

**BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS
INTERIM MEETING
Park and Recreation Conference Room
11th Floor City Hall
Monday, October 16, 2006
3:30 p.m.**

Present: Glen Dey, Janet Miller, Andy Solter, and Nalini Johnson, Mick Tranbarger*, Dennis Brunner

Absent: Doug Leeper

Also Present: Doug Kupper, Karen Walker, Mary K. Vaughn, Director of Public Works, Christy Askew, Planning Department and Myca Bunch (staff)

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

PUBLIC AGENDA

Miller informed the Board that there were three individuals who wished to speak on the proposed Vietnamese/American Vietnam War Memorial.

Ron Herndon, 328 N. Bentwood, Rose Hill, KS

I am appalled at the thought of the Vietnamese having a memorial next to ours in Veterans' Park. I have nothing against them having a memorial, but just not in that park. The wall in D.C. was put there for the families of those that died in the war. The other day we had a send off for 200 of our local marines. While there a Vietnamese woman approached me and asked me if I believed in all of this. She then asked me some questions and that is where I learned about the prospect of there being a new memorial built. I told her that Veterans' Park was sacred ground. She got upset with me and a few days later I received a letter in the mail that has terrified my wife. All of the other Veterans in Wichita support me and what I am saying.

Jerry Nicholson, 6557 Cory, Wichita

I also attended the event when the Marines left but I did not hear what the Vietnamese lady said to Mr. Herndon. I would also like to back what he said about the Memorial and show that I disapprove of it being built in Veterans' Park. Had we known you were going to vote on this subject prior to the vote, we would have liked to have talked to you about it. I understand that now it is to go before the Design and City Councils.

Dennis Scuffham, 8125 Victoria, Haysville, KS

I can also echo what the other two individuals said. I am Vietnam veteran and fought for my country. I have no animosity toward Vietnamese but this park is sacred to Kansas Veterans. We have done a lot for the veterans of this state and I bet when they find out about this proposed memorial they will not be happy. I ask that the Board rethink their

decision. When we have ceremonies at this park and the Vietnamese show up at their new memorial it isn't going to be pretty. Go ahead and give them their memorial, but just build it at a different location.

REGULAR AGENDA

Item 1: Approve and sign Meeting Minutes

Motion 1: Dey made the motion to approve the July 17, 2006, and September 11, 2006, meeting minutes with the edits made by Dey and Johnson. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

*Tranbarger joined the meeting

Item 2: Annual Election of Officers

Miller reminded the Board that at the September 11, 06, meeting, they agreed on a Slate of Officers that nominated Miller to remain as President, Johnson would become the 1st Vice President and Dey would continue as 2nd Vice President.

Motion 1: Solter made the motion to approve the Slate of Officers. Tranbarger seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item 3: Redevelopment Authority Presentation – How do parks, recreation open space fit in to the proposed plan?

Motion 3: Miller made the motion to move agenda item 5 up to become Agenda Item 3. Johnson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Miller introduced Mary K. Vaughn, Director of Housing Services, who shared a presentation on Redevelopment Authority. Miller informed the Board that this topic is something that the City of Wichita will be working on extensively in the future.

Vaughn said that in June 2005 she first outlined the Stop Blight initiative to the City Council. She said that the Redevelopment Authority (RDA) was a good way to proceed on this initiative. An RDA is permitted by state law and allows cities to have urban renewal agencies. The RDA will have a singular purpose and focus of eliminating blight. She said that there are currently a number of neighborhood plans, developed by citizens and planning staff that outline short and long-range plans for those neighborhoods. Most of the plans have been completed but are now sitting on the shelf waiting to be implemented. Vaughn said that there is not an entity in our organization right now that has the sole purpose of implementing those plans. Not all the plans have blight as the main focus, but most do. She said that state law allows cities to create urban renewal agencies. They also allow us to designate certain powers to those agencies. She said that there are several ranges of power. One of those powers is to use eminent domain, which

our City Council could designate. She said that they have not proposed that the City Council give the RDA the power of using eminent domain yet, but it is always an option in the future.

