

Recreation Advisory Board Minutes

5.13.13

In Attendance:

Board Members

Wayne Wheeler - Chair

Jordan Veale

Todd Dunnuck

Josh O'Conner

John Parrish

Barry Mundt

Ashley Arrington

Council Liaison

Cecil Bothwell

Staff

Cathy Ball, Executive Director of Public Works and Multi-Model Transportation

Christy Bass, Interim Business Services Superintendent

Debbie Ivester, Assistant Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Arts

Al Kopf, Superintendent of Parks and Planning

Amy Rickman, Superintendent of Recreation

Sandra Travis, Program Supervisor for Cultural Arts

Murphy Rasmussen, Secretary

Call to Order: Wayne called the meeting to order at 12:31 p.m.

1. Approval of April Minutes:

Josh moved to approve the April minutes. Ashley seconded and the motion passed with all in voting favor.

2. Nominating Committee Report: 2013-14 Chair & Vice Chair

Wayne reported that he, Josh and Hutch expressed interest in serving again and asked for anyone else who might be interested to let him know. Voting will be held at the June meeting.

3. Budget Update

City of Asheville Budget Process

Debbie gave an update on the Budget Process as it pertains to the upcoming 2013-2014 Budget Year. At the April 23rd council work session suggestions were made such as freezing the Cultural Arts Superintendent, eliminating festivals, restructuring the management at the Nature Center as well as the reduction of hours or the actual closing of some of the Recreation Centers. She stated staff is already looking at options to restructure Nature Center operations. At the same meeting, Council asked staff to prepare a 4% to 5% budget reduction for all departments. Council also scheduled another work session for this Friday, May 17th at 10:00 a.m. to hear additional information from staff including that 4% to 5% budget reduction option. Debbie noted that later today there will be a meeting of senior management staff to prepare for that May 17th meeting. No final decision has been made on budget cuts but the tennis center and skate board park will not close and staff anticipates no staff reductions although we may adjust hours of operation. We don't expect pools or the Nature Center to close though there could be restructuring at these facilities. We are expecting Bele Chere to operate this year but no decision has been made as to its future beyond 2013.

Councilman Bothwell added that things are changing quickly and we thought we would have to make up a \$2,000,000 shortage but with the changes in the State legislature is looking more like a \$4,000,000 to \$6,000,000 shortage. The legislature is considering authorization that allows the city and Buncombe County to create a Cultural and Recreation Authority. If this agreement is reached the city and county may combine its parks, recreation and libraries into an authority. If this happens it could eliminate the need for the city to cut the extra 5% from all departments. Nothing is confirmed until we know the State legislature action and what the county wants to do, but no change would be made until January 2014.

Cathy Ball was introduced to address the meeting. She agreed with what had already been said and with regard to Bele Chere the 2013 event will be the last one held.

Josh asked if the Tourism Product Development Fund had been approached to help fund Bele Chere. TPDF funds capital improvement only therefore Bele Chere is not eligible to receive funding.

Josh asked if the proposal to discontinue Bele Chere had gone before the Bele Chere Board for feedback. It did and the Bele Chere Board provided feedback directly to City Council.

4. Director's Report

Park Flood Damage

Debbie reported on the flood damage in parks as a result of the rain on May 5 and 6. The cleanup has been standard with the exception of the Azalea Park where $\frac{3}{4}$ of the soccer fields

were under water and experienced heavy silt damage. Staff is in the process of gathering bids which are expected to come in at as much as \$50,000.00. Expect the work to be complete in June.

Wayne asked if the parks department or the City has a fund to protect against such acts of nature. Cathy stated that although the department does not staff is checking to see if the City's Risk Management may have it through its budget.

Nature Center Construction

Debbie revisited construction being done at the Nature Center on the Red Wolf exhibit along with installing a playground and a trail. The project is behind schedule due to the rain and may not be completed until the end of June or early July.

Summer Programs

Debbie reported the hiring of the seasonal employees for our pools, playgrounds and park maintenance is 70% complete. Recreation Park Pool opens May 27th with a grand opening event called Pool-A-Palooza. The week of June 8 all pools will be open. Summer playground programs start June 10.

Playground Clean Up Volunteers

Debbie invited board members to volunteer at the playground spring clean up including spreading mulch at the soccer complex May 24th, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sign up with Marcia Stickford or Debbie. Staff will complete the prep work so it is ready to receive the mulch to make the best use of the volunteer time. 20 to 25 volunteers are needed that day, and staff is promoting it in local media and neighborhood associations.

Ironman Triathlon

Debbie responded to Todd's questions about the Ironman Triathlon application. The Asheville Buncombe Sports Commission is the event organizer and operator. Debbie referred inquiries to the Sports Commission at ashevillesports.org.

Thomas Wolf Cabin

Wayne asked Al how improvements to the Thomas Wolfe cabin are coming along. Al indicated that the plan is to cover the roof with a heavy duty membrane until funds become available to replace the roof.

5. Other Business

Timothy Sadler had a concern about the Earth Day event on Lexington Avenue and that the event is operated on a paved surface. Debbie stated that the City does not produce that event and she does not know who is responsible for it. Timothy asked if the City could get involved in sponsoring it in the future in one of our parks. Wayne suggested the group should contact the City to obtain a permit if it wished to hold it in a park.

Ashley received a phone call inquiring if Pack Square Park is open or if it is closed because of problems with the grass. Debbie explained staff installed turf test plots as a means to determine what type of grass performs best in the park but the park is open.

6. Adjournment

Wayne moved to adjourn. Hutch seconded and the motion passed with all in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.