

PARK BOARD MINUTES
Schmidt Southside Community Center
September 11, 2013

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Kibbey, Olivia Martin, Patricia Spitzley, Adam Hussain, Patricia Pisano

MEMBERS ABSENT: Paul Holland, Dusty Fancher

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

CALLED TO ORDER: 7:00 p.m.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA

STATEMENTS OF CITIZENS

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Adam Hussain inquired about the August minutes and if further discussion took place on Westside tree replacement.

Brett Kaschinske stated yes and an agreement is being worked on.

Patricia Spitzley inquired if there is an agreement or safe guards set up should someone from the neighborhood get hurt while performing the work. Kaschinske stated yes, we would use the adopt-a-park policy.

Patricia Spitzley moved to approve the July 10, 2013 and August 14, 2013 minutes as submitted; seconded by Adam Hussain. 5 yeas; 0 nays

Motion carried

NEW BUSINESS

Oak Park

Shelton Tyson, Eastern Neighborhood, is trying to get Oak Park baseball field named in honor of John Stauffer and Jim Herbert and develop a little league field. He has talked with individuals and businesses that are willing to help with the cost of this project.

Rick Kibbey explained where the park is located and Brett Kaschinske referred to a map to indicate the ball field.

Kibbey stated he is not disinclined to this project, but he is curious about where the kids are coming from that would utilize this field.

Tyson stated they would mostly come from the surrounding neighborhoods.

Patricia Spitzley clarified if there is an existing field there that needs to be improved. Kaschinske stated there is a back stop, soccer goals and the field is probably being used for kickball. The field is currently all grass.

Rick Kibbey inquired what would need to be done to use this as a baseball field. Kaschinske stated if it was to be used as a youth field the easiest maintenance would be to skin the infield, to remove the grass. You could move the mound and bases depending on the ages.

Kaschinske stated the grounds manager listed out what would need to be done to upgrade the field as follows:

- 1 - The backstop would need new boards 6 feet up from the ground.
- 2 – Additional grading would need to be done because the current back stop footings are showing
- 3 – Permanent soccer goals would need to be removed.
- 4 – Mounted benches need to be removed.
- 5 – Two water dome beehive drains are currently in the field of play
- 6 – Two manhole covers would need to be moved.

Drainage is an issue.

Patricia Spitzley inquired if we have, as a Parks and Recreation organization, the need additional ball field capacity. Kaschinske stated no, we currently play different locations throughout the city.

Tyson inquired if there is a problem to develop this into a league field.

Kaschinske stated parking is an issue and going to single field maintenance instead of a complex is additional maintenance.

Spitzley inquired if the drains have been there all along what the concerns are now.

Kaschinske stated if it is developed into a baseball field, we are inviting more use and there would be objects in the field of play. Kaschinske stated he does not know what the cost would be for the upgrades.

Spitzley asked Tyson if the department does not commit to the upgrading of the park is he still interested in renaming the field to honor Mr. Stauffer and Mr. Herbert. Tyson stated yes.

Tyson inquired if the drainage issues would stop the skinning of the field for practice rather than league play.

Kaschinske stated he would refer that question to the city attorney due to liability.

Kibbey stated this is an old school neighborhood park and these are two great gentlemen to dedicate the field after. Before involving the city attorney he would recommend creating a drawing to show the drains and how the ball field could be laid out.

Spitzley recommended looking at our park inventory and reviewing if it is appropriate to expend the money to upgrade this park. She is for renaming the field.

Kaschinske asked Mr. Tyson if they are asking for city money. Tyson stated he is asking for permission.

Spitzley recommended starting with renaming the field and come back to the board with what it will cost for the upgrades.

Kibbey clarified they are asking for permission to work with the city to come up with a cost. He would hold off on the memorial until we know what we are naming at the site.

Tyson inquired if there is confusion on what is being named.

Spitzley and Martin verified this was for the existing back stop. Tyson stated yes.

Hussain stated the type of memorial needs to be identified in order to be approved.

