



# BOARD OF PARK COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Monday, December 12, 2016

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

455 N Main, 11<sup>th</sup> Floor

City Hall, Park & Recreation Conference Room

**Members Present:** Cindy Claycomb, Hoyt Hillman, Troy Palmer, Chris Clark, Tori Deatherage

**Members Absent:** Ron Allen, Chris Highfill

**City Staff:** Troy Houtman (Director, Park & Recreation), Elizabeth Harlenske (Assistant City Attorney), Penny Garding (Clerk), Warren McCoskey, Larry Hoetmer, Matt Townsend

**Guests:** Megan Campbell, Terry Fry (citizens)

<u>Item</u>	<u>Description</u>
	<b>Call to Order:</b> Cindy Claycomb, President, called the meeting to order at approximately 3:01 p.m.
	<b>Public Comments:</b> Megan Campbell, 12018 Autumn Ridge St. inquired about the status of the pump track at Buffalo Park. Houtman responded it is an option we have been looking at. There is no funding or design yet. Options are still being explored, maybe at Air Capital Park where there is more space. Campbell would like to see a BMX track in a different area in Wichita. Houtman is interested in the track idea. Campbell would be willing to prepare a presentation. Houtman stated Visit Wichita and the Sports Commission would be interested.
1	<b>Approve Previous Meeting Minutes:</b> Recommended Action: Approve, sign and file minutes of the November 14, 2016, Board of Park Commissioners Regular Meeting. <b>Motion by Hillman, second by Palmer, IT WAS UNANIMOUSLY VOTED to approve, sign and file the minutes of the November 14, 2016 Board of Park Commissioners Regular Meetings (4-0).</b>
2A	<b>No Mow Zones Policy and Outsourced Mowing (Warren McCoskey)</b> Houtman stated several years ago some areas were set aside for no mow zones to save money. This past year the Park Department received some push back and feedback from the community. The no mow zones were never brought to the Park Board or Council for approval and issuance of an ordinance to protect the spaces. The Park Department is asking if the Park Board would support no mow zones so it could be taken to Council.  McCoskey stated going back to 2010-11 we had erosion problems along river bank at the Art Museum. The Ark River Coalition planted a wildflower buffer and the Park Director declared it a no wildlife feeding area. In 2012-13 there were some no mow areas along Kellogg. Those were well received. In the 2013-14 budget cycle, the Airport did some wildflower and native grass plantings. Rainfall that

year made them appear beautiful. Due to budget requests to save dollars, we identified areas along highways, river banks, and low use in parks where we installed wildflowers and grasses like the Airport. In the winter of 2014-15 several hundred acres native grass and wildflower were installed. We received high praise from a few individuals. The majority either really disliked them or they liked the concept but not near their home. Some no mow areas have been retained within the parks, some with high complaints are now being mowed. We realized there was no public education on our reasoning for this. We would like to get support from Park Board to take no mow zones to Council for policy and ordinance approval. Houtman stated there are additional environmental positives to no mow zones like reduced emissions, less erosion, and better filtration runoff. He will explore properties and present locations to the Board.

Palmer inquired if KDOT participates in any type of similar program. Houtman responded he is not aware of what they do on their properties.

Claycomb inquired if it would be specified areas and would look aesthetically pleasing. Houtman responded he will provide a list of potential properties next month prior to the meeting. Clark asked to have a sample of what type of plantings would be in each of the areas. Claycomb asked to have pictures of existing areas.

Houtman added 90% of park mowing is contracted. This past year there have been a lot of problems. Some contractors were non-performing, some were difficult to work with, and some were backlogged due to the amount of rain.

McCoskey explained that the City is part of a federal program called What Works City. Experts were brought in to look at, among other things, our outsourced mowing. They suggested we move from a specifications-based model to an outcome-based model. What they suggested and what the RFP is asking for is: let us know what the standards could and should be, how we get there, and proposed pricing.-Palmer stated the price would go up considerably.

Clark inquired how the contract was previously awarded. Houtman and McCoskey both responded it was based on price. We have lost contractors due to inability to perform to the standards and frequency needed. Clark asked how the new RFP will be awarded. Houtman responded in addition to price, we will be looking at methodology and scope. Palmer inquired about how many cemeteries the City mows. Houtman responded four. McCoskey stated in the state of Kansas, when it becomes no longer financially feasible for a cemetery company to operate, someone has to administer the land. In Kansas they turn it over to the County who can then turn it over to a City of the First Class. Wichita is a City of First Class. Houtman stated there is a Friends of the Wichita Pioneers group that has adopted our cemeteries. They are helping with headstone care and beautification. Headstones are private property and need family permission to make repairs.

