

## RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

### MEETING MINUTES

MARCH 9, 2015

**Board Members Present:** Hutch Kerns – Chair, Todd Dunnuck, Bob Pierce, Kim Reed, Barry Mundt, Pat Denney, Forrest Merithew

**Staff Present:** Roderick Simmons – Director, Debbie Ivester – Assistant Director, Judith Scott – Administrative Assistant, Al Kopf – Superintendent of Planning & Development, Pete Wall – Landscape Architect, Sandra Travis – Program Supervisor, Mark Halstead – Program Supervisor, Allison Dains – Program Supervisor

Hutch called the meeting to order at 12:33pm

#### 1. Approval of February Minutes

Bob motioned to approve the February minutes. Pat seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

#### 2. Capital Projects Endorsement

##### a. Montford Center Complex Master Plan & Montford Park

Pete Wall presented the Montford Center Complex Master Plan including phasing strategy, budget considerations and implications for lower Montford Park.

Phase I will be the Recreation Center to include on street and sidewalk improvements, expand parking to 56 spaces by taking out the tennis court, improvements to center entrance, larger playground facility and an ADA trail connectivity to the transition area.

Phase II includes improvements to Gay Street, parking lot, two new sports courts (pickle ball and youth tennis), full size basketball court, the Historic Stump Town loop and connectivity to Hazel Robinson Amphitheater managed by the Montford Park Players (MPP).

Phase III includes grading and vehicular parking, improved pedestrian circulation, improvement to the amphitheater and ball field plaza, enhanced entry way, modernize ball field with dugouts and spectator seating, improve neighborhood access to the park, a walking trail loop and community garden area.

MPP will make improvements to the amphitheater in two phases. Phase I includes amphitheater trail head, seating, guest services building and ADA access. Phase II includes theater building, additional parking, and connection back to the ball field. Projected cost \$292,000.

Projected cost of each phase is Phase I \$938,408, Phase II 512,658, Phase III \$1,234,018.  
Estimated total cost: \$2,977,836.

Lower Montford Park has potential space for recreation use.

Forrest stated the tennis courts are in demand and when he was last there he waited an hour to get a court. With the future recreation area, he's concerned about the decrease in tennis courts. Hutch explained there are two courts at Weaver Park and two courts at lower Montford.

Pat asked about the relationship with MPP. Debbie explained there is a lease agreement between the city and MPP in which MPP rents the amphitheater for \$1 a year, and in return make capital improvements to the amphitheater, staging, lighting, and adding guest house. The master plan allows \$300,000 in improvement costs to guest building, walkway and amphitheater in the first phase. MPP is responsible for the utilities and maintenance.

Bob asked what the expected time line is. This is the planning stage and no funds are budgeted at this time for design and construction. Design and construction drawings will be the first item.

Barry motioned to approve moving forward with the Montford Center Complex Master Plan. Bob seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

\* At the May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015 Meeting Forrest requested to have comments added to the Montford Complex agenda item. After further review of the intended plan and potential negative impact on available tennis courts, I would fully support a plan that replaces the two courts with at least one, if not two, but otherwise cannot support a decrease in recreational opportunities in our parks. The board approved the addition.

#### **b. Azalea Park Trails Master Plan**

Pete Wall presented an overview of the Azalea Park Trails Master Plan. A handout was provided depicting the multi-use trail system at Azalea Park including Recreation Park. It includes four types of trails and identifies four major loops.

Todd asked if this is all city property. The city owns the property, but part of the paved trail and on-road connections are not city property.

Bob expressed concern that the Trillium Trail is part of the multi-use trail system and is part of the paid attraction at the Nature Center. With the multi-use trail how do we keep people from entering the Nature Center from the trail? There will be a secondary trail without access to the Nature Center.

This multi-use trail system master plan is staff generated. The request is the board's endorsement in order to move forward to obtain cost analysis and construction documents.

Pat expressed concern about the limited amount of parking at Azalea Park as there is no additional parking in the master plan. He also asked about the occurrence of flooding in the John B Lewis Soccer Complex. Roderick explained the City is responsible for the maintenance and capital improvement in the soccer complex. The Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association has applied for a grant to support the cost of replacing the soccer field artificial turf. The field upgrades at Memorial Stadium and Azalea Park are on a long-term plan since there is no financing.

Todd motioned to approve moving forward with the Azalea Park multi-use trail system. Forrest seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

### **3. Swimming Pool Operations**

Roderick Simmons provided an overview of pool operations. A handout on pool attendance was provided showing an increase in pool attendance in the last five year to 153,035.

In 2013-2014 Recreation Park and Malvern Hills pools show a steady increase so groups and summer camp groups were moved to Walton Street Park pool. Program activities per pool for 2014 were Malvern Hills Park Pool over 12,000, Recreation Park Pool over 18,000 and Walton Street Park Pool over 2,000.

All three pools were built roughly about the same time, and all need significant improvements or replacement. Walton Street Park Pool is in the worse condition of the three pools. Staffing is a concern since there is no one staff person dedicated to pool operations

The next option is to explore alternate means to operate the pools similar to the lease options at the Golf Course and at McCormick Field.

Kim asked if we check the demographics of people using each of the pools. Response no.

Hutch asked about the cost to operate each pool. Staffing is the biggest cost. Recreation Park Pool is the largest pool. It's the only 50-meter pool in the county, but it is not operated to maximum capacity because of the number of lifeguards needed.

Recommendations in the fee and charges study set fees for camps based on categories and services. This is where RAB will get involved. Pat asked if we know where the new Buncombe County pool facility will be, and will it affect city pools? The location has not been decided yet and it will be used primarily by school swim teams.

Forrest asked if the city is part of the white water paddle park proposal in the French Broad River. It is not although the proposal is expected to come before RAB at a later meeting.

Bob asked about the water slide that was announced for downtown Asheville. It will not occur since the State would not issue the required permit.

#### **4. Director's Report**

- Preparation for summer programs is in full swing and hiring summer staff.
- The city is in the FY15-16 operating and CIP budget process. Expect more information at the next RAB meeting.
- Currently working the Friends of the Nature Center on the Memo of Understanding with the city at the Nature Center.
- The design and construction documents for the new front entrance of the Nature Center are complete. Staff is now working on the construction funding strategy.
- The Summer Program Guide is provided to each RAB member.
- The CAPRA accreditation in process for the department and the CAPRA site inspection team will evaluate next week. The department is hosting a breakfast with the CAPRA team on March 17 at the Nature Center to which RAB members are invited. Debbie will send invitation information. Mark Halstead will make a CAPRA presentation at a future RAB meeting.

#### **5. Other Business**

- Kim attended the Black History Month event at the Grant Southside Center on February 28. The staff did an amazing job.
- Josh O'Connor is stepping down from the board. He's employed with Buncombe County and has been promoted to the director of the Parks & Recreation Department. The city and RAB will have an opportunity to thank Josh for his services.
- Hutch will be ending his service on RAB in June, and with Josh leaving too, there may be the need to assign an interim chair. Debbie will talk with the city clerk regarding the process.
- Todd asked about the Beaucatcher Mountain Project open house since the meeting was cancelled. Staff is contacting property owners to offer a comment period. This is the first phase and we will go to the general public at a later date.. Al Kopf and Stewart Engineering are heading it up.
- Hutch reported he had sent out a Google calendar to record events.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Barry motioned to adjourn the meeting. Pat seconded and the motion passed with all in favor.

Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.