

Park Board Minutes
September 15, 2009

Members Present: Candy Sullinger, Jeff Justus, Joe McDowell, Kenny Garrison, Julie Wolfe, Stan Barker, Gabe Miller and Kent Vanderpool

Staff Present: Cindy Shook, Preston Peper, Marsha Fulton and Shari Risley

Joe McDowell made a motion to approve the Park Board minutes from August 18, 2009. Stan Barker seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Business:

1. Candy Sullinger welcomed Gabe Miller as the newest member to the Park Board. In addition, Cindy Shook introduced Marsha Fulton, who is replacing the retiring Shari Risley. The first agenda item was the financial report dated of July 31, 2009. Cindy asked the members if everyone had a chance to look at it and that she would be happy to entertain questions. Candy asked if the City's Finance Director planned to attend meetings in the future and Cindy replied that the budget has taken priority, however, she or her assistant director plan to attend future meetings. Gabe Miller remarked that revenue was up in many of the cost centers this year.
2. The next agenda item was the City Council strategic goals, Candy asked if alderman Stan Barker would like to comment. Stan said the goals are a little broad in scope, and added that the "wish list" would be pared down as it is probably not realistic to accomplish all of the goals. He said essential services needs have priority but added that the goals for the Parks & Recreation Department are also very important to council.
3. The next agenda item was the retiring of long-time Public Works Director, Larry VanGilder, and the resulting restructuring of the department and how that will affect the park's department. Cindy remarked that most of the board knows Larry, who has attended many Park Board meetings, and will certainly be missed. She stated that the park's department will now be maintaining all the parks and that will require additional employees and equipment. Joe McDowell noted that it had been stated that lower operational costs could be expected and asked if that were true. Cindy answered that some of the Public Works employees were retiring or had recently retired and that an organizational chart is being laid out to provide for the scope of work required and that she expects the park's department to realize some savings. She added that, for example, she plans to mow some of the more passive parks with contract mowing rather than doing it in house for a cost savings. Stan remarked that it was a big compliment to Cindy that City Administrator Dean Kruith possesses confidence in Cindy and her staff to do this job. He added that with Larry leaving, separating the shift of responsibilities to other departments is a natural reorganizational change.
4. The next agenda item was an update of the parks tour from the August meeting. Cindy stated that she had met with Public Work's Supervisor Martie Dunn to review the deficiencies in the parks and was happy to report that most of them had already been completed. Kenny Garrison asked about the status of Parnell Park. Cindy stated that she had completed a letter to mail to residents in that area to ask them their opinion about the park, especially about removing the tennis courts, and what features they would like to see in the park. She reported that she had met with the City

Administrator about the letter, who suggested that she might talk to a couple of city council members that reside in the Parnell Park area to get their feedback before mailing out the letter. Cindy reported that she was able to budget a little money in case it was decided to place a gazebo in the park. Kenny said he saw some folks using the court and took the opportunity to visit with them and they expressed the hope that at least one court would be kept. Cindy said that is her goal to get feedback from the residents as to what is needed.

5. Candy stated that Cindy was bringing a fee recommendation to the board and asked if she would like a vote tonight and Cindy replied yes. Cindy reviewed the fee proposal, beginning with the youth baseball team recommendation. She stated that some of the recreational team fees, mostly used by area towns, needed to increase as the fees do not support the costs of the program. Cindy asked the recreation staff to take a look at all program fees and it was noted that the team fees in different sports were not the same, so a similar recommendation was being made with the soccer team fee. Cindy stated that she would like to change the wording in the future to simply say team, rather than using the term competitive or recreational team. Preston Peper added that the T-Ball and U8 baseball team fees paid by area towns also need to increase as they were not keeping pace with the fees brought in when people sign up as an individual. Joe McDowell asked how great the increase would be and Cindy responded that said she did not want to make a great jump in cost and that raising the fee by \$50 now would be a start. Joe asked if Cindy knew how many Branson teams versus out of town teas were in youth baseball last season? Cindy responded that there was 95 teams participate and about half were Branson teams and the other half were out of town teams. Cindy asked the board if they recalled her reporting a few meetings ago that she had been making changes to registration to include resident status so in the future if non-resident fees are warranted, we will be ready. Gabe said his team is entered as a Branson team, but several of his players are from out of town. Cindy commented that every year we barely have enough gym time and the day will come when we will have to turn teams away.

