

# MINUTES

## *Parks & Recreation Advisory Board Meeting*

Parks and Recreation Conference Room  
Thursday, November 12, 2015 ~ 4:00 p.m.

### **Members Present:**

Justin Carlson	Roy Christensen	Jim Crook	Peter Levitov
Sherrie Nelson	Jeff Schwebke	Larry Hudkins	Bradley Brandt

### **Members Absent:**

Susan Deitchler	Emily Graul	Robert Ripley	Joe Tidball
Anne Pagel	Olive Martin	Kathi Wieskamp	Todd Fitzgerald

### **Staff Members Present:**

Lynn Johnson, Director  
Jerry Shorney, Assistant Director  
Terry Genrich, Assistant Director  
Nicole Fleck-Tooze, Special Projects Adm.  
JJ Yost, Planning Design & Const. Manager  
Chris Myers, Park Operations Maintenance Coordinator  
Jocelyn Golden, City Law Department

**Call to Order & Recognition of 'Open Meetings Act':** As per law, Chairperson Peter Levitov announced that the Board follows the regulations of the Open Meetings Act, and called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

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

None.

### **\*APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the last meeting were not available, so we will approve them at our next meeting.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

- **Futures Committee** – Bob Ripley is absent. Discussion of the new dog run master plan will be discussed later in this meeting.
- **Fees & Facilities Committee – Susan Deitchler (Chair) 488-4224**  
Lynn Johnson stated that Peterson Park, located South of Hwy 2 on S. 22<sup>nd</sup> Street, has been proposed to be converted from two (2) tennis courts to six (6) Pickelball courts. Several people commented that Pickelball is very popular in the southern states. Peter asked for the vote; the Board Unanimously voted to change Peterson Park's tennis courts to Pickelball courts.
- **Golf Report – Brad Brandt (Chair) 473-9619**  
Brad asked that the October golf monthly reports be sent out via e-mail. The Mayor appointed a Community Golf Committee to look at ways to create a sustainable Golf program. The Committee has 13 members and 8 of them are non-golfers. The first meeting was last Tuesday and ran for four (4) hours! It was used as an introduction meeting to provide an orientation to Lincoln's City golf program.

The next meeting is November 24, 2015. The task now is to put together thoughts and ideas. They hope to have a public meeting in January or February to present the ideas. The facilitator will be at each meeting.

- **Executive Committee – Peter Levitov (Chair) 488-2742**

No report at this time. Peter requested that they table officer selection until December and vote in February.

**STAFF REPORT:**

Lynn Johnson, Director; introduced JJ Yost, Planning and Construction Division Manager to present a report on changes proposed to dog run facilities within the City.

JJ started with sharing a copy of the proposed master plan for dog runs in Lincoln. He stated that the plan can also be found on the Parks web-site. ([parks.lincoln.ne.gov](http://parks.lincoln.ne.gov)) He and his staff have researched use of our two existing dog runs and had an on-line survey to try to determine the community needs and wants for dog runs. Dog parks typically have a higher standard and usually provide shade structures and amenities such as agility equipment. The driving force behind this proposal is:

- 1) Existing parks
- 2) Other communities and their dog usage
- 3) Design standards
- 4) Level of service
- 5) Rules and regulations

This process started in April with the on-line survey. Three hundred (300) surveys were completed, a huge number of responses compared with what we usually receive on surveys for other things. This shows us that the community is interested in the topic. There are up to 66,000 dogs in Lincoln. JJ reported that he has received several calls from interested citizens providing feedback. JJ also talked to the media to encourage people to give feedback and let us know what they would like to see accomplished with the master plan.

JJ pointed out that this is not a “set in stone” proposal. This is just the start of creating a master plan for dog runs that we would like to someday act on. At this point, the next step is to get approval from the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Eventually, a dog park is planned for each quadrant of the City. They are looking at Mahoney Park in NE Lincoln; South Haymarket in Downtown Lincoln, and Peterson Park in SW Lincoln. Moving the Oak Creek Park from Oak Lake to Roper Park East has also been proposed to get the run away from the old landfill site. It was suggested that a separate entrance gate be installed for the small and large dog sides.

Jordan Brasch, President of Friends of the Dog Park, a 501c3 organization, said the Friends group is willing to work with Parks to improve the runs. They want to provide clean up bags. He provided a handout highlighting why dog runs are important to the city and its economy. Dog runs benefit everyone.

JJ said that this all started due to the increased use of the dog runs. Rickman’s needs more parking and potable water. A rinse space to rinse dogs before putting them back in the car would be nice.

JJ was asked who enforces the rules for the dog parks, especially keeping large dogs out of the small dog area. Lynn replied that if it is a dog aggression issue, call Animal control and/or LPD. A gentleman in attendance told of his dog being attacked at the dog run and neither Animal Control nor LPD would do anything for him.

Deb Woods with the Friends of the Dog Parks discussed dog runs/parks as being social gathering spaces for both dogs and humans.

Sherry Nelson asked who has liability insurance for the site. Lynn responded that the dog owners are responsible for the actions of their pets. The runs are also self-regulating.

Further discussion took place regarding the rules and regulations and enforcing them. A suggestion was made to post the rules on a larger sign with larger font along with the phone number for Animal Control's phone number.

Steve Beal, Division Manager of Animal Control for the City Health Department, stated that Lincoln had 39,000 licensed dogs and of those 32,000 have been altered (spayed or neutered). Animal Control gets 5,000 reported bites a year where people have gone to a hospital or Doctor's office. He checked their records and found that only 7 of those bite cases were at the dog runs. Current cost to license is \$21 for a neutered dog. \$52 for an unaltered dog.

When asked by Ron, owner of Kennel Inn, what was motivating this issue, JJ responded with the fact that we need to plan for the future and what neighborhoods want in the future. It has become a growing issue that the City has a large population of dogs and has out-grown the use of the runs we currently have.

JJ reminded us that this is a proposal and Parks and Recreation is asking for the PRAB to endorse the idea as a guidance document.

Ron Christianson asked what has to take place before this becomes a reality? Lynn said that if this proposal is approved, we will try to locate funding from the CIP funds or ask for private sponsors for the project.

Brad Dean just moved back to Lincoln from Austin, TX. He suggested that we look at Austin's dog policies and their Bark Ranger program to help police the runs. He also suggested that we implement a fee, especially for the Downtown run for people to get into the park. He suggested \$150.00 along with proof of current shots and license to be allowed to join. A dog owner in attendance stated that he would be for a fee or membership to get in and if the dog is unruly, their membership is voided.

Lynn stated that a special donation program might become available when licensing your dog with the City to make a donation that goes to the dog runs.

### **Announcements**

VIP or Volunteers in Parks is scheduled at Mahoney Park at 9 am on Saturday, 11/19/15

Happy Thanksgiving

Peter stated that a wonderful turnout of approximately 150 people were at the recognition for the Airport Entry Way. He showed a replica of one of the 18 markers that have been installed along Cornhusker Highway and mentioned that 1,500 plants have been planted on the medians. Lynn thanked the Parks Foundation for leading this project and raising funds.

Meeting adjourned at 5:06 pm