to the public.

Dickgrafe stated it would require a bylaw amendment to change the meeting location and the item should be placed on a future agenda.

Kupper stated it is possible to change one meeting at a time by motion. A permanent location change should be an agenda item.

Goolsby stated he could change one meeting at a time. Goolsby does not intend to amend the bylaws.

Stevens suggested Kupper pick locations so the Board can see the Recreation Centers that are proposed for improvement. Stevens would like to visit the assets that the Board votes upon.

Kupper stated there are 13 facility sites along with 8 enclosed shelters that could be used for meeting location.

Claycomb stated she walks to the meetings and City Hall is convenient for her.

Motion by Goolsby, second by Stevens, to move all 2011 Park Board meetings outside of City Hall with locations to be determined by staff.

Frye asked for public comment, there was none.

Roth said he would like to see the park assets but asked if the location change would be inconvenient for staff.

Goolsby said he realized staff will be inconvenienced but at this point the Board is being inconvenienced.

Kupper stated there are numerous non-city employees presenting to the Board. The complexity of the agenda may require some meetings to be held at City Hall. Generally accommodations can be made for outside meeting locations. Kupper offered to set a location schedule to be voted on at the December meeting.

Brown arrived at the meeting after having difficulty getting into City Hall. Brown said the parking will be difficult permanently.

Goolsby said the citizens who want to come to meetings also have parking and security screening issues.

Roth asked when the construction will be completed.

Kupper said it should have been completed last spring.

Claycomb asked if moving the meetings would result in technology problems.

Kupper stated the department has a laptop and projector which can be taken to outside locations.

Frye appreciated the frustration of Board Members. Having meetings at City Hall allows staff easy access to records. City Hall is also a common place for citizens to attend meetings. Frye suggested the motion be amended to allow meetings at City Hall.

Goolsby said he was open to the amendment but the Board should have the opportunity to override any changes in location.

Dickgrafe stated if the meeting location change is not permanent the bylaws would not need to be changed.

Roth asked if the meeting location can be a standing agenda item.

Stevens said the Board does need to see other facilities.

Kupper agreed the Board should know the facilities they are setting policy for. A proposed location schedule can be brought to the December meeting.

Brown supported one year of off-site meetings and creating a schedule for 2011.

Motion by Goolsby, second by Stevens, IT WAS VOTED TO APPROVE moving all 2011 Park Board meetings outside of City Hall. Meetings can be scheduled at City Hall with Board approval. Staff will present the Board with a 2011 meeting location schedule at the December Board meeting for final approval and public notice. 4 – 3, Claycomb, Solter, Frye dissent.

Item 2C: Park Board Appointment to Central and Bristol Park & Community Facilities Plan Steering Committee

Kupper stated the Planning Department is developing a 17 acre site at Bristol and Central. There are multi use intentions for the site between police and park. Some discussion has occurred at District 2

Advisory Board and Council Member Sue Schlapp has suggested Tom Roth be appointed to a steering committee for the project.

Roth stated he would accept the appointment.

Motion by Frye, second by Stevens, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE the appointment of Tom Roth to the Central and Bristol Park and Community Facilities Plan Steering Committee.

Item 3A: Proposed Amendment to Bylaws

Frye directed the Board to review the amendment to Park Board Bylaws regarding the nominating procedure for officers.

Frye asked for public comment. There was none.

Motion by Claycomb, second by Brown, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED TO APPROVE amendments to the Board of Park Commissioner Bylaws concerning nominating procedures.

Item 3B: Update on the Downtown Development Master Plan

Scott Knebel, Planning Department and Jeff Fluhr, Project Downtown, presented an update on the Downtown Development Master Plan. Downtown demographics and economics have changed the needs of the downtown area. The market study focused on housing, retail, hotels and transportation which is key to parking, pedestrian and bicycle accessibility. The development must be paced with public investment to private development projects.

Park improvements are proposed along the river which provides recreation opportunities. Finlay Ross Park and Kennedy Plaza would be converted into a convention hotel. A new park or parking at the Coleman Factory site is proposed.

Claycomb stated she had heard the county had issued an RFP for that site.

Knebel said no proposals are submitted yet.

Claycomb asked if citizens can still promote a park on this site.

Knebel affirmed. An upgrade to Naftzger Park would allow better access and movement in the area.

Solter asked how much private funding will be involved.

Knebel said this has not been determined yet. Funding will be a challenge. A 20 year plan has been developed;

1. Enhance Douglas with trees, plantings and planters
2. Convert the railroad right of way to multi-use path
3. Create Library Plaza on riverfront
4. Create a new boating facility
5. Continue ongoing riparian improvements
6. Continue to install planned park and fountain amenities at WaterWalk

7. Restore Kennedy Plaza
8. Create park or plaza space that takes advantage of underutilized open space at Century II
9. Encourage redesign and reprogramming of the ground floors of buildings at state office complex
10. Create two green hearts for the Arena District
11. Make additional use of green spaces for passive and active recreation
12. Improve access to the Y with enhanced sidewalks, bike lanes, a multi-use path spur
13. Create a new park to anchor the Renaissance Square neighborhood
14. Encourage creation of a new park to serve western areas of Old Town West
15. Create a pedestrian walk to add a more convenient scale to 1st and 2nd street
16. Create a neighborhood park for Old Town
17. Prioritize St. Francis as a Green Street
18. Enhancements that responds to the growth of pedestrian traffic
19. Consider using Union Station's brick drive and/or other site area as a public plaza
20. Create one or more parks serving the growing Commerce Street Arts District
21. Make open space around the Intrust Bank Arena useful as everyday park space
22. Create a multi-use path along the active Downtown railroad corridor

Solter said nothing in the plan refers to South Broadway area South of Kellogg.

