**Park Advisory Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

*March 22, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.*

*City Hall, 3rd Floor Conference Room*

**Members Present:** Andrew Meggitt, Larry Thomas, Susan Wrasmann, and Mike Fleishhauer

**Absent:** Sue Arnold and Ken Kwantes

**Others Present:** Floyd Jernigan, Andrew Smith, Recreation Manager, and Julie Quackenbush

1. **Call to Order**

* Andrew Meggitt called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

1. **Approval of Minutes**

* Larry Thomas made a motion to approve the January 30, 2023, minutes. Susan Wrasmann seconded approval. Motion passed with no opposition.

1. **New Business**

* Committee to Continue Prop P update

Mr. Jernigan introduced Lonna Sowers to the group, noting that Lonna is the “face of RDBA.” Lonna has graciously offered to help with Prop P, working on the committee and helping to bring awareness of the tax to Rolla citizens, through various media.

She said Prop P has a Facebook page and an event page which are all free. The committee did two sets of ads for the Phelps County Focus: an on-line banner ad to run from March 28 – April 3; and two 2” x 6” print ads.

Lonna does media submission. She shot two videos of a young child at the all-inclusive playground in BerJuan Park. They are posted on Facebook and the Focus is publishing it, as well.

Lonna interviewed Randy and Laura Stoll for a pickleball video. She is trying to show people a variety of aspects that Parks touches. “We are trying to educate people,” she said. “We have sheets with the facts and figures of Prop P, showing the tax is only 6.25 cents on $100. The sheets list what our Parks have to offer the community: SplashZone, maintenance of 276 acres including trails, 33 parks, ballfields, a disc golf course, and a 40-acre cemetery which has over 16,000 burials.

Mr. Jernigan said the City Council Monday meeting that was aired on cable TV included his presentation to Council on the tax. An open house for Prop P was attended by six City Council members, which is the most we have ever gotten for an open house. That support was appreciated he said.

He noted that a question from one of the public presentations asked how much Parks received in ARPA money. That amount was $45,000 and was tied to Covid-impacted attendance at SplashZone. The follow-up question was where other appropriations were made, asking how much The Centre received. That amount was an initial $850,000 and an additional $350,000, among the ARPA expenditures in different areas approved by City Council. Other ARPA funds were parks were not allocated as no other areas were impacted due to Covid and Council agreed not to close parks during that time.

Lonna noted that the parks tax was on the back side of the ballot. The county marijuana tax and the school tax and school bond were on the front.

The Prop P Committee has had several meetings. That committee consisted of Lonna, Rachel Guth and Elissa Jennison. Aimee Campbell and Mark Caballero provided support with feedback.

* Farmers Market MOU

The Farmers Market officially begins April 1, the first Saturday in April. Mr. Jernigan included this year’s Memorandum of Understanding between the Rolla Downtown Farmers Market and the Parks Department.

There are eight vendors currently active for the winter market. Manager Laura Tarvin has been working on the MOU paperwork for spring vendors. They are currently a 501C3 organization, but they are working toward getting their own insurance. It should take effect next year. A picture of the Rolla City lots they use was included in the Parks Advisory Commission packet.

They have 37 vendors confirmed for this year, a couple of which are new food producers. They had 65 vendors last year. We require them to undergo a food safety handling course through the County Health Department. We currently have about half of the Hold Harmless Agreements with the remainder expected by next week.

Susan Wrasmann moved to approve the updated MOU. Mike Fleishhauer seconded the motion. All were in favor, with no opposition.

1. **Financials**

* Mr. Jernigan noted that Prop P Tax revenue is missing from this month’s Park Financials spreadsheet as at the time the spreadsheet was put together, that tax amount had not been entered.

Overall, expenses are down and revenues are up. At this point, we haven’t hired back seasonals. We turn on water and open bathrooms on April 1.

Expenses should be more this year because minimum wage has gone up again. We are still looking for umpires for softball league. We are doing pretty well on lifeguards and rec aides.

We were short by several maintenance employees again last year. Maintenance side still looking for people.

Revenue is up mainly because Eugene Northern Community Hall rentals are up.

As approved by City Council during the budget process, rate increases for rentals of offset state mandated minimum wage increases will take place April 1. Cemetery rates are staying the same, but are expected to increase next year.

1. **Director’s Narrative**

* Working with a group from MS&T regarding nutrient mitigation in Schuman Lake. Mr. Jernigan included a copy of the abstract in the packet. The research team will consist of two principal investigators, graduate students, and undergrad students, who will perform sampling of water. We also do a Special Use – canoe – Permit for this group. They are applying for a grant, so this is preliminary for that.

We talked about putting in aerators in Schuman, like we did at BerJuan Lake. It limits or reduces fish kill. Both are runoff lakes which receive fertilizer, etc., from nearby fields. Mr. Jernigan said this should be the best bet for the overgrowth. Mike Fleishhauer said to watch that the floating mats don’t get left there and to watch for bank fishermen.

* May is Tennis Month, but it is a particularly busy month for Mr. Jernigan and Andrew Smith. They both met with USTA to talk about new ways to bring in people and programs to our courts. USTA representatives expressed they would help with activities for Tennis Month.
* Mr. Jernigan met with a MS&T group regarding a Monarch butterfly and pollinator garden in Schuman Park. The key will be that the group is able to provide us with information to show continued efforts for the Mayor’s Monarch garden, since these students are seniors.
* Working with Westport for the pool leak, hoping it will come out well. We dipped into reserves for unbudgeted Morgan Field lights, so we are just replacing the slide on the children’s play structure at SplashZone, rather than replacing the entire pool feature.
* Ridgeview Playground was vandalized, set on fire by juveniles, causing around $40,000 in damages. Since this park was funded by TDD (Transportation Development District) funds, the choice was to utilize loose rubber nuggets as the safety surface originally, but we would have gone with the pour-n-play surface otherwise due to greater durability and less issues with vandalism. We are waiting on final reports; pictures and initial investigations and documentation was turned into insurance. We are waiting on insurance adjusters to make a determination on reimbursement.

1. **Commission Comments**
   * Larry Thomas said he was recently questioned regarding the train in Schuman Park. Mr. Bagnall expressed that he would like to see the caboose that is downtown be added with the train. The caboose the city currently owns is not a Frisco, unlike the engine, oil tender and passenger car at Schuman, although it was repainted to feature the Frisco Line motif. It would take a sizable outlay to move the caboose, which is currently maintained by Public Works. The downtown location was chosen as an additional focal point of interest.
   * Andrew Meggitt asked about the current standings on the other grants we submitted. He asked how they are looking and if they seem to be in our favor. Mr. Jernigan replied that we are hopeful. We will have an announcement as soon as we learn. The LWCF grant won’t be known until likely October. The RTP grant will be probably be sooner.

Mr. Jernigan added that we applied for a small $250 grant in conjunction with May Tennis Month. It would be helpful for any expenses incurred for the activities we have planned.

Mr. Jernigan commented on a couple of changes we will have to make on the large grant that includes improvements to the soccer field. We had to take out the lighting, since the cost of the activities planned had increased 25-35% in the last year so the improvements will be turf and scoreboards.

* + There was some discussion regarding the Rolla Cemetery. We received a $10,000 donation to do repairs. We will do a border on Potters Field/Section 4A, which includes lots for people who lost a child and moved away, people who died due to railroad accidents, and indigents. We do not know exact locations of those who are in this section, but we have a list of names. There was GIS done in the section to help locate graves.

Larry Thomas asked about how things ended up with the mausoleum issue we had a few months ago. Mr. Jernigan said we contacted the various parties involved and resolved the situation. All went smoothly.

1. **Adjournment**

* Next meeting is Wednesday, May 24, at 5 p.m. It was suggested we meet in one of the Rolla City Pavilions, the train, or possibly the Rolla Cemetery.
* Larry Thomas made a motion to adjourn. Mike Fleishhauer seconded. All were in favor, with no opposition. The meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.