The next proposed fee increase was for a tennis tournament. Cindy noted that this fee should have been changed a long time ago and that the fee reflected in the ordinance was for a non-sanctioned event. She stated that this fee being presented is what is charged for the USTA sanctioned Branson Junior Open tennis tournament. Cindy moved on to discuss the fee recommendation for the campground. Cindy asked if the board recalled creating "super site" fees for extra large sites at the campground? She reported that these sites have increased in popularity and that a fee increase is now warranted. Candy asked if the increase by \$2 was enough and Cindy replied that was what her campground managers recommended. Jeff asked how a "super site" differed from a regular site and Preston responded that these sites are extra wide to accommodate large RV's with multiple slide outs. He added that these sites have been improved to include a grassy area with some landscaping. Stan asked how we compare to the private RV Parks and Cindy said that our park was somewhere in the middle. Stan responded that we don't want to run off business yet we don't want to be lower than local businesses. Jeff questioned if the "super site" fee was high enough with the seventh night free policy? Cindy responded that they were not completely done with the improvements to the "super sites," so additional fee increases may be necessary in the future. Gabe commented that incremental increases are not as noticeable and asked how available are statistics on occupancy before and after the increase? Cindy responded that manager Jim Dikes was very good with the financials and getting that information from the software was no problem. Candy stated that staff has presented a proposed recommendation to

raise certain fees and asked if there was a motion? Kent Vanderpool made a motion to accept the fees as presented; Julie Wolfe seconded the motion; all were in favor.

6. The next item on the agenda was the RecPlex land expansion. Cindy asked Stan Barker if he would discuss this. Stan stated that the city council has not yet narrowed down the numerous capital projects up for consideration. Stan said the focus would be on essential services, and that he hoped capital improvements would be discussed at the next meeting. Cindy said she has requested a total of \$400,000 in the capital budget over the next two years for consideration of the land purchase. Stan said he has taken the opportunity to lobby for the property as he is concerned that if it sells, our opportunity is lost. He stated that if the land was secured, the ball fields could come at a later date. Candy Sullinger asked if it would help for the Park Board members to talk to their individual council members and Stan responded to take the opportunity if it arises. Candy stated that she recalled that the Mayor had commented that no one on council was opposed, however Stan reminded everyone again that the essential services come first. Cindy said that we can continue to support the same level of teams but that the problem is the flooding at Stockstill Park. Stan commented that the Parks Department along with the Chamber of Commerce has done a great job bringing tournaments into the area, and with our current facilities we are maxing out our resources. Joe added that the department always does a good job balancing our local leagues and tournaments at the same time.

7. Cindy commented briefly on the proposed new nature center at Lakeside Forrest Wilderness Area. She said committees will be formed and funding is the primary focus at this time but added that it could create a diverse interest on Highway 76. Joe suggested making the nature center a topic of conversation at a future meeting.

Members Report

1. Jeff Justus asked how far along the trail from Skaggs to Branson Landing was, and was it going to be "bike friendly"? Cindy stated that she would have to follow up with Matt Felice in the City Engineer's office. Kenny Garrison commented that as he remembers the numerous curves are not always bike friendly.
2. Gabe Miller said he was asked about playground access during baseball games. Cindy responded that safety is a primary factor along with keeping the fences locked along with the fact that fees are collected at the gate. Gabe inquired about the possibility of moving the fence and Cindy answered that would not be feasible, however, she would see if there might be some opportunity to add a small playground in the future.
4. Kent Vanderpool asked about the idea that he brought to Cindy about selling Parnell Park to the church next door and using that money to buy land in the Cliff Drive area for another park. Cindy stated that she had recently gone on a walking tour of the Cliff Drive neighborhood with the Mayor, staff and residents. Cindy reported that in the follow up meeting, an idea of adding a park in that neighborhood was discussed. Cindy added that it might be a good idea in the letter to the residents to ask how much they use Parnell park?
5. Joe McDowell said the WII Bowling at the Senior Center is a good idea and also asked if Cindy had heard any feedback with the Shakespeare in the Park? Cindy said it went very well and that she had a meeting scheduled soon with the creator, Mike Deprisio.

Meeting adjourned 6:20pm