

Parks Advisory Board Meeting Minutes

January 28, 2013

Present- Norma Hernandez, Grace Laman, Brad Johnston, Ron William, Lynn Jackson (representing Howard Rub), JP Moss, Tammy Loughran, Karen Mellin, and Jay Flint

Absent: Howard Rub

Staff- Phil Elkins, Terra Patterson, and Mark Montgomery

Meeting was called to Order at 6:50am by chairperson Norma Hernandez. Brad Johnston moved to approve the minutes from the Nov. 26 meeting and Ron Williams seconded the motion. The minutes from November's meeting were approved.

Norma reviewed the board's goal of each member selecting a park to check in on regularly. Councilor Melin reported that City Council has set a new goal for each council member to adopt a park in 2013.

Ms. Hernandez introduced new board member, Jay Flint.

Director JP Moss reviewed a list of Items for Board Feedback-

1. Recently, the department has run short of space to add additional benches on the River Walk. JP asked for board feedback on adding additional spaces or branching in to other park areas.
 - The option of donating a shelter for a bench was suggested. Brad Johnston pointed out this would add a need for more security and police patrols.
 - Tammy Loughran suggested alternate options to benches such as community art.
 - Jp suggested fee structure so that the few remaining spots have a higher fee.
 - Jay Flint suggested working with the Port of Astoria to add new benches to their section of the River Walk.
2. The old Shelter across the street from the batting cage at Tapiola Park was discussed. It either needs to be repaired and renovated or removed. Ron Williams suggested removing it.
3. The old batting cage structure at Tapiola Park between the Niemi fields and the main baseball field was discussed. Parks staff receive phone calls from time to time complaining about the condition of the structure. Ron Williams informed the board that the baseball foundation would like to see the structure come down.
 - The board suggested putting picnic tables in its place.
 - The origins of the structure were discussed. It is believed that the container was donated by Nygard Logging and the Astoria High School built the rest of the structure.

- JP Moss said he will inform the baseball foundation of the department's intent to remove the structure and then staff will remove it if there are no issues within the baseball community.
4. JP Moss discussed the rising power bill from the concession stand at Columbia Field, considering that the stand is used almost exclusively by the Cal Ripken association for fundraising purposes, Mr. Moss' suggestion was to have the association pay for the power bill.
 - Ron Williams suggested turning the power off in June as the association uses the concession stand from March through the beginning of June.

Old Business

JP discussed the process for the new Parks Director. The selection process has narrowed candidate down to 7 finalists who will be interviewed for the position. Interviews will be held in late February.

A short update on maintenance at the Column was given. The doors on the garage need to be replaced. Staff have received bids for 2 new doors. The Friends of the Column have offered to pay for half of the expense.

New Business

1. The department's new program guide for winter and spring was reviewed. JP highlighted the parks map with updated locations. Norma asked the board to review it and said they would be discussing its contents at the next meeting.
2. The winter news letter was also reviewed
3. Parks maintenance projects were discussed. Staff Elkins reviewed a report of new projects the department had been working on and discussed each project. Staff Mark Montgomery discussed the new sign structure at Cathedral Tree Trail.
 - The Sign was donated by Astoria Granite Works
 - The gate at the park also needs to be renovated but it is owned by Public Works.

Maintenance staffs are now planning to put signs in all parks with the goal of renovating and cleaning up the entry way at many parks.

The Fort Astoria Park was recently made over. Phil showed the board before and after pictures. Access from the Ft George business was discussed. An entry to the park will be added from the business side of the park, the old Column stairs will be used in this project.

Recently added Memorial benches to the River Walk were discussed.

New picnic tables and renovating old picnic tables at several parks was reviewed. Staff plans to renovate picnic tables at all parks that need repair.

Phil reported that the large boulders at Tapiola Park next to the batting cage area have been removed.

Recently at LaPlante Park, ten volunteers planted 100 potted plants.
4. Staff Elkins Reviewed upcoming park projects
5. Phil also discussed new and upcoming projects
 - Several lights have been analyzed at the aquatic center as well as multiple light switches replaced which run on a sensor. The goal of this project is to save on electrical costs at the facility.

- The plan to install a well at the Ocean View Cemetery was discussed this would give the facility a dramatic cost reduction in use of water from the City of Warrenton. It is estimated that the savings from installing a well would pay for the new system within the first year.
 - Staff are also researching purchasing a portable tent and software system for the cemetery.
 - Utilizing Coast Guard volunteers for a project with Garden of Surging Waves was discussed.
 - Other volunteers currently working with the department were reviewed. This includes a Trails Group, a boy scouts group, and work crew groups.
6. Phil reviewed a list of Fix- it projects his staff completed recently.
 7. JP reviewed the top 5 challenges and successes for the department currently.
 8. Staff Patterson review a few new programs the department has seen success with recently and the process of creating these new classes. Programs reviewed included the 1st and 2nd grade basketball program, cheerleading and gymnastics.
 9. The new website the city is working on launching was discussed.
 10. After hours entry into parks facilities was discussed by JP. A new policy has been enacted to prevent any potential misuse of Parks facilities.
 11. Tammy Loughran discussed some of the recent work done by the Parks Foundation and the recent grant the foundation has completed.
 12. The recent meeting between Parks Director Moss, Staff Elkins and Friends of Trees group leader Bob Goldberg was discussed. The group had planted approximately 100 trees two years ago and many have died since then. JP discussed possible removing the dead ones and purchase 40 new trees in a targeted area which would make watering and upkeep easy for the maintenance department. easily accessible\
 - Brad Johnston shared his concerns of funding this project which has struggled with volunteers to do the upkeep.
 - Jay Flint suggested getting input on volunteers maintaining the project.
 - Ronnie Williams said he felt the trees need to be removed if they are dead regardless of who is responsible for them.
 13. Norma Hernandez thanked the board for coming to the meeting. She also discussed the role of board members and board input at the meetings.
 14. Tammy Loughran asked about the March meeting which is scheduled over spring break. The board agreed to change the date of that meeting to Monday, March 11th.