

Park Board Minutes
August 20, 2019

Members Present: Candy Sullinger, Gabe Miller, David Parrish, Bob Simmons, Julie Wolfe, Garrett Vanderpool, Andrew Brown and Jamie Whiteis

Members Absent: Danielle Dingman and Scott McCaulley

Staff Present: Cindy Shook, Jason Reinsch, Marsha Fulton and John Manning

The meeting was called to order.

Gabe Miller made a motion to approve the Park Board minutes dated July 16, 2019. Garrett Vanderpool seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Cindy opened the Park Board meeting by introducing the new Assistant City Administrator, John Manning. John shared his background with the board. Bob Simmons remarked that John brought with him a tremendous background and they looked forward to being able to utilize his knowledge and experience.

Business:

1. The first item on the agenda was the presentation of the financial report for July 2019. Cindy opened the item by stating that she was excited to see there had been recovery made since last month. She reminded the board that the spring had been difficult for both the pool and concessions due to excessive rainfall, but she was pleased to see that they were both rebounding. She also noted that tournaments were recovering as well. Cindy shared that the swim team had less swimmers this year and of those on the team fewer were competing. Cindy explained that many were using it more for training, opting to not attend meets, which was causing the swim coach to recommend dividing the team into recreational and competitive divisions. Gabe added that with the Summer Olympics coming, it could possibly spark more interest in swimming. Cindy then reviewed campground and RecPlex expenditures, noting that they were down, due in part to lower electricity. Cindy explain that it was partially a timing issue due of when the bills were received. Garrett asked if they had looked into sub metering. He explaining that they had done that in his business and were able to more proactive. Garrett went on to explain that the meters were fairly inexpensive and easy to install, and he thought that they could pay for themselves in a month. Cindy thanked Garrett for the suggestion and stated that they are tracking electricity to see when and where the increases were occurring. Cindy noted that they had been looking at solar for a while in some of the bathroom facilities as a way to reduce costs. Cindy stated that she had initially targeted smaller facilites so that the upfront cost of panels was less, but found out that some of the buildings were too small for the number of panels that would be required. Cindy then explained that the heating and cooling of the bathrooms such as

Awberry, Liberty Plaza and Lakeside Forest can see large increases in the summer and winter months. Garrett suggested that they look into mini split cooling units that you can install yourself. He stated that they put them at their tower sites and they were very efficient. David then inquired about the increased expenses at the pool. Jason explained that it was a combination of wages and pump rebuilds. Cindy added that wages were a big issue due to the new Missouri minimum wage law that would eventually push minimum wage to \$12.00 an hour. Cindy explained that they were developing a plan to incrementally increase wages over that time to be off-set by fee increases. Bob stated that he was glad to hear that they were looking at a multi-faceted approach. Bob also shared with the board about a gentleman who worked at Microsoft that improved efficiencies by computerizing everything down to the fire exits. By doing so, he had saved the company a lot of money by simply being a very dedicated employee who was determined to make a difference.

2. The next item on the agenda was an update on the sport facility community discussion. Cindy asked Bob, a member of the Board of Alderman, and Jamie, who has been involved with the task force, if they would update the board on the ongoing discussions. Bob started by explaining that the sports taskforce, which is a committee organized by the CVB and made up of community members, was looking at options to expand sports facilities in Branson. The last idea for funding the expansion was a park and storm water tax. Bob explained that it could be a good thing for many aspects of the community and could possibly provide more funding for the Parks Department. Gabe stated that he felt it was important to explain the different programs it could affect and help, ranging from additional ballfields to trail expansions and improvements. Gabe went on to say that it was very important that the information gets out to the masses, not just those who are interested in sports, to show the positive impact it could have on the entire community. Candy asked Bob, as a member of the Board of Alderman, how he felt this new approach would be received. Bob stated that he felt it was better than the food and beverage tax but that any tax would be a hard sell. Jamie added that it was important for the task force to step in and really help to get the message out. Garrett agreed and stated that it would be important to show how the parks were benefiting the community, and provide examples like how much use the all-inclusive playground was getting. Garrett added that he wondered if maybe utilizing billboards in the community could be a way to get the word out. David added that there may be students at College of the Ozarks who need volunteer hours that could do a video montage including the dog park, playgrounds, trails, etc. Jason asked who they should contact at the college. David stated that he should reach out to Kurt Wilkerson. Garrett suggested the high schools might be a resource as well. Bob added that they should craft the messages for the multi-generational community, so as not to forget the older community. John added that he had been looking at the ordinances and saw where it required developers to donate land based on the number of people in the subdivision. Bob stated that the required land has typically been used as open space and opportunities for recreation rather than the traditional idea of a park with playgrounds.

