

PARK BOARD MINUTES
Letts Community Center
November 13, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Kibbey, Olivia Martin, Paul Holland, Patricia Pisano

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dusty Fancher, Patricia Spitzley, Adam Hussain

OTHERS PRESENT: Brett Kaschinske, Parks and Recreation Director; Kellie Brown, Board Secretary

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:05 p.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

None

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS

None

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 11, 2013 and October 9, 2013 minutes tabled until next month due to lack of quorum.

NEW BUSINESS

Parks 5-Year Mast Plan Goals

Kaschinske stated he would like the Board to look at goals and reviewed the goals in the current 5-year plan. Kaschinske inquired if the Board wants to keep some of the goals or change some of them.

The current goals are:

- Maintain safe parks
- To promote and enhance the financial stability of the Lansing Parks system through recreational economic development, regionalization, general fund, millage, grants from Federal, State and local sources, endowment/gifts/donations/corporate partnerships/bonds, evaluation of park land holdings, and user fees and rental rates
- Maintain, develop and preserve park lands and facilities in order to provide for the needs of present and future generations
- Promote the development of new recreation programs with active sports facilities and passive leisure opportunities which are in high demand, or are innovative, unique or not presently provided by municipal or private sectors.
- Promote interaction, involvement and communication between the Parks and Recreation Department, the citizens of Lansing and surrounding communities.

Kibbey stated he tried to figure out a process for the Board to go through and have a plan. Two items he considered were storm water management and environmental involvement which is what people bring to a millage vote.

Martin added promote physical activity and environmental stewardship to better understand the outdoors.

Pisano inquired if there are benefits to having some park land as wetland. Kaschinske stated there could be potential for grant money.

Kaschinske stated there is also potential in the future to acquire FEMA properties located in the flood plain.

Kibbey stated the Land Bank has taken down hundreds of houses leaving small lots of land all over Lansing. The Land Bank is working in conjunction with the City on FEMA properties. Martin questioned if the City would have funds to make purchases and would the Mayor and Council allow this. We did the inventory this year and some of the parks were not being used as parks. Kibbey stated changes were found in land use and the City trimmed away some of the properties are managed.

Kaschinske stated there could be other funding sources through the Land Bank or FEMA.

Board members recommended the following goals:

- Remain financially stable
- Storm water management system *
- Promote and support physical and mental health of population
- Strive to meet and anticipate outdoor space needs and desires of neighborhood population
- Continue to provide a place to gather and engage in physical activities and experience a natural environment.
- Manage urban natural areas for wildlife, birds, etc.
- Flood plain properties – FEMA *
- Land Bank properties
- Add endowment/park foundation
- Regionalize trail system/funding source
- Trees, number of plantings vs. removal – volunteer projects to engage neighbors
- Identify recreational needs of different ethnic groups
- Increase river activities/properties – canoe/kayak launches, media promotion, water recreation, riverwalk expansion, public/private opportunities with businesses on parkland
- Playground replacement plan in 5-year increments

Kaschinske inquired about the current goals. Martin stated to maintain safe parks needs to remain.

Kaschinske stated maybe not as a goal, but more as a function.

Martin stated financial stability is a goal, but it would not be on the top of her list. If we were to keep financial stability she would recommend adding to it about the endowment. She would personally not want to highlight regionalization.

Holland stated his issue with the first two goals is they are not measurable and should be part of parks, but not as a goal. Also not sure why general fund is a goal

Kaschinske replied there are many sources of funding the department has for programs now and what are the percentages. In other words what is the percentage of general fund dollars going to parks and recreation? The general fund is the overwhelming biggest piece and can we make some of that regional or parks foundation.

Holland stated those questions are not goals. If the goal is to increase general funding or diversify funding to the department it is a goal, but the current plan stated general fund.

Kaschinske stated he would put in the plan the percentages of funding now and get the Board's opinion on diversifying the funds.

Martin clarified she thought the task tonight was to come up with goals and then Kaschinske would come up with details of the goals. Kaschinske stated everyone will be involved and working on the goals.

Kibbey stated when he thinks of safety as a goal and what we will do; there is not a person in the department whose job it is to ensure the parks are safe. His experience is if it is not someone's job it does not get done.

Martin stated it is also a goal for the Board and there have been discussions on safety.