Miller then asked Vaughn to clarify that they were speaking about the Redevelopment Authority and not about Stop Blight. Vaughn agreed but said that at the same time the RDA does deal with some amount of blight. She said that their proposal is that the RDA be a separate legal entity and that it have a separate governing board that the Mayor and City Council would appoint. She said that ultimately the board would be self-sustaining and they do not anticipate the city having to fund it forever. She said that eventually the goal is to become involved in projects that generate revenue. They will recommend that the first priority of the RDA be to implement existing major plans. She showed the Board a few of the plans and added that the Arena Neighborhood plan that is being developed would hopefully be adopted within the next year.

Vaughn continued by saying that the local community developers are looking at this suspiciously. She said that the city brought developer Richard Barron in for help and now these developers think this is our way of cutting out the locals. She said they are trying to show the developers that they are needed for these major projects.

Vaughn ended her presentation by informing the Board that they had made a presentation to the City Council in September. She said that the City Council asked them to research other communities similar to Wichita and provide them with information on how those communities handle their RDA. She said they would return to the City Council on November 14 to present their findings.

Dey added that the Board was currently going through the PROS planning process and that this was another way to look at these blighted areas – incorporating parks and green space into redeveloped areas. He said it is also an opportunity to have the RDA designed as an entity that involves the people in that area so the plans are not developed solely by someone from outside. Dey said that they should think of using a charette so the public can feel like they had a part in deciding the plans. Vaughn agree that it did need to be part of project. Miller asked how the Board could ensure that including plans for parks, recreation, and green space could be built into the RDA. Vaughn replied that it is at the RFP level where how to incorporate the parks and green space issues and solicit community involvement would be addressed. She said that the developer would eventually tell us how they would do that. Kupper replied that it was important for the Board members to tell their elected officials how they feel about these blighted areas.

Vaughn continued her presentation by defining slum as an area that is dilapidated and detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare of the community. Blight is an area with deteriorated structure, faulty lot layout, inadequate street layout, and unsanitary or unsafe health conditions. Those are two areas the RDA will have to address.

Item 4 and 5: Criteria/process for evaluating/prioritizing park and playground Requests and the Redevelopment Authority Presentation.

Miller informed the Board that they had a request for a new neighborhood park and they needed to gain feedback on what types of things should be considered when the Board evaluates requests for new parks. Kupper replied that one of the outcomes of the PROS plan would help shape future growth and expansion. Usually when looking at a neighborhood park we will see what services are within a mile of the area. The parks that are within a mile of this park (east of Oliver and north of Lincoln) are Boston Park, College Hill Park, Friendship Park, South Lakes Park and Longview Neighborhood Park. He said that there are some major thoroughfares that intersect with this neighborhood. Kupper said that normally they look to see if there are any other agencies providing open space for children and their families. He said in this case that there is a school south of the major thoroughfare. He said they are also looking at the barriers the children have such as the heavy traffic that may keep them from getting to the area. There are currently no services within a reasonable walking distance to this locale but the city does have access to some property in that area that could possibly be used for a play area. Solter asked if there are any additional criteria that we should look at. Kupper replied that the most important thing was to determine if we are providing adequate services in the area.

Miller said that she could see the Board being asked by many different neighborhoods for new playground equipment and playing fields. She said she felt that the Board needed to have a process and evaluation criteria for determining for whom we build. Kupper replied that the Park Department does not promise any group new property. Currently the Park Department cannot put this new park into the 2007 CIP funds because we have other items that need attention first. He said that if the Board thinks we should pursue the Dry Creek request that we go to the Dry Creek Neighborhood and tell them how much money they would need to contribute in order to develop the project more quickly.

Miller then summarized the criteria for developing the parks based on the information she had heard proposed by Kupper and Board members. She listed the following items as those that would make a good interim criteria for the Board to consider.

