

Recreation Advisory Board

May 9, 2011



Members present:

Sara Manuel, Chair
Hutch Kerns
Wayne Wheeler
Mildred Nance-Carson
Will Callaway
Mary Ann West
Cecil Bothwell, City Council Liaison

Staff present:

Megan Shepherd, Special Projects Coordinator
Debbie Ivester, Assistant Director
Roderick Simmons, Director
Kathy Connor, Park Maintenance Superintendent
Diane Ruggiero, Cultural Arts Superintendent
Frank McGowan, Business Services Superintendent
Amy Rickman, Interim Recreation Superintendent
Seth Hendler-Voss, Landscape Architect
Nikki Reid, Real Estate Manager

Guests present:

Sara called the meeting to order at 12:35 p.m.

1. Approval of April Minutes

Mildred motioned to approve the April minutes, Mary Ann seconded, all approved and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Land Acquisition: Reed Creek Greenway at Elizabeth Pl.

Nikki Reid presented a piece of property needed for the Reed Creek Greenway Phase III. The County owns the parcel and has offered to donate it to the City for the greenway.

Wayne asked if the parcels adjacent to this property are parkland. Nikki and Seth responded that one parcel is owned by Bob Lawrence Power Equipment and an easement has already been secured. Will asked if there's enough space under the culvert for the greenway to run under the road. Seth said it will have to go over the road, probably as a crosswalk. Cecil added that he used to live in this area and it's not a busy road.

Nikki clarified that this parcel has been in Buncombe County's ownership since the 40s or 50s.

Will moved to support the parcel transfer for Reid Creek Greenway Phase III, Hutch seconded, all were in favor and the motion passed unanimously.

3. Land Easement: Riverside Cemetery at Westover Dr.

Nikki showed a map of the northern section of Riverside Cemetery with the current MSD sewer line. She explained that nearby land owners would need an easement to tap into that sewer line and are offering to purchase the easement from the City. Nikki worked with Angel Banks at MSD to determine the easement value. That amount came to around \$1000 with a \$150 fee.

Hutch clarified that with an easement the City would still own the land. The easement owners would not pay taxes on it. This process guarantees their right to establish the sewer line. Nikki reported that Al Kopf inspected the area to ensure it is not necessary or desirable for City usage.

Hutch asked if a fee is typical for access to public utilities. Nikki said that is the standard formula that MSD uses. MSD will likely charge an additional fee to tap into the line.

Wayne motioned, Mary Ann seconded, all were in favor and the motion to support the easement sale passed unanimously.

4. Budget Discussion

Roderick gave board members a packet of budget documents detailing revenue, expenditure, Capital Improvement Projects, and staff since 2006. He also provided data on Department reengineering and its impact on operations.

Wayne noticed that in 2009 staff was dramatically reduced. Roderick said there are several factors: the Department stopped handling City Hall operations and Building Maintenance; others are simple staff reductions or vacancies.

Roderick presented the estimated 2010 budget (we won't have actuals until June), including the golf fund, which really depends on revenue, not cutting expenditures. He explained that the Department also moved Festivals from an enterprise fund back to the operating fund. This year the Department is eliminating 3 positions and freezing 2, as well as other reduction measures.

Regarding the Capital Improvement Program, the Department is heavily invested in facility maintenance (rec centers, parks), public art (as per the ordinance), McCormick Field contract (we're renegotiating lease), and greenway development (Overlook & land acquisition for Town Branch). Funding for construction documents for next phase of the

new recreation center at Livingston Street Park is not in the CIP; it was bumped to 2013-2014.

Wayne asked for clarification of the Overlook Park land purchase. Roderick described the area. Wayne also asked if the \$200,000 for the splashpad was accurate. Roderick clarified that is only the construction drawings, not construction costs. The City can't engineer our own projects legally because you can't have engineers sealing their own work.

This budget was presented to Council last week, and they will vote May 24th. Mary Ann asked if the Department has ever discussed turning the club house at the golf course into a rental venue. Roderick reported that last month the Board made a recommendation to look at new management practices and this will be considered as part of that.

Wayne asked if vehicles are rented or owned. Roderick explained the City's fleet system.

5. Nominating Committee Report

Sara announced that she is moving and will resign from the Board in June. Will reported he will also be leaving.

Therefore, Sara, Will, and Geoff will all be leaving the Board, leaving 3 vacancies. Lonnie and Mildred's first terms are expiring and they both wish to renew.

Hutch reported that Lonnie and he were on the nominating committee and the suggestion put forward is for Sara to continue as Chair and Wanda to serve as Vice Chair. This will be amended given Sara's resignation. The vote will be made in June.

6. Director's Report

No additional report besides budget. Board members received a copy of the Department's third quarter report.

7. Reports

Pack Square Conservancy: In Geoff's absence, Roderick reported that the Conservancy is still working on restrooms. Hopefully construction will begin this fall.

Asheville Parks & Greenways Foundation: In Geoff's absence, Roderick reported that the last 2 meetings have been cancelled. The Foundation is trying to revamp its organization. They have a list of fundraising needs for Department.

8. Other Business

All thanked Will for his service, since this is his last meeting.

9. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 1:11 p.m.