

**Park Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 9, 2019**

**Park Board Members Present:** Ron Brunk, Jim DeHerrera, Ray Boksich, Terri Dunn, Susan Schnee and Frank Sweeney

**Park Board Members Absent:** Eric Matson

**City Staff Present:** Maria Butts and Mary Blubaugh

**A.** Call to Order: 7:00 pm

**B.** Approval of the April 9, 2019 Agenda – Member Sweeney moved to accept the agenda as presented. Member Schnee seconded. A vote was taken with all ayes.

**C.** Approval of the February 12, 2019 Meeting Minutes – Vice President DeHerrera moved to accept the minutes as presented. Member Sweeney seconded. A vote was taken with all ayes.

**D.** Public Comments – None

**E.** Committee Reports

a. Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee – Vice President DeHerrera reported there are many projects going on. There are several easement requests with BNSF. The Baker underpass is top priority.

Director Butts said this easement is important because it is tied into the NW portion of Central Ave. and the Depot Park Master Plan.

Vice President DeHerrera said there was discussion regarding the Riverview Meadows trail. The developer did not get permits from Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) or the Flathead Conservation District (FCD). The FCD said they would not have permitted the trail in its current location. However, the trail will not need to be removed. In the future the City will likely be the entity applying for the permits.

President Brunk asked how this affects the Dalen/Les Schwab future path. Director Butts said a gravel path would likely be permitted, but an asphalt path is less likely to be permitted. It is possible as we apply for permits to repair existing asphalt paths, we may be told we are not able to continue using asphalt and may have to move toward gravel. President Brunk said gravel paths do hold up really well.

b. Tree Advisory Committee – Member Dunn reported Arbor Day is April 26<sup>th</sup>. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade class will be participating. An Aspen, Birch and Ponderosa Pine will be planted. Planting Maple trees will be put on hold as no more than 30% of our inventory should be Maples due to the likelihood of disease. A revised tree list has been created.

c. WSFF Board – President Brunk will defer his report to the scheduled presentation.

d. WAG Board – Member Boksich said April 13<sup>th</sup> is clean up day at the dog park. They will be part of the Great Fish Challenge.

## **F. Presentations**

a. Update from WSFF on Ice Den – Judah Gersch reported to the Park Board WSFF has \$106,000 in Capital Reserves, \$100,000 in maintenance reserves and \$80,000 in operating reserves. They will need, in the future, a new Zamboni. They would like to fundraise for some of the cost of this purchase. The cost of a new Zamboni is around \$150,000. Financially they are doing well. Summer has turned out to be a money-making season. WSFF tries to not be reliant on fundraising. Mr. Gersch would like to have better snow removal in the parking lot. It is very possible they will need to replace the ice plant in the future. Member Sweeney said the WSFF is doing a great job.

b. Update from FAMB on Pump track and request to approve signs - Ron Brandt and Anders Broste reported the pump track has been constructed and a fence was built last fall. This spring they plan on doing more landscaping. Much of the construction work and equipment was donated. The Park Board had in their packet examples of the signs FAMB created and wished to have approved. There will be a large sign at the main entrance of the track. A scaled down version of this sign would be placed at the secondary entrance. Director Butts told the Park Board the Parks and Recreation staff has reviewed the signs and are ok with the wording and location. The coloring and design are similar to the City's wayfinding signs. One option has a tan background and the other option has a dark background. Director Butts asked the sizes of the signs. Mr. Broste said the large one is 4x6, and the scaled down sign is approximately the size of a street sign.

Member Sweeney made a motion to approve the tan signs and rules as presented.

Vice President DeHerrera seconded. A vote was taken with all ayes.

