

Park Board Minutes
March 19, 2019

Members Present: Candy Sullinger, Scott McCaulley, Jamie Whiteis, Bob Simmons, Julie Wolfe, Andrew Brown, Wes Stoner

Members Absent: Garrett Vanderpool, Gabe Miller, Danielle Dingman

Staff Present: Cindy Shook, Jason Reinsch, Marsha Fulton

Guests: Joel Hornickel

The meeting was called to order.

Julie made a motion to approve the Park Board minutes dated November 20, 2018. Andrew seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Business:

1. The first item on the agenda was a presentation of a proposed open space dedication. Candy introduced Planning Director Joel Hornickel. Joel began by informing the Park Board that per City of Branson ordinance, residential subdivisions were required to provide open space for the enjoyment of residents and visitors. In abiding by this ordinance, the property to the west of the RecPlex that is currently being developed would be required to provide property, and as part of that process the Park Board would have the ability to make a recommendation to the Board of Alderman to accept a portion of the property as an open space dedication. Joel indicated that he and the Planning Department had been working with the developer over the past several months to successfully fulfill the requirements of the ordinance. Per the ordinance, the developer was required to provide a minimum of 2.88 acres of land to be donated to the City for recreational use or green space. Joel noted that the developer could choose to donate \$15,000 per required acre to the City in lieu of the land. Joel indicated that after initial discussions the developer came back with a proposed area of land, and based on further investigation the Planning Department recommended that the developer go with a large plot, as the original plot was not ideal in terms of the terrain and usage. Joel explained that after continuing to work with the developer, they were able to come to agreement on a 6.75 acre area, and he felt comfortable that at a minimum 2.88 acres of this plot would meet the purpose as outlined in the ordinance. Joel went on to tell the Park Board that the proposed property would loop around the subdivision and connect to existing City property that would allow for potentially extending the Branson Hills Parkway walking path around the new subdivision if the City ever decided to move in that direction. Joel also stated that Planning and Zoning had recommended that the developer landscape the sloping portion the plot with trees and vegetation to make it more presentable, and also remove the storm water retention area from the proposed plot. Joel noted that if the Park Board made a recommendation to accept the land, it would then go to the Board of Alderman. Scott clarified that the land would then belong to the City for potential development of parks or green space. Joel replied that the land would actually be deeded to the City and would become City property. Cindy mentioned that the land would not necessarily have to be park space, and Joel agreed that the City would be responsible to decide if they wanted to develop the area or leave it as a more natural open space. He went on to mention that per the ordinance, scenic quality would be an appropriate use of the area. Cindy asked Joel if he was pleased with the outcome of their

negotiations with the developer, and he answered that from where they started, he was extremely pleased with the progress they had made. Bob made the point that there would have to be recognition of the additional maintenance of this area and the cost to the Parks Department to do so. Joel responded that it would be up to the City to determine the level of maintenance and review the use of the area as a larger city-wide process. Joel continued by stating that he believed there was value in having the property in the City's hands as open space that could allow us additional future options. Scott mentioned that this area would be at the entry to Branson Hills Parkway from Hwy 248, and had the potential to be very nice. Joel agreed, and noted that was one of the reasons that they were recommending the landscaping on the sloped portions. Wes mentioned that one thing that was concerning was the budgetary costs to maintain the area, and how it could affect the Parks Department. Joel responded that he was very aware of our concerns in this area, and would be happy to come back to the Park Board once all of the final details were worked through and share with the Board the final plan for the vegetation and landscaping. Scott made a motion to accept the staff recommendation to accept the proposed open space dedication to the City based on the removal of the storm water detention facilities, the connectivity to the Branson Hills Parkway trail and the applicant's willingness to improve the land's environmental and scenic qualities. Jamie seconded the motion. All were in favor.