Martin moved to name the existing baseball diamond, as it is, after Mr. Stauffer and Mr. Herbert. Supported by Spitzley.
5 yeas; 0 nays

Kaschinske stated he would want to see the wording on the plaque and how it will be installed before actual installation.

Motion carried

2014 Meeting Schedule

Rick Kibbey stated this is regarding the Board meeting at one location each month or to continue rotating throughout the community centers. Kibbey stated holding the meeting at one location would mean board members and the public would always know where the meeting is being held.

Martin stated the point of different locations was to be accessible to various neighborhood groups. Hussain stated even with the different locations we do not get the public turn out and it is confusing.

Spitzley stated the meetings need to be central and on a bus line, which Gier and Schmidt Center are not.

Kibbey stated department staff have their offices at Foster and are accessible to files and information during the meeting.

Kaschinske also added there are more rooms at Foster and would not impact a class or program like it would at the smaller centers.

The Board supports a single location; Spitzley stated due to the room Foster makes sense.

Hussain favors Letts, but does not want to impact programs and classes.

Board members agree beginning January 2014 the monthly meetings will be held at Foster Center.

OLD BUSINESS

Parks Foundation

Kibbey stated there has been discussion on a couple of occasions regarding the sale of Red Cedar and what to do with the money. The City has an established policy that any sale of dedicated park land is supposed to go to acquisition of additional park land or capital improvements. In addition to this we have noticed over the years an increasing number in approaches to the Board, such as this evening, where the public has offered to partner with us to increase the utilization of our facilities.

There is a need to become more systematic about our approach to this and how can this be addressed. One part is some means of holding money that may come our way for future purposes; and second is the creation of a foundation.

Creating a foundation creates an opportunity to fold into the process the “friends of friends” which incorporates various friends’ organizations into one friend’s organization.

Kibbey stated he and Kaschinske recently visited Grand Rapids and they have full blown friend's organization. There are usually three ways, such as park sale money and interest, special events, and program fees.

Spitzley inquired if the parks still belong to Grand Rapids. Kibbey stated yes.

Martin inquired what the foundation would spend money on.

Kibbey stated he was captivated by the last meeting and the tree partnership with the Westside Neighborhood Association.

Spitzley stated she could see neighborhood association groups petitioning the foundation for small grants.

Martin asked if the Board should come up with a suggestion to provide to Council for use.

Spitzley inquired if the Board can establish the foundation. Kibbey stated yes.

Spitzley clarified there needs to be an established mechanism to route funds to the foundation.

Kaschinske stated Grand Rapids started this in 2008 when the Mayor of Grand Rapids mandated it be done or there would not be a parks system. Their situation is eerily like Lansing and they started with \$25,000.

Kaschinske stated this would also assist with grants because the foundation would be established as a 501(c)(3).

Spitzley inquired if there is support in the City for this. Kaschinske stated yes and this is his mission for the Parks Department. The Parks Department is a \$6.5 million dollar city funded department. Grand Rapids has 13 to 17 funding sources.

Martin inquired when the foundation has money would the city remove funding from the department.

Spitzley asked what the process is.

Kaschinske stated we start with Articles of Incorporation and establish bylaws.

Kaschinske stated Grand Rapids has a millage coming up and the millage language states the city would continue with the existing subsidy.

Spitzley inquired what would happen with the current Park Board, would it continue to exist or would the two blend together.

Kaschinske stated the two could be blended together, but they are different and would require two different skill sets. Who appoints and governs is different than the Park Board.

Wood Chip Program

Kaschinske stated there was a need to spread woodchips in the playgrounds so he went to the Neighborhood Council to get neighborhoods involved. Churches, neighborhood organizations, and youth groups have come out to work on this. The program is going well.

INFORMATION

Kaschinske provided the following:

Busby Memorial is starting this weekend.

New fall activity guides are out

Crego Park has started

Frances Park pathway along Moores River Driver has a failure and we are in the process of going back to the designer.

Spitzley asked what is going on with the roses at Frances Park.

Kaschinske stated there was a rose kill from last winter. The city is sitting down to find out what can be done with the staff we have or do we contract out the maintenance.

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

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