

MISSOULA PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

March 12, 2013

Regular Board Meeting

12:00 – 2:00 pm

600 Cregg Lane

Headwaters

Attended by: Dale Harris, Susan Ridgeway, Johanna Eisenmann, Ross Mollenhauer and John O'Connor

Absent: Norma Nickerson, Chris Ryan

Staff: Donna Gaukler, Shirley Kinsey, Rita Hackett and Morgan Valliant

Others: Jim Habeck

Approval of Minutes – It was moved to approve the minutes of meeting from February 2013. The Board started a review of the guiding principles but due to incomplete information the approval was not recommended. The board will review and approve in their April meeting.

Announcements

Public/Guest comments

Action Items:

Amend CLACs By-laws to include a former GPAC member as a voting member of CLAC with a 3 year term and to appoint John Pierce as new CLAC member. (Morgan Valliant)

On Monday March 4th the Missoula City Council disbanded the Greenough Park Advisory Committee (GPAC) and directed the Missoula Park Board to transfer all duties previously assigned to GPAC to CLAC. Additionally, to ensure continuity in citizen involvement in the management of Greenough Park, Council recommended appointing John Pierce, chair of the GPAC, as a member of CLAC. A merger of GPAC into CLAC requires the Park Board to edit the CLAC's by-laws.

Valliant – there was limited discussion from City Council and the item today is for the Park Board to appoint John Pierce and amend the by-laws for CLAC.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to appoint John Pierce to CLAC and amend the CLAC by-laws to transfer all duties previously assigned to Greenough Park Advisory Committee to Conservation Lands Advisory Committee. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Softball Park Enterprise request (Shirley Kinsey)

This referral is to approve up to \$8,800 from the softball enterprise fund to make chain link fencing modifications and repair to the softball fields located at Fort Missoula Parks. Missoula Softball Association has made this request to use the enterprise funds. MSA will be applying for a County grant and if successful will use those funds to reimburse the enterprise fund. There are sufficient funds in the Enterprise account to cover these expenditures.

O'Connor – question on when the proposed fields at the Fort would be constructed. Even with a best case scenario the new fields won't be built next in the next four years.

Mollenhauer asked if the request shouldn't include raising the fence the height of the fence from six feet to eight feet.

Eisenmann agreed and suggested even a higher fourteen foot fence would be more appropriate.

Kinsey – the quote from Fence crafters just included the additional chain link modification, and it may not be cost effective or it is cost prohibitive to replace the entire fence.

Motion: it was moved and seconded to approve up to \$8,800 from the softball enterprise fund to make chain link fencing modifications and repair to the softball fields located at Fort Missoula Parks.

All members voted in favor of the motion.

Interim Use Permit process and fees for Conservation Lands (MV)

In 2012, the Conservation Lands Advisory Committee (CLAC) developed a set of recommendations to the Missoula Park Board (MPR) and Parks staff for the development of a special event permit on City conservation lands. A sub-committee of the MPR and Parks staff expanded these recommendations and developed an implementation plan for permitting special events on conservation lands. Valliant reviewed the proposed process and fees with the Board.

The Park Board Subcommittee reviewed and recommended changes to include events require a special use permits for groups:

- 12 people advertised to the public or exclusive activity targeted at a specific group.
- Commercial events charging a fee to participants and all commercial events regardless of the number of participants.
- Off-Trail Event – An event which includes participants traveling more than 10ft off the trail edge. All off-trail events require a permit regardless of number of participants. No events w/more than 20 people will be allowed to travel off-trail.
- **Exceptions** – events on the Kim Williams Trail, Rattlesnake Greenbelt Main Trail, the Clark Fork Natural Area, Greenough Park Trails 60" or greater in width and the Moon-Randolph Homestead do not require a conservation lands special use permit. Events in these areas are required to obtain a Use Permit from the Parks Department.

The permit provides general definitions for conservation lands and events. There is a section dedicated to special resource considerations related fees. The following will apply for events which charge a fee to participants:

For small events which do not require MPR staff to document pre & post-conditions or to staff the event a minimum fee of \$50, or 25% of gross revenue (whichever is greater) shall be charged and go towards the management of Missoula's Conservation Lands.

For any event which requires MPR staff to document pre & post-conditions and/or to staff the event a permit fee shall be established to recoup the direct expenses of MPR. Additionally, 25% of gross revenue shall go towards management of Missoula's Conservation Lands.

NOTE: Volunteer or other-in-kind services which directly meet goals of the CLM plan and the Department may be eligible for reduction in fees with Parks and Recreation Board approval.

Valliant - given that events can be overwhelming to staff the permit only allows for four large events per year and only 2 events per trail. The guidelines for submitting requests will be November 1 of prior year. The recommendation to have parks staff meet with current events sponsors to work with them on making their event less impactful. The goal is to contact a group in town to design another large event, do all the permitting and document time, conditions, permitting process and then develop a full permit based on findings.