2. The next item on the agenda was an update on the end of year financials for 2018. Cindy started by noting that the Campground continues to thrive and be a large revenue producing entity for the department. She also mentioned that at a recent meeting, she heard that many campgrounds had a great year, and that was indicative of many people coming to Branson. Cindy also stated that she was happy to see the RecPlex cost center rebound at the end of the year. Cindy also pointed out that the programs were very successful in 2018, and much of the credit for that success was due to Recreation Specialist Carlie Allison and her hard work. She also mentioned that we saw an increase in Special Event revenue in 2018, as these events continue to grow and be very successful. Jamie asked what accounted for the reduced revenue in tournaments. Cindy answered that we did not host our annual MAYB Tournament in 2018, and would be working with a different organization in 2019. Along with that Cindy pointed out that the tournament expenditures were down because we did not have the officials cost associated with that event. Julie asked what the other revenues were linked to, and Cindy responded that it was grant money received for the playground.

3. The next item on the agenda was an update on the campground improvements. Cindy opened the item by explaining our philosophy of trying to stay ahead of the curve and anticipate areas in the market that we can capitalize with the campground. Cindy expressed that the new premium sites were very popular so far and had seen many booking on them. She also noted that the new signage was in place and consisted of signs at each site, wayfinding signage on the rows, and painted site numbers on the concrete pads. Jason briefly updated the group on the online software, and shared that it had been going very well, noting that we had already seen a significant number of online reservations. Cindy closed the item by sharing with the group that new Campground Manager Chad Glaser was doing a great job of using social media as a tool to interact with our guests. Andrew and Scott both mentioned that they had been through the park recently and that it looked very nice.

4. The next item on the agenda was an update on grant opportunities. Jason began by sharing with the Board that the TRIM grant project at North Beach Park had recently been completed.

He reported that through the TRIM Grant, and because the City of Branson was a Tree City USA, they were eligible for 85% reimbursement on the project. He also noted that City staff had done the clean-up on the project to assist in keeping the cost as low as possible. Jason also reminded the group that this project was part of the larger project to touch all park trees in the next 12 years in response to the tree inventory done in 2017. Cindy discussed the upcoming Skaggs Helping Hands grant that the department was applying for. She stated that we had received the grant two times previously, and this allowed us to continue to successfully offer scholarships for youth programs. Cindy also mentioned that we continued to look for ways to become more self-sustaining in this area through things like the new Mother/Son Event. Finally Cindy shared with the group that we had recently applied for a grant through Community Foundation of the Ozark that would pay for the installation of a mulch walking path around Eiserman Park. She said that with this new walking path, there would be additional opportunities for those using the Senior Center, as well as those living nearby, to have a place to walk other than the streets.

5. The next item on the agenda was an update on the Community Leadership Trip. Jason briefly discussed his recent trip to the Gulf Shores area and explained how impressed he was with the community buy-in regarding sports tourism. Jason shared that he saw a great deal of community engagement and that it appeared that all of the businesses in the area saw the value of the sports market. He mentioned that it was great to see these entities working so well together, and he felt like it provided a great road map of what Branson could look like in the future.

6. The next item on the agenda was an update on Parks Special Events. Cindy shared that the MoNASP State Archery Tournament was being hosted in Branson on March 23-25, and the Parks Department would be running the ASPIRE consolation bracket. Cindy noted that the event was expecting over 3,500 archers. Cindy also informed the group that the Father/Daughter Dance was once again very successful, and that the department had added a Mother/Son Event at Fun Mountain hosted on the same day. She told that group that going into it, we were unsure how successful the Mother/Son Event would be, but ended up having over 60 people on the waitlist. Cindy indicated that the department hoped to work with Fun Mountain again next year, and possibly expand the event. Andrew asked if there was any possibility to add a Sunday session. Cindy responded that we were reviewing all aspects of the event, and would be considering all options for future events.

7. The final item on the agenda was a recreation update. This item was covered through the financial report and the Special Events update, so the group moved on to the member's reports.

Member's Report

1. Wes shared with the group that he had seen the new trail markers at Lakeside Forest and they looked nice.
2. Bob commented on the number of youth soccer players utilizing the fields at Stockstill, and how nice it was to see all of the kids running around.
3. Andrew stated that when he has been working in the community over the past few years he has noticed a significant number of dance groups in town and was curious if we had been involved with the dance market in the past.

Scott make a motion to adjourn. Jamie seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Meeting Adjourned 6:30pm