

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS  
RETREAT  
Watson Park Enclosed Shelter  
3022 S. McLean Blvd.  
Saturday, September 18, 2010**

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

**Absent:** Matt Goolsby

**Also Present:** Bob Layton, City Manager, Doug Kupper, Director of Park and Recreation, Karen Walker, Assistant Director of Park and Recreation, Sharon Dickgrafe, Assistant City Attorney, Lee Ann Sack, Clerk, Warren McCoskey, Acting Park Superintendent, Misty Bruckner, WSU, Tracy Tams, Keri Miller, Carolyn Lindsey, Tom Hein, Phyllis Stanger, David Springs, Anthony Boyle, citizens

**1. Department Re-Organization Planning**

Misty Bruckner, Associate Director, Center for Urban Studies, Hugo Wall School of Business, Wichita State University, presented a draft overview of the research being conducted by the University to identify re-organization options for the Department of Park and Recreation. A criterion for the study has been evaluating the departments 1) efficiency of service delivery, 2) Enhancement without increased funding, and 3) Can service response be improved without increased funding. Special consideration is being given to the PROS plan neighborhood concept, various delivery models, the environment and uniqueness of each site.

The purpose of the study is to consider the benefit that could be gained from an alternative use of the same resource or the cost for alternative use of the same resource by using the resource effectively. Goals and outcomes need to be defined with a process for implementation.

Neighborhood demographics have been gathered from the 2000 census. Results will be measured against 25 cities identified as comparative communities or best practices. Cost recovery was calculated by different methods at each community.

Information not included in the results is summer activity camp reports, special populations using Orchard Recreation center or any special event sponsored by the Park Department. Crime reduction during Summer of Discovery will be provided by the Police Department. All recreation directors have been interviewed, but their information has not been incorporated into the research. All directors will be able to review the final research.

Kupper stated there was a 33% lower crime rate in youth during Summer of Discovery and Summer Activity Camps.

Bruckner said public meetings will be held at all 10 recreation centers to gather citizen input. Dates will be determined and advertised as soon as possible. The findings will be published.

Claycomb asked when the Park Board will be notified of the dates.

Kupper stated the dates will be determined in the following week and the Park Board will be notified as soon as they are determined.

Bruckner stated the WSU Center for Community Service and Research will be facilitating the public meetings to insure impartiality.

Solter asked about the incomplete research, mainly the Neighborhood demographics and community research.

Bruckner said peer cities and the summary of public input can be sent to the Park Board when compiled.

The report for each center provides an estimation of participants, facility usage, 2009 budget breakdown, cost recovery and programming cost. Numbers quite possibly will change as the research continues. All information is site specific.

Kupper stated there is some revealing numbers from the 2000 census. It will be interesting to see the changes in the 2010 census which will be available by the end of the year.

Bruckner stated the majority of the research and conversation centers around cost recovery. Usage times and age served is part of the consideration but is somewhat misleading in the data. Client proximity is also being evaluated.

Aley/Stanley		Linwood	
Cost Recovery	42%	Cost Recovery	35%
Programming Cost Recovery	169%	Programming Cost Recovery	207.3%
Boston		McAdams	
Cost Recovery	13.6%	Cost Recovery	7.6%
Programming Cost Recovery	95.1%	Programming Cost Recovery	28.1%
Colvin		Orchard	
Cost Recovery	30.9%	Cost Recovery	33.9%
Programming Cost Recovery	48.7%	Programming Cost Recovery	182%
Edgemoor		Osage	
Cost Recovery	24.2%	Cost Recovery	8.7%
Programming Cost Recovery	99.2%	Programming Cost Recovery	61.6%
Evergreen		Lynette Woodard	
Cost Recovery	45%	Cost Recovery	29.6%
Programming Cost Recovery	203%	Programming Cost Recovery	128%

Frye brought the Board's attention to relevant maps in the PROS report.

Brown asked why there is no charge at Boston for an after school program and there is a charge at Aley/Stanley.

Kupper stated the Aley/Stanley location is a school site and is much more active for parents dropping their children before school and picking up after work. Boston is a walk-to site and does not include the at school location incentive. Boston is serving an older age group of students.

Kupper said some of the free programming at the centers is for seniors to stay after nutrition programs to play dominos, cards or to socialize. Golden Age locations are serving this demographic for free.

Solter asked if these people could be served at another site and if serving these people is part of government responsibility.

Kupper stated these questions are part of the research. Public input will help determine the answer. The impact of outsourcing recreation services needs to be established before it is implemented.

Claycomb asked if the research will determine if services provided by the recreation centers were discontinued, such as the Red Cross Nutrition Programs, could they be provided elsewhere.