## **G. Public Hearings - None**

## **H. Old Business – None**

## **I. New Business**

a. Consideration of relocation of Whitefish Rising and Moose Statues – Director Butts told the Park Board the Moose came to the City damaged. She is looking to the Park Board for their thoughts on where these pieces of art be displayed. Member Boksich thought Kay Beller Park would be a good location for Whitefish Rising. Member Sweeney thought Bakke Nature Reserve might be a possibility for the moose statue. It could be placed under trees for shading. There was a question whether the moose statue could withstand being outside. There was concern the moose could be vandalized if it is placed outdoors. Once it is vandalized or affected by the weather, it's ruined. He suggested further thought is needed, and if no one can come up with anything, then the moose should be placed in the City's surplus auction.

Member Sweeney also mentioned the pond at the dog park for the Whitefish Rising statue. He believed it should be somewhere observable. Member Boksich said he would check with the WAG Board to get their thoughts on the statue being relocated to the dog park pond.

This item is tabled until the next meeting.

b. Consideration to limit special events in Depot Park to historic events for the 2019 summer season due to construction in the Depot Park – Director Butts updated the Park Board on a meeting she and President Brunk as well as Craig Workman and Ryan Mitchell attended that afternoon as it pertained to the construction schedule. They met with approximately 30 business owners along Central, Railway, and Spokane who were concerned with construction going on from July through September. The owners wanted all work done in the shoulder season. Their desire was to have Railway done this spring, Spokane done in the fall, and Central bid separately and done next spring. The owners were also concerned with parking, and staff offered reassurances and potential solutions to the parking concerns.

Director Butts told the Park Board she and Craig and Ryan presented the owners with a bid alternate, construction schedule that scheduled Railway work to be done by July 1<sup>st</sup> and everything north of the intersection done July 22<sup>nd</sup>. Director Butts stated that rearranging the construction schedule to what the owners want would require another public meeting. The event organizers would need to have a say with these schedule requests. April 23<sup>rd</sup> is when bids were to be opened. Director Butts said the solution proposed by the businesses would likely increase the cost. There would be new consultant fees and 3 different building sessions. The city's compromise of giving incentives to contractors to finish earlier would also increase the cost of the project.

President Brunk told the Park Board the Central Ave. businesses were concerned with alleys and deliveries. They were under the impression that Railway was going to be totally closed. In fact, one lane and the sidewalk are scheduled to remain open. President Brunk told the Park Board the City had followed proper notification policies. Representatives from The Heart of Whitefish, the Chamber of Commerce and CVB were at the work sessions. Ron believes the compromise pitched by the City was awesome. This would cost the City more money, but he felt it was doable. He reiterated if we change the schedule completely, it would require new public meetings. President Brunk reminded the Park Board his business had construction fencing in front of his business for 2 different summers.

Member Schnee said her business has been through 4 construction projects during the summer. She said she just made it work. At no time did she or her neighbor business request projects be rescheduled. Member Schnee reiterated that the board held several public meetings.

Member Dunn said tourist traffic is mainly on foot in the summer. With the sidewalks open people will still be walking by. She feels a lot of money has already been spent in the planning of this project. Changing the construction schedule at this point could compromise the integrity of the project, which could lead to future expense.

Member Sweeney said he would endorse the city's option. Public Works does need to give the owners assurances their delivery trucks will be able to get out ok.

Member Schnee said with foresight, she was able to get her deliveries during all 4 construction projects.

Member Sweeney said the existing parking on Railway does not serve them that much as it is. As well, the construction will not be cutting off foot traffic their business. It is not cost effective to only do it at night or only during the shoulder season.

Ron asked the Park Board to decide on the agenda item regarding limiting events in Depot Park during construction.

Vice President DeHerrera made a motion to limit special events to historic events whenever construction is going on at Depot Park.

Member Dunn seconded. A vote was taken with all ayes.

c. Consideration of removal of rotting cottonwood tree at Riverside – Director Butts informed the Park Board the Urban Forestry staff conducted a visual inspection of the large cottonwood tree east of the Riverside tennis courts in November. Staff noticed 2 of the 4 main leaders are in poor health with hollow pockets and fungus growing. Core samples were taken and showed extensive amounts of mushy wood, indicating rot pockets, decay, and dead wood.