Ridgeway asked for a clarification on a small group requirement as the permit states more than 12, which impacts a school group who may want to go to the North Hills. The permit also requires a month in advance request which may not be doable for some field trips. This permit may be too restrictive for educational users.

Valliant –we do want to make this as easy as possible and we do want to allow field trips as part of curriculum which could be done with a short form permit. Currently there is no process and this allows us to regulate the impacts on popular areas. Right now each group can hit the same area which can impact some areas. I will work with educators but the focus will be to communicate with me when there is a proposed educational tour, event, etc.

Ridgeway – it may be beneficial to meet with educational groups ahead of time and many educators could benefit from some programming from Parks.

Gaukler – That would be valuable for next season and right now we need a process to get small group permit and use volunteers. Approval today allows staff to move forward with events for this year.

O'Connor – why not just move forward as pilot project - rather than this document?

Valiant - the focus here is on large group but we want a document out there for public knowledge. We want to move forward to allow a couple of large events and this needs to have process in place to help guide the development of policy/permit.

Gaukler – as the process moves forward, this policy will be part of master fee document.

O'Connor – I would like to see or have in the conditions acknowledge documentation that is shared with eventee, have them signed off prior to and then after the event sign off.

Ridgeway – maybe amend now to not charge a fee for education?

Morgan – we can make edits and the Park Board can decide not to charge a group.

O'Connor suggested a friendly amendment to include language in the motion to implement a pilot program. The amendment was accepted.

The Pengally event has been grandfathered in and staff will work with them as a partnership to make less impact on the land. This year they will not be charged a fee but changes will come for the next year.

Motion: it was moved and seconded to accept the interim recommendations for developing a permit for events on conservation lands and implementing a pilot program for evaluation of these recommendations. The motion was unanimously approved.

Presentation/Discussion/Updates:

Conservation Lands Management update (MV)

Presentation by Morgan Valliant which included the following updates and season highlights of the Conservation Lands accomplishments of 2012 and goals for 2013.

Accomplishments:

- Expansion of research and monitoring program
- Cultivation of New and existing partnerships
- Completion of the Greenough Park Survey

By the Numbers:

- Volunteers 508 people = 2700 hours or about \$39,000 in labor
- Trail construction - .9 mile new trail
- Fencing constant - repair .3miles and remove .35 miles
- Forest thinning - 45 acres on Mt. Jumbo

- Invasive tree removals - Norway Maple, Siberian Elm and Golden Willow - 2.5 acres in South Hills, Tower, Greenough Park and Mt. Jumbo – this is being done to preserve the native trees.
- Hand pulling across 19.5 ac on Jumbo and South Hills
- Weed mowing = 139 acres
- Re-vegetation - slowing expanding the amount of re-vegetation and realizing this need to happen at a higher level to reach goals. It did not help that seed prices were quite a bit higher last year and not able to purchase as much as seed.
- Herbicide applications across 785 ac = 154 ac weeds sprayed
- Sheep grazing - 886 ac in 94 days and in 2006 – 930 ac in 150 days
- Grant donations = \$181,000 which helps leverage budget dollars for every dollar in the budget
- Slides on pilot projects – difference
- HOT Seeds to prevent mice eating the seeds
- CLM Greenhouse – from grant from Missoula Conservation District

Goals 2013

- New greenhouse - the goal is to provide full time staff to run greenhouse
- Hire train research specialist
- Develop monitoring program for recreational use of cons. lands
- Set up monitoring program for restoration of riparian habitats
- Work to secure funding to increase restoration program
- Get dedicated money for seed, plants, and greenhouse supplies in order to restore areas
- Need more efforts into restoration and trail maintenance issue and less weed control
- Staffing needs: greenhouse attendant, additional maintenance laborers

Presentation of budget requests and ranking of requests by Board. (Donna Gaukler)

Gaukler reviewed the Park Departments budget and CIP requests for FY 2014. The Department submitted a total of \$127,239 in budget enhancements and a request of an additional \$125,000 in general funds for Renovate, Replacement and Improvements projects. Other Capital projects included have funding sources which do not include general funds. Staff had a suggested priority ranking for budget requests and the Park Board was asked to rank their priorities for budgets. The Board would like to see funding for RR&I projects, sustained maintenance, conservation lands and urban forestry. The Mayor will be presenting his proposed budget at Administrative Leadership Team in early April. The Department will have an opportunity to appeal the Mayor's proposed budget.

Draft Policy for Requested Donation from Parks and Recreation (Kinsey)

Kinsey provided a draft policy for the board to review. The reduced rate would be the resident discount rate. This will be held for an action item at the next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 pm.