

MINUTES

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting

Parks & Recreation Conference Room

Thursday, March 14, 2013 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Justin Carlson	Jonathan Cook	Jim Crook	Susan Deitchler
Todd Fitzgerald	Karen Hand	Larry Hudkins (arrived at 5:00 pm)	
Peter Levitov	Cleo Mullison	Anne Pagel	Robert Ripley
Jeff Schwebke (arrived at 4:20 pm)		Joe Tidball (arrived at 4:20 pm)	

Members Absent:

Molly Brommond	Trent Reed	Vacant Position (Caitlyn Do)
----------------	------------	------------------------------

Staff Members Present:

Lynn Johnson, Director	Jerry Shorney, Superintendent
Terry Genrich, Outdoor Education	Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Special Projects Administrator
Dale Hardy, Golf Administrator	Ryan Meuhling, Recreation
Angela Chesnut, Executive Secretary	

Recognition of 'Open Meetings Act': As per law, Chairperson Anne Pagel announced that the Board follows the regulations of this Act, as posted.

*** APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** A motion was made by Peter Levitov and seconded by Justin Carlson to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2013 as written. ***Motion was approved by unanimous vote of members present.***

PUBLIC COMMENTS FOR ITEMS (other than those listed on the current Agenda):

Chairperson Anne Pagel introduced Trent Reed as a new member of the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board, who replaces Dennis Sheer. Larry Hudkins is also a new member who will replace Jane Raybould from the County Board. Chairperson Pagel announced that Caitlyn Do has resigned as a student member. The Department will look into a replacement for her.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fees & Facilities Committee - Susan Deitchler, Chair - 488-4224

- No Report

Futures Committee - Bob Ripley (Chair) 471-0419 or 488-5131

- No Report

Golf Report – Golf Administrator Dale Hardy

- Rounds and Revenue: Through January, 2013, compared to last year, rounds are down approximately 12.8%, and comparing to a 10-year average down 8%. Revenue is also down 6% from last year. Specials continue through the end of March. Through March 3rd, the \$100 10-round special sold 128, and the \$50 5-round card sold 61. At the end of the month, information will be compiled for comparisons. It is felt that there has been an increase in players, and is hoped to create a habit and ultimately return customers
- FORE Program: A partnership is being formed with the Nebraska Golf Association for a program that was piloted last year in Omaha focusing on

youth. The program runs June and July each year. Two different parts of the program include involvement in the game either on-line or through clinics that the Lincoln City Golf program currently offer. Seven through twelve year olds would receive a card allowing a reduced fee, which has been proposed at \$3.00 at Ager Golf, with the NGA subsidizing the difference. The 13 through 17 year old program allows play on the larger courses with a 48-hour advance tee time. The cost being proposed is around a \$10.00 green fee, limiting time of play to weekdays during slow times (11 am – 3 pm), and weekends after noon. The charge to these players would be \$4.00, with NGA providing the remaining \$6.00. The Golf Committee is working to implement this program yet this year.

- CIP: Sub-committees have been putting together a prioritized list of CIP needs at the municipal golf courses. More information will be forthcoming to the Advisory Board in the future.
- Questions & Discussion: Jonathan Cook inquired what the rounds and revenue graph looked like over the past ten years. Dale affirmed that he does have that information that could be sent to the members, noting that across the four courses the 8% decline is fairly even.

Justin Carlson asked if the revenue included anything from snack bars or concessions, or whether that it has ever been factored in. Dale provided a history of the golf course professionals at the four main golf courses, who are contracted with the City and retain the revenue from the snack bar, lounge, and pro-shops that they open and maintain, but that the City is informed of those revenues. Director Johnson also provided that the revenue to the Golf Program is from greens fees, cart rentals, and memberships.

From a question regarding a long-range planning consultant by Peter Levitov, it was discussed that the paperwork is being finalized for the golf sustainability study which should begin this month. The consultant is the National Golf Foundation out of Jupiter, Florida, with approximately 30 years of experience, and an estimated time frame of approximately 3 months for completion of the study.

A Holmes Clubhouse update provided that the exterior masonry has begun and the interior walls have been erected, with electrical work to begin soon. Dale should have pictures available for viewing at next month's meeting. Bob Ripley inquired whether the building was now weather tight, which was affirmed. Windows have all been delivered but have not yet all been installed. JJ Yost informed that general contractor Rogge Construction is expected to request a 15 to 30 day extension due to the steel delay during the holidays, although that has not been officially received. The original completion date was projected at May 1st. Golf play does continue, using the old clubhouse, resulting in view issues for the 1st and 10th tee.

Executive Committee - Anne Pagel (Chair) - 570-9194

- No Report

Staff Report:

Review of Department Outcomes and Indicators:

- Lynn Johnson reminded that this is the first year of the bi-annual budget, and instead of preparing budgets at this time, staff have been working on the budget outcomes and indicators, and distributed copies of the current updates for review. The April meeting will be a broader study of the numbers associated with the indicators.

City-wide there are eight outcomes for services and programs that have an investment in tax dollars. Parks & Recreation Department have five of the eight outcomes, with specific goals, department programs and activities, methods, and a number of indicators. New this year are the statements of 'why this is important', 'what is being done', and 'about this measure', with new information being added for greater understanding.

- Safety & Security Outcome – These programs are primarily school aged programs based on the thinking that if children are engaged in purposeful and meaningful activities after school that there is less of a likelihood that they may be engaged in risky behavior. The first of the Department's indicators is to maintain the percentage of youth program participants who report feeling safe, and find activities useful and interesting at 90%. The way information is collected is through point-in-time surveys when the students are participating in the program. Benchmarks are established by the department and then determine how programs or activities measure against that, with the Mayor and City Council having the ability to adjust those benchmarks. Benchmark information is tracked typically on a biannual basis, with these benchmarks historically ranging 85% to 90%. Some variations depend on which area is surveyed, specifically in the area of parks maintenance, which tend to be much lower in terms of residence satisfaction. In the school-aged programs, surveys are taken on a random day during after school programs with certain grade levels.

With various questions from the members regarding the programs and benchmarks, Lynn noted that action would not be requested with this presentation, and that this would be an exercise to familiarize the group with the Department's indicators. Discussion was held on a number of inquiries, with explanations from Lynn, Nicole, and Ryan giving historical information and practices.

The second part of the program indicator is to maintain the percent of parents who report that programs for their children are safe, affordable, and accessible at 90%. The 'safe' portion was just added this year, to coincide with the point-in-time surveys for children.

A brand new indicator, with no current historical data, is participation in a learn-to-swim program through swim lessons or recreational swim teams, as increase the percent of school aged children in public learn-to-swim or

recreational swim team programs. Part of this change is due to the fact that Red Cross will no longer be providing swimming lessons, and Parks & Recreation will now be providing this service. Red Cross will continue to provide material for the training, while they are reprioritizing their focus and their resources. The intent will be to look at the overall percentage of school aged children participating, and then after one season will provide a benchmark for 2013.

- Healthy & Productive People Outcome – The first goal is maintaining the community’s health status, which is a new goal for Parks & Recreation. While this has been done for a number of years, it is now being more purposefully measured and more nutritional information is being provided and those practices are being put to use. This indicator would be to increase the percent of participants in school aged programs who achieve increased fitness and who report healthy eating. Drastic increases have been seen in children’s fitness, endurance, and flexibility, as well as their awareness of healthy choices and nutrition.

Goal two is in support of active living, with two indicators that are fairly similar, one of which may be dropped. First is asking residents to rate the recreational opportunities in the community, accomplished through a survey which is conducted every two years that encompasses all community opportunities and not just Parks & Recreation. The second indicator measures the percentage of residents who have actually used a Parks & Recreation facility in the past year, with a current 90% report rate of use.

The next goal is to support vulnerable populations. The adult day-structure program at Easterday Rec Center and the adaptive recreation club programs are the programs that fall under this goal and the indicators, which are similar to the youth school age programs. Participants and their caregivers both rate the programs.

- Livable Neighborhoods Outcome – The first goal, provide for safe, clean, and attractive neighborhoods to create desirable places to live, includes a significant number of Parks facilities and programs, such as park maintenance and street tree maintenance. The first indicator is to maintain the mowing cycle at 14 calendar days during the prior growing season. The peak mowing period is May through June, and the average mowing cycle includes the entire growing season. The 14 calendar day mowing cycle has been stretched from a previous cycle of 10 calendar days. The next indicator rates the maintenance of park areas and facilities. Neighborhood parks are rated in the resident satisfaction survey, ball fields, golf courses, and outdoor pools are rated with a point-in-time survey by participants. The Great Plains Trails Network does a survey every two years on trails, with one of the questions being to rate the maintenance and operation of trails. The 2000 benchmark was 80%, with a goal of 75%, however the 2011 resident satisfaction survey was below 75%, possibly due to a change in demographics and age of participants surveyed.

The next three indicators are related to the Community Forestry program, looking at maintenance, replacement, and resident satisfaction of the overall program. A fairly standard measure in the industry is the pruning cycle, which varies from year to year, depending on whether pruning smaller trees as opposed to larger older trees which take more time, therefore reducing the number of trees pruned. A recommendation from the Community Forestry Advisory Board was a pruning cycle by caliper, which may even out the difference between younger and larger older trees.

Improving the ratio between street trees planted vs. street trees removed is the next indicator, which is a budget related impact. In response to an issue of only replacing one tree for every five removed, last year the “2 for Trees” program was started, which has increased the ratio to one tree planted for every three removed. The current goal remains at 1:5.

The final indicator, which is new this year, is to maintain the ratio of request for service associated with street trees in relation to the total number of street trees. Calls for service are tracked and will be monitored as new trees are added, with the intent to keep the calls for service in accordance with the new trees being added. If calls begin to increase faster than the number of trees added, that would suggest there may be a potential problem with some of the larger older trees, which would indicate a call for action.

Questions regarding the 1:5 goal for street trees planted vs. street trees removed and that possibly a more optimistic goal should be 1:1, in order to maintain the canopy in the core of the city. Budget and resources have become less, from \$40,000 ten years ago, to around \$10,000 per year, which was the genesis for “2 for Trees”. Species and size of trees, locations, neighborhoods, arterial streets, right-of-way space, etc. all weigh on the decisions for planting. The current count for street trees is approximately 91,000, with an approximate 34,000 trees in parks, although park trees are difficult to maintain calculations due to the number of volunteer trees. Jonathan Cook specifically asked what it would cost for a 1:1 goal of planting vs. removal, with Lynn estimating \$100,000 for purchasing and planting an additional 500 trees per year, in addition to watering which would require increased staff and equipment. “2 for Trees” funding is assisting with additional planting and watering. Drought impacts have also greatly impacted tree removal, and a tracking system is being reviewed to help in determine species success rates as well as maintenance time.

The fifth and final goal for this outcome is providing community spaces and programs that enhance neighborhood vitality, with the first indicator to maintain the number of parks per 10,000 residents at 40% above the average for peer cities.

Larry Hudkins arrived at 5:00 p.m., and was introduced as the new County Board representative to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board.

The next indicator is maintaining the number of playgrounds per 10,000 residents and the third is the number of outdoor pools per 100,000 residents,

then recreation centers per 20,000 residents, with indicators to maintain at the average for peer cities. These numbers are currently slightly down, since the Lincoln population has grown and partly due to budget reasons, new parks and facilities have not been added lately.

- *Environmental Quality Outcome* – Two items are being measured, one regarding management of natural, conservation areas, and the other regarding outdoor education programs at the Pioneers Park Nature Center, which fall under Goal #4, to preserve and manage natural areas in a manner that promotes awareness of our natural environment and fosters a conservation ethic. Indicators are measured by the resident satisfaction survey regarding the amount of parkland relative to the city and a measure of how people feel about the maintenance and operation of natural areas such as Wilderness Park, and also by a participant satisfaction survey of the outdoor programs at the Pioneers Park Nature Center.
- *Identity Lincoln Outcome* – Provide residents and visitors with access to cultural activities such as public gardens, arts and community festivals. The resident satisfaction survey measures the maintenance and operation of the public display gardens, which is at 95%, and seems to stay fairly consistent. The second indicator is new this year, to maintain the number of special events and special use permits issued for community activities occurring in public parks each year. District supervisors are witnessing more people using parks on weekends, which seem to be due to the vast diversity in the community, as well as an increase in special events in the parks. Weekend staffing has been increased, which essentially takes away from regular park maintenance duties during the week. This measure will look at the number of events relevant to the number of park staff over time.

More information will be brought back to the Board next month, with a possible endorsement in May, which will be part of the budget review and development process. A summary sheet will be provided with the board packet for next month's meeting.

Review of Updated Park Mowing Maps:

- A redefined position, Parks System Specialist, is held by David Ross part of whose responsibility will be developing the mapping and GIS system. Jerry Shorney provided that the long/prairie grass conversion has been in progress since 2003. In 2010-11, a major step added more long grass areas in neighborhood parks, which added 170 acres in 30-some neighborhood parks. Fifty-four parks were included in a sampling, with three examples provided to the Board. (Examples attached to these minutes.)
- Roberts Park was reviewed with long grass and heavily wooded areas to be improved with tree removal, waterways, and grass planting this spring, and a press release in the next week. Last year's budget had an added \$50,000 to this program in order to re-establish some of the areas that were put into long grass, back into mowed areas. Two years ago there were approximately 165 to 170 acres implemented into tall grass, and this program will re-establish 31 to 32 acres back to regular mowing. The tall grass program is not being

abandoned, but the areas being tweaked will address neighborhood concerns. The cost per acre for neighborhood park mowing is higher than larger parks, with last year's budget for labor at approximately \$625,000. Larry Hudkins noted the County's offer to use prisoners for mowing, as they do. Many of these individuals are not high profile offenders, and if the County can help with the labor issues in neighborhood parks they would be glad to do so.

- Taylor Park was discussed regarding the numerous drainage areas, with implementation of some long grass establishment. Channel work was done three years ago with the Watershed Management initiative of a 3' buffer on either side of a stream channel for improvement of water quality.
- Trendwood Park, after meeting with the neighborhood, concerns were addressed with re-establishment from long grass to native grass areas. The additional budgeted dollars will allow mowing of an additional 31+ acres, increase overseeding, chemical control, weed control, etc., for improvement of these tall grass areas.
- Maps should be available on-line within the next month, with a key to the classifications and legend. It is intended that this tool will assist in future asset management for thousands of acres of parks.

Announcements:

- The Lincoln Cares and "2 for Trees" news conference was held this morning at the Easley Branch Library.
- April 6th, will be a new event Roses! Roses! Roses! to include six twenty minute sessions on selecting, planting, pruning, and caring for roses, with proceeds to support the care and maintenance of the rose garden.
- Invitations are being sent for the Sherman Field rededication on Thursday, April 17th
- The "Jan's Emma" sculpture will be placed at Jan Pitsch Green on Sunday, April 21st
- Lincoln Cares program was discussed, which will now be divided proceeds of 15% to Libraries, 15% to Aging Partners, and 70% to Parks & Recreation – five Parks projects will include upgrading or adding tennis backboards at four park locations, adding two drinking fountains on the Rock Island trail, Pinewood Bowl entrance fencing and lighting enhancement previously from Antelope Park entrance off of O Street, Hanes Branch Prairie Corridor, and the Parker House scholarship program.
- Discussion held regarding changing "2 for Trees" to "3 for Trees", and requested the consideration to adjust, with the length of time it takes to grow a tree, and the loss of so many trees due to the recent drought.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.