In February 2019 staff used a resistograph tool, borrowed from the City of Billings, to test the resistance of the tree. This instrument detects decay and cavities in trees and timber. Staff drilled 6 resistance borers into the tree to a depth of 16". The results showed the North, South and West sides of the tree have good living, holding wood. The NE, SE, and straight East sides of the tree however are dead with no holding wood. This amounts to 50% of the tree being dead.

Staff deemed this tree as a public safety hazard as the parking lot is on the East side of the tree and the tennis courts are to the West. The Tree Advisory Committee unanimously voted on March 12<sup>th</sup> to move forward with the removal of this tree.

Director Butts said there will be public notice of the removal of the tree on social media as well as a sign on the tree informing the public of its removal date.

Member Sweeney asked if there is a plan for a tree replacement? He suggested that plan be included in the Parks and Recreation public notice.

Member Sweeney moved to remove the rotting cottonwood tree at Riverside as presented.

Member Boksich seconded. A vote was taken with all ayes.

**J. Other Items – Cancel/reschedule June Park Board meeting –** It was decided Director Butts should plan to cancel the meeting and if something major happens the meeting could be rescheduled.

Director Butts reminded the Park Board there are 3 board positions up this year. Vice President DeHerrera and Member Dunn will re-up for their positions. Member Matson's position is also up in May, but he was not in attendance.

## **K. Items from Parks and Recreation Department**

a. Administrative Report – Director Butts has submitted the first draft of the FY20 budget. Three bids were received for the Woodland Parking project. Watsons Excavation was awarded the bid by City Council. Staff, Whitefish Lake Institute, and City Council agreed the best location for the decontamination station is in the overflow lot at City Beach.

b. Recreation Coordinator – Liz Records reported 16 families signed up for the Spring Break Camp at the Armory. Summer programs are now open for enrollment. She has many returning staff for the Summer Day Camp. A tennis instructor is needed.

c. Parks Maintenance – Staff has been sweeping paths and working on budgets. The exterior lights on the Armory building are being updated to LED. Arbor Day will be at Soroptimist Park.

d. Community Services Coordinator Report – Plans have been drafted to convert the nonfunctioning solar shower at City beach into a changing room. These plans have been submitted to Planning and Building for Architectural Review. Connect Whitefish is getting ready for a season of programs promoting biking and walking.

**L. Correspondence – Orchard Lane 4 Subdivision – Parkland Dedication – Bailey Minnich sent a memo to the Park Board. The developer is requesting a Cash-in Lieu for this subdivision. Bailey requests the Park Board make a recommendation to the Planning Board and City Council regarding this proposal. The area of land required for dedication to the City is not large enough to be dedicated for parkland.**

Member Sweeney makes a motion to recommend the Planning Board accept the cash-in-lieu proposal.

Member Schnee and Vice President DeHerrera both seconded. A vote was taken with all ayes.

## **M. Items from Park Board:**

Ray Boksich – asked Maria if the Whitefish Rising attached to a pedestal and if the City would be placing it in the pond. Director Butts said it is attached to a pedestal and the City will place it.

Jim DeHerrera – Thanks to Ron and Maria for attending the meeting.

Terri Dunn – She also thanks Ron and Maria and reiterated we did our due diligence.

Susan Schnee – She would like the business owners to know the City and the Parks Department are not the enemy. We should work together. The Heart of Whitefish and the Chamber of Commerce should be mitigating this, not adding to it.

Frank Sweeney - none

Ron Brunk – The Parks Department did everything properly.

Director Butts told the Park Board she appreciates all of the Park Board's support in situations like this.

**N.** Adjourn: Member Sweeney made a motion to adjourn. Member Schnee seconded. With a vote of all ayes, the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 p.m.