

PARKS BOARD MEETING

September 8, 2009

12:05 pm - 2:00 pm

Currents @ 600 Cregg Lane

Attended by:

Park Board members: Dale Harris, Kevin Verlanic, Janet Sproull, and Tim Bechtold
Charlie Vandam

Staff: Ben Carson, Rob Thames, Donna Gaukler, Shirley Kinsey

Others: Dan Rogers, Ken Wall, Jamie Kirby, Jim Habeck, Mike Sweet, Ken Wall

Approval of minutes of meeting from July 28, 2009. (No meeting in August 2009)

Minutes of the July meeting were approved with an addition from Janet Sproull.

Public comments: none

Updates/Board Workshop: (12:15-1pm)

Ben Carson - Ken Wall from GeoData Service was asked by the Department for a cost benefit analysis outlining the benefits of forestry resources, using a dollar value. The project also includes some sample plotting, and potential implications based on budgets.

Ken Wall - Urban Forestry Return on Investment (URI) profile for Missoula forest.

The Goals of the project were to put a value to the urban forest using current conditions, review the status of the green infrastructure, provide a return for investment giving different parameters and what would be future steps.

Mr. Wall based the cost benefit modeling on the leading research in urban forest benefits, costs, and strategic planting by Gregory McPherson and colleagues. The study information can be found at the following email address:

http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/program/cufr/products/cufr_258products

The urban forest inventory was updated in 2003 by former Urban Forester, Dan Rogers.

At present there is not any individual tree data available. The analysis is done on neighborhood level which is not a precise measurement but does give a good view of the mix of species, and age. Two of the components were to determine the cost benefits and looking at the even age distribution of the maple tree population. As all of the trees are the same age and all are approaching or beyond maturity, all will die within the same time period. In looking at the model showing canopy cover in 2008 vs. 2050 - there are no trees in 2050. Missoula needs to be proactive, although an even age forest is good for energy reduction. The issue is making sure there is a diversity of tree species and sustainable management. Early on in development regulations only one tree species was a requirement in new subdivisions. This leaves a population of

trees susceptible for disease. The solution is to plant a variety of species and enforce requirements for a variety mix.

The modeling program was funded through the DNRC. Jamie Kirby from the DNRC explained the program was to provide grants to use modeling techniques for urban forests. This is a cost share grant with the participants sharing 50% of the cost.

Dan Rogers- this type of application is good to provide the information for proactive management. It helps the decisions makers understand the value and provides details for making their decision. This same issue is occurring in other Montana cities and Missoula is a pilot project using this modeling technique.

The ROI model uses satellite imagery to provide an overall footprint of community. The Missoula urban forest model is done in Arc View with the added GIS component. Adding GIS gives information to create graphs and charts tied to the maps. The information is also linked to assumptions and as you move the slider bars linked to these assumptions you can change the graphs, and maps.

The slider bars in this profile broke trees into age classes, tree structure, and cost benefit based on size of trees. The information was used to measure different categories including the ability for heating, cooling, storm water runoff, and green house gas reductions.

The information was done using the last 5 years of the City's urban forest budget to show cost benefit and how this can also be a management tool. The ROI shows the benefits of the forest if pruning and maintenance were adequate on a 1-7 year cycle and then using the 49 year cycle in Missoula. The most notable benefit is the trees will live longer. Changing the budget amounts change the benefits.

Another issues associated with the urban forest is inventory and how decision made now affect the value and life of trees for the next hundred years.

Mike Sweet was present to discuss inventory strategies. Mike has his experience from the UM campus where the goal was to complete an arboretum inventory and measure every tree. The inventory was used to help plan appropriately to assure development of the arboretum, education and beautification, and accurate location of each tree so as to not interfere with infrastructure. The 2004 inventory for the campus was updated by hiring a student for \$7500. This amount did not include equipment or data processing costs to collect data on every tree including diameter and height. Once an inventory is established there should be a scheduled inventory about every 2 year for a cost of 10% annually to maintain the inventory. An inventory process shouldn't be started if it can't be maintained or sustained.

This is a good opportunity to have city and University collaboration on this program and take advantage of grants, cost share, and update inventories.

The City needs to be more proactive with taking care of the urban forest. In the past with limited budget the pruning and other planting have been neglected and the City is falling further behind. The Department is interested in naming a task force with

the help of key people to work on a plan of action on how to replace the trees in Missoula.

Motion: It was moved to recommend staff work with DNRC, Ken Wall with Geo Data Services and administration, along with a park board liaison to help with funding sources, and a maintenance district for street trees. The process will include education and a working group to help the community understand the necessity for tree maintenance.

Motion: it was moved to create a working group to participate in the above motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Director Report:

FY10 budget - staff has received additional funding for keeping restroom open in the parks.

Other projects:

The Parks Department is a recipient of stimulus project - HB645 which will provide funding for new playgrounds at Sacajawea, Marilyn, Lafray, and Kiwanis. Also part of the bill is funding for bank restoration and placement of the bridge at Greenough Park.

The CDBG funds originally slated for playgrounds have been redirected to the Northside Pedestrian crossing project.

Even though this year required a loss in operational funding, the Department is working on finding other funding sources including a \$25,000 grant from DNRC for tree inventory and a \$50,000 for wood waste to turn into a growth medium.

CLM plan - there was a good meeting with the Technical group, putting the goals of working group and ranking and prioritize the lands to show how and where to put resources and balancing recreation, social and management.

Open Space update

Jackie: a proposed new acquisitions or easement include a proposal to acquire an easement with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation at Grant Creek for elk herd preservation.

Recreation Report

Shirley Kinsey provided the park board with a summary report of the summer for recreation and aquatics. Shirley provided the number of participants per event and program. Sports and Wellness incorporated a new format for youth programs with a positive response. New outdoor programs this year include photography class, Take Me Fishing, and skateboard curriculum.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm