**Park Advisory Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

*September 27, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.*

*SplashZone*

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

**Absent:** Ken Kwantes and Larry Thomas

**Others Present:** Floyd Jernigan, Stan Busch, Andrew Smith, and Julie Quackenbush

1. **Call to Order**

* Andrew Meggitt called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m.

1. **Approval of July minutes**

* Susan Wrasmann moved to approve the July 26, 2023, minutes. Mike Fleishhauer seconded approval. All approved, with no opposition.

1. **New business**

* Pickleball RFP review – Floyd Jernigan, Parks & Rec Director and Darin Pryor, Public Works Director.

Mr. Jernigan included six bid proposals in the Advisory Commission packets, but only two of them can be considered as they were the only ones received by the advertised deadline for bid submission. The bids by McConnell & Associates and Precision Construction & Contracting were received on time and met specs.

Mr. Jernigan spoke to questions raised by the pickleball players regarding court design, layout and length. Two layouts were submitted, six linear and three and three. Darin Pryor said that either alignment could be built. He agreed with the rationale from one of the bidders that the six in a row configuration is the least amount of work due to site prep. The group discussed the pros and cons of the two different configurations. Darin offered to have his people stake out both configurations so Advisory Commission Members can see the two different layouts in the location.

McConnell’s bid packet listed a sizable number of locations where they had built pickleball courts in Missouri.

Mike Fleishhauer made a motion to go with the McConnell bid. Andrew Meggitt seconded the motion. No one opposed and all were in favor.

Mike, Andrew and Susan visited the proposed Green Acres Park locations in the days following the meeting. All agreed that there would be less impact on existing park structures and trees and natural landscaping, as well as less vegetation debris on the new courts with the six linear concept and they unanimously recommended this configuration.

1. **Director’s narrative**
   * Community Garden

The city has had limited involvement over the years since the garden’s creation more than 10 years ago. The garden is located behind the recycling center. It was developed for a garden separately from city departments, with volunteers and the help of various organizations. The site is on city property but was not developed with ADA accessibility in mind.

It has been managed by a volunteer collection of officers made up of the participating gardeners. As currently configured, there are potentially 60 lots. Gardeners pay $10 per lot annually, with the money used by the officers to purchase needed supplies. Compost is available from the Rolla Environmental Services Department.

Gardeners grow a range of vegetables, from peppers, tomatoes and corn, to flowers.

Mr. Jernigan spoke with one of the gardeners about the challenges she faces in working her lots. Mr. Jernigan, Mr. Pryor, Environmental Services Director Roger Pankey, and Environmental Services Superintendent Simon Yoakum met for a walk through of the garden. Three of the gardeners were present at the time. Some of the lots are well tended. Others were overgrown.

The area needs work, with additional mowing and weed eating, as well as more accessible and defined paths and separation of lots.

To make the garden area ADA, the city will have to put in concrete walkways, place the existing two sheds on concrete slabs, and designate and contour a number of lots so they will be accessible.

Currently, the board isn’t operating as all but one of the officers dropped off in the past several years.

Mr. Jernigan and Mr. Pryor spoke with City Administrator John Butz about the issue and the concerns of the gardeners.

If the city is going to continue to provide city land for this group, a number of changes will have to be made. To get the area up to standard could cost $20,000. There is also the ongoing cost of city provided water and staff time to keep the area accessible. There could also be a monthly cost for a portable bathroom. All this would likely necessitate an increase in the annual fee, better accounting, and the re-establishment of the garden’s volunteer board, which would provide its own insurance at a future date, similar to the Downtown Farmers’ Market. There would also need to be a city staff member as liaison and establishing this as a city-run program.

Darin Pryor said there is a need to assess the gardeners’ desire to continue the garden and understanding of what will be needed to get the area to the required standards. “They need to form a board, update their agreement, and establish a set of bylaws.”

Mr. Jernigan said the city expects to hold a public meeting in November at Eugene Northern with the gardeners and any interested organizations and citizens to determine the course of the garden.