3. The next item on the agenda was an update on the Sunset Trail extension. Cindy opened this item by announcing that the trail was nearly complete and that it would expand Sunset Trail to the end of the city property. She shared with the board pictures showing the newly poured concrete and asphalt. David asked if in the future this trail would connect to the trails at Lakeside Forest. Cindy explained that there is one final easement needed to connect these trail systems and that efforts had been going on for many years to secure the easement.

4. The next item on the agenda was the discussion of the 2020 capital improvement requests. Cindy shared with the board the list of the Parks Department's capital requests with the ones deemed most important by the department in red. Cindy explained that the list included items rolled over from previous years. Cindy then explained how priority based budgeting was being used more effectively to help with determining what items are funded and reviewed the priority score that was attributed to each capital request. Andrew inquired if there was anyone who did grant writing for the city and added that he had been up at Hy-Vee and noticed they had pictures to show programs that they had funded. Cindy stated that the department has submitted many grants through the years and had been successful in helping fund the new inclusive playground and more recently the TRIM grant. She noted that they were always open to private and public partnerships as well, including naming rights. Cindy stated that the one new project that was submitted for 2020 was turfing the athletic fields and that she had just met with the turf company today to review the turf estimates. Garrett asked if there was a master list of all needs and wants, not just the ones submitted for capital projects. Cindy confirmed that there was indeed a master list and it was reviewed annually. She mentioned that sometimes they are able to take projects off of the list because they are able to find a less expensive way to get it done or do the work themselves, like replacing pavilion roofs or refurbishing bathrooms. Cindy concluded the item by stating that it had not yet been determined how much money is available for capital improvements next year but that she would keep the board updated.

5. The next item on the agenda was a discussion on the tree advisory committee. Cindy shared with the board that the City was discussing the idea of eliminating the Tree Board and having the Park Board absorb some of these duties. Additionally, the City was looking at providing an additional staff person to the Parks Department that would provide valuable resources and focus on tree care and landscaping. Cindy stated that an employee in the Planning Department, Amy Jackson, would transfer over and bring a great amount of knowledge to the department and the City as a whole. Cindy explained that Amy is a Certified Arborist and her background would be a welcome addition to the Parks staff.

6. The next item on the agenda was an update on park improvements. Jason reported that a lot of progress had been made recently in neighborhood parks. Cindy passed out a list of parks that were currently being improved while Jason shared pictures with the board.

7. The next item on the agenda was the recreation update. With no additional comments the board moved on to member's reports.

Member's Report

1. David Parrish stated that the improvements to Nygard Park were nice, and but unfortunately, there are now less swings and wondered if it was possible to make the swings interchangeable. Cindy stated that the old swing set was removed due to safety concerns and the new swing set had less swings, but they had provided an area for future expansion and the addition of a pavilion, which is something the neighborhood had expressed that they would like to see. Cindy stated that she would follow-up and see what options they might have regarding swings.

2. Cindy shared with the board that both members Danielle Dingman and Gabe Miller would be stepping down from the park board due to the fact that they were both moving out of the City of Branson. Candy thanked Gabe for his many years of service and acknowledged that they would be missed and had both been real assets to the board.

Jamie made a motion to adjourn. Bob seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting adjourned 6:30pm