- Are we already providing services to this neighborhood within a ½ mile area and what are those services?
- Are there other public entities providing open space and services to this neighborhood?
- What barriers exist in this neighborhood to families trying to get to public assets in the area?
- Is there public land available in that neighborhood?
- Is there was a neighborhood association involved in the request for the park?
- Appropriateness of the site? (topography, drainage, adjacent land uses, environmental condition)
- How many people would it serve?
- What are the extra maintenance costs annually?
- Can we ensure safe access?

- What is the whole cost of the park and where does it fit into the CIP?

Miller then suggested that the Board create a trial policy to be used to evaluate new park requests in the immediate future.

Motion 4: Miller motioned that the staff create a policy statement to be brought back at the November meeting to read, approve and put into place and to look at the possible funding sources when evaluating playground requests. Solter seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion 5: Solter made a motion to use these criteria in the interim to evaluate the Dry Creek Association's request for a new park. Miller seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Item 6: Flood Plain Management Task Force Presentation

Miller introduced Christy Askew from the Planning Department. Askew began by showing the Board a power point presentation on the Flood Plain Management Task Force. She showed a map of Sedgwick county outlining the drainage and watershed districts. She also showed areas that belong to the watershed that have no formation and have drainage issues. She said they have 20 municipalities, 6 watershed districts and 5 drainage districts but that they do not have a coordinated effort of trying to reduce any risk. In December 2004, the City and County managers agreed it would be good to put together a Flood Plain Taskforce.

Askew said that the Task Force's goal is to look at current policy and evaluate and make needed recommendations and to research existing and potential policies. They also try to reduce the risk to property loss. She spoke on the goals of the Task Force and how they related to the community. She outlined the Task Force's ideas to educate the community, create standards and learn from other areas by using the Drainage Technical Guidance Manual and how the Governmental Framework involves Flood Plain Management. Since 2005, Askew said that the City and Sedgwick County have accepted the Floodplain Management Task Force's Final Report and have directed the City and County Manager to work together to move the recommendations forward through a technical task force. This task force is comprised of several different local and community officials. Askew went on to say that a public awareness website is currently being developed to better educate the public. FEMA publications for local libraries and for future educational workshops were also available and letters were to be sent to property owners in Spring 2007.

Dey asked if they had discussed the property owners above the drainage area and what legal recourse there is if they do not follow proper protocol. Askew said that those issues have not yet been addressed. Right now they are trying to prioritize the larger projects. They have determined several needs but that a policy has not yet been addressed.

Item 7: PROS Plan Update

Miller informed the Board that they had short-listed the firms for the RFP and would be interviewing them later in October. She said that they are also continuing to work on grant funding for the speaker series.

Item 8: Director's Update

Kupper told the Board that several members of the staff had attended the National Parks and Recreation Association convention in Seattle. He said that they all learned new things and have brought back new information concerning many areas of parks and recreation.

He then said that they are still in the CIP process for the District II park development. They have toured it but do not have any plans to spend money on it right now. He said they had met with the District II DAB to talk about idea and get suggestions.

He said the Park Department had been asked to purchase a parcel of land at Pawnee and 159th Street East, close to the county line. This land is a natural and vegetative area that has never been touched by a plow. The family is asking \$6000/acre. He said he called the Trust for Public Land and they will hold the land for 3 or 4 years until we can acquire the money to buy it back from them.

Kupper then said he wanted to point out that not all of the individuals that have come to the Board concerning Veterans' Park have been opposed to the Vietnamese Memorial being built there. He asked the Board to remember that The Merchant Marine Memorial that is currently in Veterans' Park does not honor a branch of the US military. The second thing he asked them to remember is that at the Korean Memorial has a plaque sponsored by the Korean Association and has a partial inscription written in Korean.

Miller then asked if anyone from the Board had any additional comments and there were none.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at approximately 6:10 p.m.

Janet L. Miller, President

ATTEST:

Myca J. Bunch
Recording Secretary