	<p>Clark inquired about statutes allowing cemetery developers to just walk away from full cemeteries. Harlenske responded the statutes have been tightened over the last five years. It is a trust and a fiduciary responsibility the cemetery corporation owes to the people who purchase lots and bury family there. The City of Wichita maintained cemeteries are Highland, Pierpont, Jamesburg, Old Mission Mausoleum and Wichita Mausoleum. The City gets what money is left in a trust when the property is abandoned. Palmer inquired how this shows up on CIP. Houtman responded it is not a CIP item. There are a lot of things that are a public service and do not generate any revenue.</p>
<p>2B</p>	<p><b>Sale of Park Land Policy (Troy Houtman)</b>  Houtman stated that if and when park land or park operated land is sold, he would like a standard policy that guarantees the money comes back to the Park and Recreation Department. All revenue currently goes to the General Fund. The Park Department is wanting to propose that when park property sold by the Park Board or the City, those revenues would come back to the Park and Recreation Department. An example is the golf course land at Auburn Hills that just sold, we had crafted an agreement specifying the funds go back to the golf fund. If the Park Board is supportive, he will draft a policy for the Board to adopt and take to Council. Clark inquired if the policy could be amended to include revenue from rentals, etc. coming back to the Park Department as well. Houtman responded we can ask, but all other revenues, Library, Police, etc. go back to the General Fund. It would be highly unlikely, and would create other issues. Property sales revenue would have to go into a capital fund and not used for operational expenses.</p>
<p>3A</p>	<p><b>Aquatics Master Plan (Troy Houtman)</b>  Claycomb stated she attended the Workshop where Council was considering the Aquatics Master Plan. They did not make any decision. It appears they are not comfortable moving forward at this time. Council members may not understand what Park Board members think about the Aquatics Master Plan, even though they have been presented with Park Board recommendations.</p> <p>Houtman recapped the Council Workshop discussion. Council appears to question why we are in the aquatics business and why we don't work with the YMCA. Houtman stated he had several meetings with the YMCA and they believe they can handle the capacity of any of our pools that are closed. He has a meeting next week with the CEO of the YMCA, the Chairman of their Board of Directors and the Mayor.</p> <p>Even though option 1, with five pools and five splash pad, is the most viable and fits our budget., any of the aquatics options is viable and feasible. Community feedback is they don't want to lose the pools; however, the City does not currently have the budget to maintain all the pools currently open. The plan is once we close a pool it will be demolished. The investment to bring it back would be significant. It is a Council decision and they are wrestling with what is best for the community.</p>

	<p>Park Board members are requested to talk to your council members and share what you feel is best and find out what's important to them. Any insight you can provide will help develop a more palatable plan. Claycomb suggested this item be placed on the retreat agenda, giving members time to talk to council members.</p> <p>Houtman stated next year we are closing one pool. The one targeted is McAdams. There are two things that will aid in the decision making process, the meeting with YMCA and if Park Board talks to their council members.</p>
3B	<p><b>STAR Bond Updates: Stryker Soccer Complex / Lawrence Dumont Stadium (Troy Houtman)</b></p> <p>These are two areas where the City is looking to request expansion of current STAR Bond districts.</p> <p>This past week there was discussion by the City Council on how to increase the STAR Bond district adjacent to Lawrence Dumont Stadium to include the stadium and surrounding area for the possibility of updating the stadium.</p> <p>The other STAR Bond expansion is for the addition of two indoor soccer fields just to the north of Stryker Soccer Complex. Additionally, the existing fields would get synthetic turf. Palmer inquired about competing with the Sports Forum. Houtman responded the Sports Forum would most likely operate these fields, similar to our partnership with Lawrence Dumont Stadium and the Wichita Ice Center. Palmer expressed concern about the Farha YMCA Centers viewing the City as competition. Clark inquired why the Park Department would be involved with Stryker. Houtman responded Stryker is city-owned park property.</p>
3C	<p><b>Naftzger Park Update (Troy Houtman)</b></p> <p>Houtman stated the Spaghetti Works building was sold six months ago. There have been two initial meetings with the developers about how to renovate Naftzger Park. The Park Department worked with the Wichita Downtown Development Corporation on designs for the renovations. Naftzger Park could be a huge front door for Intrust Bank Arena. The current set up leaves much of the park closed off and wasted space. We are reviewing plans and ideas and will bring them to Park Board.</p> <p>Deatherage inquired about a church group that sets up in that parking lot. Houtman responded that is a homelessness topic. It is a delicate balance when dealing with homelessness. When programming begins, that population will begin to relocate.</p> <p>Clark stated that pursuing a TIF would be a good resource for getting development funds. Hoetmer added the design needs to be redeveloped to activate the area.</p>
4	<p><b>Dog Parks – Presentation on Preliminary Locations (Larry Hoetmer)</b></p> <p>Houtman stated there has been a huge interest in adding dog parks to our properties. We have three dog parks in the city. Chapin was the first, with</p>

