



Parks & Recreation Commission
7:00 P.M.
March 28, 2007

CALL TO ORDER: Brent Erickson, Chair, presided.

Present: Juli Bradley, Walt Eby, David Gast, Scott Jonason, Steve Lorenz, Mark Nickerson, and Melissa Smith.

Staff Present: Jerry Acheson, Eric Levison, and Ronda Syverson.

A motion was made by Eby, seconded by Bradley, and carried that minutes of the general meeting of January 24, 2007, be approved as written. Acheson offered clarification in regards to well placement as noted in paragraph seven on page three. Council, Mayor, and staff have discussed this issue and want to make it perfectly clear that this statement is not intended to be in perpetuity. In the future if there is a need for water, new wells may be developed. The Parks Commission agreed with Acheson's clarification on this issue.

PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE UPDATE:

Levison distributed a spreadsheet detailing costs per acre for "maintained" developed parks and open space areas. The spreadsheet offers a "best guess" on costs for maintained parcels. Staff will begin to closely track expenditures to get a better handle on how the dollars are spent. This information will be useful when budgeting new parks and open space areas. It offers direction in budgeting or discussions on levels of service. Each city facility is different and this was taken into account by breaking the sites down by type. In response to Gast's question, Levison responded that the spreadsheet took a great deal of time to develop and reflects everything in the parks/open space system.

Acheson clarified that the spreadsheet covers maintained acres. For example, Grass Valley Park covers a total of 25 acres; however, the spreadsheet tracks the five maintained acres. Smith asked that a column be added to show total acres at each facility. In response to Gast's question, Acheson stated that costs for maintained properties include: utilities (water/sewer, garbage, electrical), staff (i.e., Parks Maintenance), equipment rental, storm pickup, vandalism, etc. In response to Smith's question, Levison stated that a further breakdown is available.

In response to Gast's question regarding maintained acres compared to open space, Levison stated that the Parks system receives the most use, followed by trails. Our open space policy dictates that we leave the open space areas alone. We maintain the trails to ensure that they are safe for users.

FOREST HEALTH SURVEY:

The forest health survey has been completed by Collier Arbor Care. They went through all of the open space areas in the city. They have broken the areas down to six distinct categories: Ostenson Canyon, Washougal River Greenway, Lacamas Lake Park, Forest Home area, along Heritage Trail, and Fallen Leaf Lake. The report offers a basic overview of general open space tree health. The overall consensus is that we have both gems and issues. Evasive species is a problem, as well as, red ring root rot in some areas. Levison will forward a copy of the report to each Parks Commissioner.

Staff is recommending a more extensive review and development of a path forward. For example, perform an extensive hazard evaluation on Heritage Trail and evaluate Lacamas Trail for red ring root rot issues. In response to Nickerson's question, trees with red ring root rot may be removed to keep the disease from spreading.

Levison stated that in July, staff would like to schedule an ivy removal effort around Lacamas Lake, when the water is low. This work may be conducted by the work crew or as a scouting project. Any spraying would be performed by city staff. Some of the work may be hired-out. In response to Smith's question, some of the funding is currently in the budget. He added that we will need to utilize the work crew and volunteers to minimize the impact on the budget. Bradley suggested promoting a city-wide cleanup by asking for volunteers in conjunction with Camas Days, Arbor Day, Earth Day, etc. Levison agreed and stated that an ivy cleanup could be held in conjunction with the April 11 Arbor Day celebration.

C/W COMMUNITY CENTER – DISCUSSION:

Acheson reported that the C/W Community Center was discussed during the first open house and also at a luncheon sponsored by the C/W Chamber of Commerce. This topic will also be offered for discussion during the upcoming Ward meetings. In response to Eby's question, Acheson stated that about 45 people were in attendance during the open house.

Smith suggested getting the word out that the Camas Municipal Pool is in jeopardy of closing due to health regulations that are becoming more stringent each year. Acheson responded that the water quality at the Camas pool remains good but there are other issues to consider. Nickerson agreed with Smith regarding getting the word out. Jonason cautioned the commission on this issue since we do not have a specific time frame for a pool closure.

Jonason stated that the decision to postpone taking the Metropolitan Park District (MPD) program to a vote, gives the Friends of the Community Center (Friends) a chance to continue their fund raising efforts. They also plan to continue raising funds for an endowment for operation and maintenance costs. Perhaps they will locate a benefactor that will assist with these costs.

Erickson said that we need to make sure we design the site to fit the future needs of both communities. Jonason said that the design has been projected out 20 years to meet future needs. A discussion was held regarding building a facility that operates as close to revenue neutral as possible. This concept is based on the amenities offered at the facility, some amenities bring in more revenue than others.