Buckner stated those questions are part of the research to determine existing partnerships, possible alternatives and possible discontinuance of duplicated services.

Kupper stated part of the considerations include the department paying rent to USD 259 for the gymnasium sites at Colvin and Aley for before and after school use and on week-ends. The department does not have access to those spaces during school hours. CMO pays rent to the department for the Neighborhood City Hall at Evergreen. County senior services and a library site are at Linwood.

Buckner stated there are other considerations at Orchard as they serve a special needs population.

Kupper reminded the Board that a handicap accessible ball field has been installed at Orchard.

Bruckner stated the next step in the process is to complete the research and site observations by October 1, hold community meetings in mid October, and provide the initial concept of models by November 1.

Frye announced a 10 minute break before public comment will be solicited.

Frye called the meeting back to order and asked for additional comments from the Board.

Claycomb asked if the specific target is the re-organization of recreation services.

Kupper stated this is the product that is being reviewed at this time. Other work needs to be done, but the 10 Recreation Centers and the model to provide services is the primary focus. Watson Park and Great Plains Nature Center are other areas that need to be addressed.

Claycomb asked if the whole topic is the Park Department.

Kupper stated that significant restructure happened last year with the outsourcing of mowing services. Restructuring discussions have been ongoing since 2001. In 2002, one of the superintendent positions in the Park Department was eliminated and the department went back to a north/south realignment. Recreation Centers are divided equally, north and south.

Solter stated the decisions need to be made internally with financial considerations. Solter asked how involved the Park Board will be in the decision making process and what is their role.

Kupper said the Park Board will be primary participants in the Public Meetings. Focus groups will have Park Board involvement. The diversity of the Board will be helpful to shape each recreation center to serve their neighborhood.

Stevens asked Bruckner about the data and her vision for the month's ahead.

Bruckner values the services being provided, but is searching a more efficient cost effective way of delivery. The research should determine what the public wants to achieve.

Stevens expressed concern that the public wants answers and he does not have any information to provide them. There is too much confusion during this process. Better communication needs to be provided to the public and the Park Board.

Bruckner stated the public meetings will share all the research information with the public and the meetings will be scheduled as soon as possible.

Frye appreciated the data, but it is all historical. Frye asked how partnerships be evaluated and will that information be provided during the public meetings.

Kupper stated the best practice and comparable city information will be helpful during the evaluations.

Frye asked if Bruckner will be speaking with USD 259, United Way, Red Cross, and other potential partners to determine possibilities.

Bruckner affirmed, but they are long term conversations.

Stevens said the Park Board is entitled to be the first to know about significant issues regarding Parks and not the last. Information has been provided to the media before it was provided to the Park Board. Someone needs to be responsible to make sure the Park Board is informed on a continuing basis.

Kupper stated as soon as the City Council passed the budget, all efforts were focused on finding a working model for going forward. Departmental information took five weeks to compile into the presentation provided to the Board today. Valid data had to be gathered in order to derive useful decision making information. Every effort will be made to keep the Board informed during this process.

Solter stated the PROS information needs to be actively incorporated during the discussions.

Claycomb stated her frustration over newspaper articles when supporting data was not available to the Park Board. Citizens ask for details and the Park Board does not have answers. Claycomb asked if the Park Board will be able to offer feedback on prospective models.

Bruckner affirmed. Budget reality and future partnership opportunities are part of the evaluation.

Claycomb asked when City Council would see the suggested model. Park Board should be involved in the details before it goes to City Council so they can offer guidance to their district Council member.

Kupper stated the Park Board will be involved with the focus groups and will be the ones determining the final outcome and model presented to City Council. The target is for a council workshop covering this issue in November.

Frye asked for public comment.

David Springs, 3646 South Brummett, Wichita, stated he is a student of Tai Kwan Do at Osage and Edgemoor Recreation Centers. The uncertainty of programming is detrimental to enrollment. Springs inquired how student ratio for cost recovery is determined.

Kupper said the class minimums are designed to cover instructor costs for 10 weeks. New cost models may include fixed costs, such as the building, utility or director staff costs.

Springs stated students are not signing up for classes because they are unsure if the programming will continue. There are many forms of Tai Kwan Do, so it is not always possible to transfer to other classes. It takes several years to train effectively. The lack of information is keeping people from registering.

Kupper stated the intent is to continue programming even if it is through a partnership or third party. There is no guarantee the fee will remain constant. Sustainability must be met.

Springs said the lack of information is discouraging enrollment.

