**Park Advisory Commission**

**Meeting Minutes**

*May 25, 2023 – 5:00 p.m.*

*Rolla City Cemetery*

**Members Present:** Larry Thomas, Ken Kwantes, and Mike Fleishhauer

**Absent:** Susan Wrasmann and Andrew Meggitt

**Others Present:** Floyd Jernigan, Stan Busch, Parks Superintendent; Julie Quackenbush, Carla Campbell, S&T graduate student; Nick Girondo, Missouri Dept. of Conservation

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 the Rolla Downtown Business Association.” Lonna has graciously offered to help with Prop P, working on the committee and helping to bring awareness of the benefits of Prop P 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 park in BerJuan Park. They are posted on Facebook and the Focus is publishing it, as well.

Lonna interviewed Randy and Laura Stoll for pickleball. She is trying to show people a variety of aspects that Parks touches. “We are trying to educate people. We have sheets with the facts and figures of Prop P, showing the tax is only 6.25 cents on every $100 spent. The sheets list what our Parks have to offer the community: SplashZone, maintenance of 270 acres with 34 parks, ballfields, a disc-golf course, and a 40-acre cemetery maintaining 16,000 plus burials.”

Lonna has heard a lot of negative feedback regarding taxes in general. “Hopefully that won’t also be a negative for the Parks tax,” she said.

Mr. Jernigan said we did a presentation as part of the City Council meeting on Monday that is available to view. The Open House for Prop P was attended by six City Council members, which is the most we have ever gotten for an open house.

During public meetings, questions were posed about how much the Parks received of the APRA money and where the largest portion of the funds went.

Parks received $45,000 in ARPA money, due to lower attendance at SplashZone. The Centre has received $850,000 and an additional $350,000, to date, as approved by City Council.

Prop P is on the back side of the ballot. The county marijuana tax and the school taxes are on the front.

The Prop P Committee has had a couple of meetings, with three consistent members and two others offering feedback and support.

* 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. 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 is included in the packet.

They have 37 vendors confirmed for this year, a couple of which are food producers. They had 65 vendors last year. Each vendor is required to complete a food safety handling course through the County Health Department. About half of the Hold Harmless Agreements have been turned in to the office, with the rest due 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 Park Financials spreadsheet as it had not been calculated at the time the financials were prepared.

Overall, expenses are down and revenues are up. We haven’t hired back seasonals at this point. 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 the softball league. We are doing pretty well on lifeguards and rec aides.

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

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

This year, the budget reflected rate increases, except in the cemetery.

1. **Director’s Narrative**

* The department is working with a group from MS&T regarding nutrient mitigation in Schuman Lake. Mr. Jernigan included a copy of the abstract in the packet. Carla Campbell, S&T graduate student, was on hand to discuss their project. Her research team will consist of two principal investigators, graduate students, and undergrad students, who will perform sampling of water. They are also proposing a floating wetland bed as a pilot project to see if this can help reduce nutrients in the water. The group will file a Special Use – canoe – Permit. They are applying for a grant, so this is preliminary for that.

Commission members discussed the possibility of 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. 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 with a concentrated week of activities and open play during the evenings on successive Monday nights during the month.
* Mr. Jernigan met with an 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 a report to show continued efforts for the Mayor’s Monarch garden, since these students are seniors.
* Working with Westport Pools for the Splash Zone leak, hoping it will come out well. We dipped into reserves to pay for the replacement of the Morgan Field lights that were impacted by last spring’s storms. We are 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. The playground, which was a replacement for older structures that were there in the original location, consisted of a new slide and a safety surface of rubber nuggets. This was funded by Transportation Development District funds. Staff is recommending instead to go back with a pour in play surface, due to less issues related to vandalism and better longevity. We are waiting on final reports from the fire department. Staff took pictures, and turned all of our information into insurance. We are waiting on insurance adjusters to make a determination on how much the reimbursement will be.

1. **Commission Comments**
   * Larry Thomas said he was recently questioned by Kent Bagnall regarding the train in Schuman Park. Mr. Bagnall expressed that he would like to see the caboose that is downtown be moved to the Schuman location. The caboose the city currently owns is not a Frisco, like the engine at Schuman. Staff pointed out the cost and logistics it would take to make the move. The caboose has been maintained by public works.
   * 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 in the coming months. We did receive word that we were awarded a grant that is earmarked for BerJuan park improvements. This grant will pay for replacement lighting and ballfield improvements. We are hopeful for positive news regarding a second.

Mr. Jernigan added that we applied for a small grant in conjunction with May Tennis Month. Such grant is designated for any expenses incurred for the activities we have planned.

* + There was some discussion regarding the Rolla Cemetery. We received a $10,000 donation to do repairs for the older stones prior to 1900 and their locations. We will do a border on the Potters Field/Section 4A, which is largely lots for people who lost a child and moved away, those who were indigent at the time of burial, and injured in railroad accidents. We do not know exact locations of those who are in this section, but we have a list of names and have determined their most likely location. There was GIS done in the section to help locate graves.

Larry Thomas asked about how things ended up with the cremation tombstone vault issue we had a few months ago. Mr. Jernigan said we contacted the headstone company and the lot owners and all records, paperwork, and payments have been completed. All went smoothly.

1. **Adjournment**

* Next meeting is Wednesday, July 26, at 5 p.m. It was suggested we meet in one of the Rolla City Pavilions or at the train.
* 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.