Holland inquired in the last three years, has the five-year plan been referred to by the department or the board. Kaschinske stated yes, when grants are being pursued and how the grant would fit within the plan.

Holland stated we should define the purpose of the master plan. If it is for grants then the goals and objectives should be primarily about how we grow and develop the parks systems. Having issues about safe parks, which is standard operating procedure, or financial stability are fluff. He would recommend a more targeted document, what it would be used for and what the goals are directly related to in order to measure it in five years.

Martin agreed and stated when she thought of goals, financial stability and safety did not come to mind as goals.

Kibbey also agreed. When he was working on this it was directive to provide guidance to park staff, volunteer groups and the Board.

Kaschinske stated one of the things he has heard repeatedly from the Board is tree planting and should that be a goal.

Martin stated yes, and maybe a better way to go about this is for members to come up with their own goals and then go through the old goals.

Holland inquired what the accepted typology is between a goal and an objective. He understands you set a goal and set objectives to meet it. Kaschinske stated he would not be as concerned whether it is a goal or an objective but to get it on the list and sort it out.

Martin inquired what the goal is for this evening. At the committee meeting it was discussed to come with goals, finding objectives and bringing the ideas back to the Board. Kaschinske stated this is a brainstorming session to come up with ideas.

Holland clarified if the plan is a sweetener for grants or do you need to have something in the plan to point to in order to apply for grants or can you apply for any grants that come up and it helps to be able to point to something in the plan.

Kaschinske stated if you are going for a State Trust Fund grant, which is the majority of grants we have applied for and won, you must have a five-year plan on file for the project and how you show it in the plan adds more points.

Holland stated the incentive would be to put everything we possibly could into the plan so when grants come up we could qualify for as many grants as possible.

Kaschinske stated with the State, having the plan on file and applying for a grant for a project that fits in the five year plan does warrant more points, he is not sure we need to have everything in the plan.

Holland stated his natural inclination is to have a very small set of measurable goals; however if having a bunch of stuff listed helps get grants he is for putting everything in the plan.

Kaschinske stated we put our goals up on the board and see how we can categorize the goals.

Kibbey stated the City is up in the air about this department and he is inclined to use this as the Board's

internal process to see what we want done, such as land, trees or recreation programs. This is also a time to use ingenuity to seek new opportunities such as public service and international (ethnicity) aspects.

Kibbey stated it has not been done for the last couple of plans, but two censuses ago there was an analysis of the census in terms of what is the population like within walking distance of the park. He suggests not looking at things as a goal or objective, but whether or not it is a commitment we want to make.

Martin would like to see some language to engage adjacent homeowners where trees are involved.

Kaschinske stated 20 years ago Project Play redid playgrounds throughout the city and 20 years is a long time for a playground. There are 75 playgrounds in the city and he does not plan on replacing each one since new playgrounds cost approximately \$45,000.

OLD BUSINESS

Foundation

Kibbey stated the paperwork is ready and he would like to review it with Kaschinske and any board members before filing it.

Holland recommended a 14 to 16 member board with the current Park Board members and non-park board members. Create an infrastructure guide for starting individual friends of parks and allow a fundraising mechanism.

Friends of River Trail

Kibbey stated we were approached by a group of runners who are well organized and identified a foundation that makes grants for river trail improvements. They want to recruit and have a closer identification with maintenance and funding of river trail projects.

Kaschinske stated there are over 90 people who are interested. We have individuals who have experience running a 501c3 and Playmakers is on board.

Martin inquired if the Friends of the River Trail would come under the Parks Foundation. Kaschinske stated that was discussed and the friends would like to be separate for now.

Holland stated the River Trail is one instance of regionalization he would support.

County Millage

Kibbey stated the county is meeting on this subject and the City is part of the discussion. There are a lot of ideas and the vote would be in 2014.

UPDATES

Crego paving will be done on Monday, the dock is being installed and the canoe/kayak launch is done.

The Board may have a new member soon.

BOARD MEMBER REMARKS

Holland inquired about the department's part time employees and the new health insurance. Kaschinske stated if the employee work 29 hours or less no insurance is required, however if they work 30 hours or more insurance would need to be offered. At this time there are 5 employees who work 35 hours a week. There is no clear answer at this time but options would be to offer insurance and the employee pay the full premium or reduce their work hours to six hours a day.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted: Kellie Brown, Park Board Secretary
Approved December 11, 2013