Eby said that politics have surfaced as they did in 2003. The challenge of private versus public came up. We need to ensure that we are not offering services that would conflict with private businesses. We need to be prepared to answer questions relating to development of an MPD.

Jonason reported that the C/W Community Center is being marketed through the Friends of the Community Center. Smith said that she senses that the Friends is taking the lead and both cities are backing off. Jonason agreed, and added that Friends needs the support of the cities but will continue the effort.

2007 POOL SEASON RATES:

Acheson reported that staff is suggesting an increase in the rates charged for swimming lessons, general admission, and punch passes. Acheson referred to the Swim Lesson Rate Comparison and Punch Cards vs. Seasonal Passes information that was distributed in the agenda packet. Staff is suggesting the following: an increase in rates for swimming lessons, offer senior rates, and offer punch cards.

Erickson suggested setting the general admission rate at \$3 for ages 13 and older. Smith added that ages 12 and under and seniors could be charged \$2.50.

A motion was made by Gast, seconded by Jonason, and carried that rates for entrance to the Camas Municipal Pool be changed to the following:

\$3.00 ages 13 through 59

\$2.50 youth through 12 years old and those ages 60 and older

CAMTOWN YOUTH FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES:

Acheson distributed a memo from Krista Bashaw requesting feedback from the Parks Commission on offering a petting zoo during the Camtown Youth Festival. The petting zoo was a popular activity during the 2006 City Centennial function at Crown Park. In response to Erickson's question, the petting zoo will be contained to a designated area. Acheson responded to Bradley's question by stating that the area would be swept and hand sanitation materials will be available. Acheson added that staff from the Parks and Recreation Department has discussed this festival with the neighbors of Crown Park and they have not received any negative comments.

A motion was made by Eby, seconded by Lorenz, and carried that the petting zoo would be permitted during the Camtown Youth Festival on June 9, 2007, as proposed in the memo from Bashaw dated March 28, 2007.

PROJECT UPDATES:

Parks and Open Space Comprehensive Plan: The update is under governmental review. The SEPA will be distributed very soon. The plan is on track for a June adoption time frame.

Prune Hill Sports Park, Ph. III: A professional services agreement has been sent to Council for approval. The project will encompass installation of a restroom and ball field improvements. Construction is expected to begin in July 2007.

Heritage Park: Trees and shrubs next to the trailer homes have been removed due to rot and wind damage. They will be replaced. Placement of the playground equipment and other improvements to the park are underway.

Ash Creek Park and Ostenson Canyon Park: They are in the design phase.

Camas Municipal Pool Painting project: Bid results have been sent to Council for approval. The heater will be replaced this year.

Washougal River Greenway Trail and River Crossing: Staff is very optimistic that this project will receive grant funding through the WWRP program.

Lacamas Creek Trail – house: The house at the trailhead for Lacamas Creek will be dismantled and burned. The proposed time frame will place the burn in May 2007. Erickson expressed his concern that we save any trees of quality that are near the home. Smith asked that staff use a wide notification area in regards to the burn.

Heritage Park sign: Erickson asked that the sign be resurfaced and asked if City staff could do the work? Acheson responded that a couple of Eagle Scouts have looked at the sign, but have not committed to the undertake the project. He will look into it further.

OTHER:

Grass Valley Park: Bradley expressed a concern about kids walking over and riding bikes across a broken down barbed-wire fence on a trail that leads to the school. Acheson responded that the fence is on school district property. Smith responded that they are crossing the fence at their own risk. Acheson mentioned that the City is working on an easement with the school district and that he will ask Levison to assess the issue.

Maintenance Requests: Eby reminded the Parks Commissioners that they can submit a work order to repair or remove a hazard. Just fill it out and turn it in to staff.

Skate Park: Eby suggested that it was time to upgrade the Skate Park by adding equipment or new ramps. He sees kids setting up jumps in neighborhoods, so he wonders if they have become bored with the Skate Park.

Fields Committee: Lorenz reported that with the school levy passing, the Fields Committee has discussed placing turf on all fields near Doc Harris Stadium. They have discussed this item in the past. Turfed fields can be used for multiple sports.

Parking in this area is an issue. In response to Erickson's question, Lorenz stated that Mayor Dennis and Councilmember Higgins are involved with the committee. Smith commented that the Fields Committee appears to be at a "what if?" stage. Lorenz agreed and added that a lot of ideas are being thrown on the table. Smith and Erickson stated that they are concerned about noise and traffic impacts to neighborhoods in the Doc Harris Stadium area. Smith added that she is also concerned about the level of traffic on Everett.

Lorenz said that we just do not have enough sports fields for the kids. In response to Nickerson's question, he stated that there are a few events each year that draw 4-5,000 visitors. Eby said that we may reach a point when we have to de-centralize – step back.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 25, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.