Knebel said those areas are noted in the plan but focus is on Downtown. Knebel recognized that area is important to the downtown core.

Claycomb asked what changes will be made to the Q-Line route.

Knebel said discussions are ongoing.

Goalsby asked when you add trees for maintenance, trash cans which need emptying, benches which will promote loitering, how those changes will make a street more walkable.

Fluhr stated those improvements also encourage filling empty business space.

Goalsby stated while the budget is cutting recreation centers and money for new trees, the city should be more prudent with their dollars.

Stevens asked how much land is available for redevelopment downtown.

Knebel stated there is none available at this time.

Frye asked Knebel what he is requesting from the Board.

Knebel stated he is asking for City Council to adopt the Master Plan on December 14. Knebel is asking for a show of support from the Park Board.

Solter stated he had specific concerns but the overall plan is good.

Brown said he supports the plan.

Stevens asked how much commerce is promoted by making the area bicycle friendly. Limited merchandise can be transported on bicycles.

Knebel stated 95% of citizens will still drive automobiles to the downtown area.

Kupper said most retail stores in the downtown area focus on citizens living or working downtown. Older buildings can be converted into residential space.

Stevens stated he supports a new library or a new park. Private dollars should invest in downtown and citizens should not be subsidizing the plan.

Brown said the plan is not to build infrastructure.

Kupper stated the Park Board will have influence over Finlay Ross Park, A. Price Woodard Park, Naftzger Park and the riverbank.

Frye asked for public comment.

Richard Schodorf, 2330 N. Valleyview, stated he lives and works downtown. The city's tax base is driven by downtown. Something must be done to change downtown and reach out to the community. This plan is fluid. Schodorf urged the Board to support the plan and move the process forward.

Goolsby said it would be better to save half a million dollars. This is a preamble to the possibility of a downtown sales tax or general tax. No one will build this for the city. If it is a good idea, the private sector would have already done it. Tax abatement is how we have enticed citizens to move downtown which does not grow the tax base. Goolsby stated this is a fluid plan and he will not endorse it.

Frye stated that specific elements would still have to come back to the Board for approval.

Stevens said other cities have vibrant communities without living downtown. Wichita keeps pumping money into downtown.

Brown said he believes in downtown as a part of history and will support the plan.

Claycomb stated downtowns are the heart of the community. Downtowns are what people remember when they come to the community.

Roth said he agrees the plan feels good but does not know about supporting it.

Fluhr said the plan will be presented to the Planning Commission on November 18. This is the baseline of discussion. The plan will be market driven and is a 15 – 20 year vision. The plan assists the city with direction and guidelines for policies for investment.

Stevens said if the plan is approved, there is an automatic approval for seeking dollars and public funding. Stevens stated his approval for some aspects, but not the library. Taxpayers do not want to fund this until the private sector has embraced it.

Knebel said the City should not wait on the private sector. The investments will spill over into private sector development. The plan does not state initiating building the projects.

Brown stated the library is a done deal.

Goolsby said we are observing policy past 8 years ago. Too often crazy ideas come from plans passed 10 years ago. The Board has the authority to endorse or not endorse the plan.

Frye said the committee did an outstanding job of engaging citizens. Frye hoped that continues beyond this plan. The plan is needed for the community to have a sense of direction.

Motion by Frye, second by Solter, IT WAS VOTED TO APPROVE endorsement of the Downtown Development Master Plan for presentation to the City Council. 4 – 3, Goolsby, Roth, Stevens dissent.

Stevens stated he is not opposed to the plan, he is opposed to the citizens paying for it.

Item 3C: Trail Marker Update

Richard Schodorf, Sunflower Title, updated the Board on Downtown Walking Trails. All trail signs which have been approved by the design council should be up by mid-April 2011. All trails are planned to “come to life” on the final Friday of each month. Re-enactors, poets and musicians will be on the trails to give interest and impart history to walkers.

Schodorf asked the Board for a new contact person within the Park Department. His previous contact is no longer with the department.

Frye asked if the trails were complete.

Schodorf said none of the trails are complete. Signs are currently being installed.

Frye asked Kupper who could be assigned as the contact person.

Kupper stated he would assign a contact person after the first of the year when the new organizational structure has been determined. The Department is too tentative at this point to make that determination.

Frye offered to help Schodorf with communications, but the department is not in a position to assign a person at this time.

Kupper said the Board must agree to support all nine trails.

Claycomb said if Schodorf has been working with Public Works, why is a contact within the Park Department necessary. Since the city is short on resources, there needs to be a coordination of department efforts.

Stevens stated the City Manager has taken 1.7 million from the park budget. The Board is grateful for the trails but the department is currently in turmoil.

Kupper said once the department has determined which employees will be remaining, an assignment will be made. If the Board wishes, after January 1 a liaison can be assigned. Schodorf has gone above and beyond in making these trails possible. The department is grateful for all the effort and the excellent product which has been given to the city.

Motion by Solter, second by Stevens, IT WAS VOTED TO APPROVE the concept and support of 9 walking trails in the downtown area and for staff to assign a liaison for the project in January when resources are available. 6 – 1, Goolsby dissent.

Item 4: Updates from the Director and President

The Focus Group to discuss the future plans for Park and Recreation will be November 19 at 2:30.

Kupper provided each Board member with the Trust for Public Land: The Economic Benefits of Denver's Park and Recreation System. The report assigns dollar amounts to park land and healthy benefits to the community. It places a dollar value to a homeowner who lives near a park as a real estate asset. A study could be accessed for Wichita for around \$40,000.

Item 5: Issues on the Horizon

None.

Item 6: Adjourn

There being no further business, Frye adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Bryan Frye, President

Lee Ann Sack, Clerk