	<p>Meridian and Murfin the other two. Each of the dog parks is on a land fill of some sort which presents unique challenges.</p> <p>The lessons learned include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• need for shade,</li> <li>• turf maintenance,</li> <li>• water availability,</li> <li>• enforcement of rules and restrictions.</li> </ul> <p>A city of our size should have 10-12 dog parks. We have reviewed our inventory of parks and have identified some potential locations. Hoetmer shared a map showing the location of the potential locations.</p> <p>Harrison Park (located near Harry &amp; Webb) is next on the list for a potential park. We are close to a partnership with Together Wichita, who has been raising funds for a dog park. We are now starting to look at our capital improvement program. We are plugging in an additional \$200k every other year starting in 2020. We can be creative in design and size for opportunities in the downtown area. We continue to include them in the PROS plan.</p> <p>Hoetmer explained that it is helpful to have a rotation field to aid in turf maintenance. There are many alternative surface options available.</p> <p>Claycomb stated there is interest in a downtown dog park. There is a privately owned property in Old Town being used as a public dog park. Several apartments in the area have put in dog areas for their tenants. Houtman is searching for space in the downtown area.</p>
5	<p><b>Recreation Update (Troy Houtman)</b>  Houtman shared the Night with Santa went well. The Mayor's Tree Lighting ended up being on a different night, the activities that happened on the river, including Lights on the River, were very successful. The Park Department is hoping to take the lead next year on all the planning to ensure both events are on the same night. Attendance at Night with Santa was down due to the separation.</p>
6	<p><b>Golf Update (Troy Houtman)</b>  Houtman stated Golf had a great November, but still down for the year. Specs have been put together RFP out last week for golf carts. We are hoping the \$925,000 will get us about 220 carts.</p>
7	<p><b>Golf Advisory Committee Update (Hoyt Hillman)</b>  Hillman stated they are meeting tomorrow at Auburn Hills. The committee will be working on bylaws. Claycomb added it would be good to discuss the draft of the bylaws at the Retreat. Park Board would have to approve the bylaws.</p>
8	<p><b>Wichita Parks Foundation Update (Troy Houtman)</b>  Houtman stated the Foundation is having their retreat this weekend. They will be working on their fundraising and capital improvement strategy. They want to</p>

	<p>redefine their scholarship program as well. They are continuing to work on July 4 activities.</p>
9	<p><b>OJ Watson Park Committee Update (Troy Houtman)</b>  Houtman stated Polar Express is going well. We want to explore, for next year, the possibility of having an ice rink. Also we may explore adding some Christmas lights, but don't want to compete with other Christmas places, including our own.</p>
10	<p><b>Aquatics Committee Update (Tori Deatherage)</b>  No additional discussion.</p>
11	<p><b>President's Update (Cindy Claycomb)</b>  Nothing to report. The tracking document will be updated when minutes are finalized.</p>
12	<p><b>Director's Update (Troy Houtman)</b>  Houtman stated we have had some additional discussions with Councilmember Blubaugh about what we can do for a Pawnee Prairie Park Master Plan in-house in 2017. We put together a proposal that is limited but includes a walking and bicycle trail for pedestrians and separate trails for horses. It would also include some signage improvements. The Wichita Wild Ordinance would need to be changed. The ideas were presented to Councilmember Blubaugh. We have not had an opportunity to discuss with him yet. By doing the master plan in-house we can save money that could be applied toward the park. There are still issues and concerns with horses and bicycles. The ordinance change will have to go through Council as well. Now is a good time to start talking to your council member and getting their feedback and ideas.</p> <p>Terry Fry, 1902 N Frederick. The park has been primarily a nature and horseback riding trail for eight decades. There is not anything comparable for 120 miles. An unintended consequence would be losing people coming into the community if horse trails are cut out. There are many other bicycle trails in the city. Adding bicycles to the park will meet with a tremendous amount of resistance from the equine interest who have been riding there for decades. Air Capital Park is available for bicycles. Claycomb inquired if the horses rode the whole park, because there are some areas where you could tell where horses had been ridden a lot and some the trails were very narrow. Fry responded yes, horses ride the <i>entire park</i>, those narrow trails are made by horses. Most of those trails the bicycles would not want to ride.</p> <p>Fry would like to see the plan and be able to circulate it to the equine interest and hikers. Houtman wants to make sure Council sees the plan before it goes out to the public. Fry inquired if the plan is subject to an Open Records request. Houtman said it is not a plan yet, only an idea. Harlenske said it is not subject to Open Records yet.</p> <p>The 2018 KRPA will be in Wichita, so with no travel spending we should have increased attendance.</p>

	<b>Adjourn</b> 5:03
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The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on Monday, January 9, 2017.

  
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**Cindy Claycomb, President**

  
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**Penny Garding, Clerk**