Keri Miller, 609 Barlow, Wichita, stated communication should be targeted to the groups, schools and neighbors in the immediate vicinity of the centers. Target the kids for involvement because classes give children self esteem. Special needs children are better served in the small class sizes offered at the recreation centers. Success in the recreation classes help students with school studies and peer interaction. The YMCA will not give this level of specialized assistance. Fixed incomes and affordability is also a factor for accessing services.

Tracy Tams, 212 South St. Paul, Wichita, works with special needs and holds a Masters in Rehabilitation. The lack of information has been a problem and in response a petition has been started against the outsourcing of the Recreation Centers. Patrons do not want to work with the YMCA or Genesis as their classes are too large and the focus moves too fast. This is the first time she has been active politically, but has found that every signature comes with a story of how important the Recreation Centers have been to each person. People are unaware of the Park Board or the Recreation Center availabilities. People would use the facilities if they were aware of them. The Recreation Centers add Quality of Life and value to the community and property values. People need to know what the Park Department does and provide a voice to inform the community. Tams has been in contact with her District Council member, City Clerk's office and City Manager's office to make sure the petition is being collected on a basis the council will accept. She will continue to collect signatures. The YMCA does not serve the community or the city, 50 are required to fill a class. There is no personal involvement or help given. Visitor days are established on holidays with little notice. People want their neighborhood recreation centers to remain. The Park Department must be marketed.

Anthony Boyle, 11501 West Jewell Court, Wichita, Tai Kwan Do instructor for Edgemoor and Osage. He offered his support of all the proceeding comments and restated the public's need for their neighborhood recreation centers.

Stevens thanked the public who spoke at the retreat. He agreed there must be marketing for the Park Department to have success. Programs and facilities would be more successful if they were marketed.

Frye informed the public the Park Board agendas are published on the Wichita.gov website and also in the Eagle-Beacon newspaper. Meetings are held the third Monday of each month at 3:00 pm in the Park and Recreation Conference Room, City Hall, 11<sup>th</sup> floor.

Kupper encourage the public to continue to be engaged in the public meetings.

Brown, Layton, Walker, McCoskey, Bruckner, Tams, Miller, Lindsey, Hein, Stanger, Springs and Boyle left the meeting.

## **2. 2010 Park Board Goals**

The Board reviewed the 2010 Park Board Goals for completion, adjustment or continuation.

## **3. 2011 Park Board Goals**

Goals were discussed and formulated to include;

1. Continue to advance, advocate for, and participate in the development of the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Plan.
  - A. Highlight successes initiated by the PROS Plan.
    1. Develop an Asset Management Database which will include a maintenance inventory.
    2. Continue to Utilize Channel 7 – include more content from Park and Recreation.
    3. Continue semi-annual Status Report for release to media outlets; Newspaper, District Advisory Boards, Neighborhood Associations.
  - B. Build relationships, engage citizens and advocacy groups to participate in park projects and dedications.
  - C. Incorporate adopted Goody Clancy park elements into the PROS plan.
2. Foster the development and implementation of the Recreation Center operation and re-organization into the 2011 budget.
  - A. Maintain and advocate for the Park and Recreation Department's annual budget requests (Service Plan and Service Action Plan) and bi-annual CIP submission.
  - B. Learn about the budget process and gain a solid understanding of the annual submission.
  - C. Elevate the importance of the annual Park and Recreation budget and CIP submission among various groups.
  - D. Meet with individual City Council members about the Park and Recreation budget and CIP submission.
  - E. Make presentations to District Advisory Board's about the importance of P/R budget and CIP submission.
  - F. Develop ways to involve the business community in supporting the budget and CIP submission.
3. Continue to work on developing relationships with partners and other stakeholders.
  - A. Invite speakers from other departments/groups to present to the Board on topics related to parks, recreation, and open space.
  - B. Invite Legislative Representatives and non-profit organizations to participate in the promotion of

parks.

1. Develop relationships to advocate for Parks.
  2. Advocate for State Funding.
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4. Move toward more 'Green' policies and procedures associated with the Board of Park Commissioners. Apply 'Green' policies toward Riverbank maintenance and product usage.
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5. Develop a Park Marketing and Communication Strategic Plan
    - A. Actively search for Grant opportunities.
    - B. Advocate for a full time marketing/communication position in the Park and Recreation Dept.
    - C. Advocate for an intern position to assist the marketing/communication position.
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6. Continue to Develop Riverbank Revitalization and Advocacy
    - A. Incorporate adopted Goody Clancy river elements into the PROS plan
    - B. Educate citizens on river access projects.
    - C. Continue advocating river development as it relates to the PROS.

Frye stated the second annual Play Day begins in Watson Park at 1:00 p.m.

There being no further business, Frye adjourned the Retreat at 12:40 p.m.

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Bryan Frye, President

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Lee Ann Sack, Clerk