* Tennis court light system controls

Mr. Jernigan said a Missouri S&T student approached Council about an on-demand and free light system at the tennis courts. Mr. Jernigan said the electric cost to run lights for the tennis courts is approximately $4 - $5/hr. The cost to install an on-demand system would be somewhere in the neighborhood of $5,000 - $10,000.

The group discussed options. There was also discussion regarding the current popularity of tennis and if it was enough to warrant paying that amount for an on-demand light system.

There was also discussion of potential vandalism and the vulnerability of such a system.

Darin Pryor discussed some of the costs associated with setting up an on-demand system.

Stan Busch suggested we turn the lights on a few nights a week and gauge the interest and the usage for those nights. If there are people who are taking advantage of the free lights, that could be continued. If there is little to no interest, those nights could be reduced or discontinued.

This year, the Parks Department offered four Mondays of free access during National Tennis Month. This was done in collaboration with USTA’s Missouri office, which provided free tennis lessons during that month. At that time, there wasn’t enough interest to continue the lights beyond the month.

Andrew Meggitt made a motion to run the lights four nights per week beginning next year at a date to be determined, offering this on a trial basis to see if interest would improve. Susan Wrasmann seconded the motion. All were in favor.

1. **Financials/discussion**

Mr. Jernigan asked Recreation Manager Andrew Smith to address what is currently going on in Recreation this fall. He said we had enough teams to do a Fall Co-ed Softball League, but we did not get enough teams to run a Fall Men’s Softball League. We have six teams for Co-ed and that will run on Thursday nights.

Mr. Jernigan noted that the Bayless light bids are due next Wednesday.

He recapped the year at SplashZone. Staff did a good job of keeping patrons safe.

Operationally, we replaced the small slide on the play structure in the zero depth end. One of the big slides was out of commission for a big part of the summer due to repairs being needed in the water basin. The location of a leak in the pool structure wasn’t found despite multiple visits by a pool company. Pool staff did find a probable source for the leak and that has been plugged. Parks staff later found three small holes in the deck, which have since been plugged.

Parks staff will winterize the pool in the coming days, blowing out the lines and capping the various outlets in the skimmers, deck, structure and flooring.

Mr. Jernigan told the group Council approved the budget and the department’s lists of priorities, with a summary in the commission packet.

Mr. Jernigan asked if there were any questions regarding the budget. Having none, discussion moved to closing statements.

Mr. Jernigan mentioned that he, Stan, Roger, Thomas, Lonnie, and Jesse had worked in the cemetery this past week. He said we were able to set back upright 40 – 50 pre-1900s monuments in the cemetery. We reset stones that had been down for decades, primarily in Section 7. We will move on to repairs of broken stones and those needing to be reset by sections, with 6, 3, 8 and 5 next and then moving down through the older areas. There are only about six that need to be reset at this point.

Mr. Jernigan has been working on updating the list of veterans in the cemetery. With the help of Andy Davis, treasurer with the Korean War Veterans, and volunteer Carole Goggin, they will assess those monuments. Veterans’ groups have indicated their willingness to help provide stones for those veterans who don’t have such a marker, as well as placing pads and raising those that have begun to sink.

There are over 1,000 veterans buried in the city cemetery. An updated count of those, their branch of service, their engagements and their honors will be available when completed.

Stan added that Andrew and the city hosted the local disc golf club on a tournament, purported to be the biggest one Rolla has had.

The Rolla High School Girls’ Softball Tournament is coming up in a little over a week. RHS athletics utilizes city softball fields as part of their sites during the two-day event.

Ridgeview Park repairs from the fire are now totally complete. All of the colors that were chosen have been described as dynamic.

Stan noted that we replaced and expanded the fence at Town & Country Park around the basketball court to curtail errant balls from ending up in the creek.

Mr. Jernigan said Mark Calvert and Rolla Knights are working with the city for additional soccer fields. Kittie Robertson Soccer Field has been painted and will be the site of several home school and church school games.

1. **Adjournment**

Susan Wrasmann made a motion to adjourn. Mike Fleishhauer seconded. All were in favor, with no opposition. The meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.