

Park Board Minutes
May 15, 2018

Members Present: Julie Wolfe, Bob Simmons, Jamie Whiteis, Wes Stoner, Danielle Dingman and Garrett Vanderpool

Members Absent: Candy Sullinger, Gabe Miller, and Perry Phillips

Staff Present: Jason Reinsch, Marsha Fulton

The meeting was called to order. Julie Wolfe made note of a typo in line 6 of the 4th item in the March 20th, minutes. The line had the word date and it should have been data. Bob Simmons made a motion to approve the Park Board minutes dated March 20th, 2018 with the correction. Julie Wolfe seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Business:

1. The first item on the agenda was the presentation of the financial report. Jason opened this item by stating that overall it looked like they were in a pretty good place. Jason stated that they had recently implemented quarterly budget meetings designed to work with staff to better understand examine the financials, including coming up with new ideas to increase revenue and reduce expenses. Jason pointed out that in the RecPlex cost center alone the electricity for the first quarter of the year was up by \$5,000.00. This issue was being addressed by installing light sensors, turning off some banks of lights in the basketball gym, and better regulating thermostats throughout the building. He then mentioned that the total ball revenue was up with the expenses staying flat, and pointed out that this was a direct reflection of the continued increase in youth soccer participation. Jason explained that soccer was the fastest growing program with more kids participating than any other sport. Bob Simmons inquired if the current facilities could support the soccer growth. Jason went on to explain that the current amount of wear and tear on the fields was causing serious field condition issues, but that they were looking into options including turf and making better use of Stockstill and Alexander Parks. Wes Stoner added that in the past soccer usually featured a half day of games, but because of growing participation, we were forced to expand the times, sometimes going from 8am-8pm on Saturdays. Bob asked if they had considered purchasing used turf? Jason stated that he knew there were opportunities out there to purchase used turf and it was definitely something they would be looking into. Bob added that it may be something to look at for baseball as well. Garrett Vanderpool stated that the campground had made a nice recovery. Jason added that it had been the best March on record at the campground.

2. The next item on the agenda was the review of the sports impact flyer. Jason shared with the board the flyer that the Branson Convention & Visitors Bureau had produced and were distributing. Jason reminded the Board that this was something that had been in development for a while with Tera from the CVB, and Huddle Up, a consulting team that had helped compile the information and offer recommendations. Bob Simmons pointed out that almost half of the sixty-five million in spending and economic impact was done through the Branson Parks and Recreation. Garrett Vanderpool remarked that it was nice to see it from a non-bias outside view point.

3. The next item on the agenda was the review of RecPlex expansion project concepts. Jason opened this item by reminding the board that not only were we maxing out our facilities with our local league and tournaments, but some of the current tournaments were in need of more space, and we continued to have inquiries about additional tournaments. He went on to say they had been looking at different options and they had recently shared two possible expansion ideas with the Mayor and City Administrator:

1. Expansion option: This option would include purchasing the 17 acres located to the west of the RecPlex and developing the area with 4 new baseball/softball fields, similar in set-up to the current ball field complex. The fields would be turf, with one championship level field that would include extended seating, press box area, and live stream capabilities. The estimated cost for this project would be approximately \$6.46M.
2. Turfing of the existing soccer fields: This option would include turfing the current soccer field and creating a multi-use space by placing baseball/softball fields at opposite corners. This would provide two additional ballfields, and also help to solve a major issue with the current soccer field conditions. As part of this project, the infields on the current complex would also be turfed. The estimated cost for this project would be approximately \$2.37M.

Danielle Dingman inquired if there had been any feedback from the Mayor or City Administrator. Jason stated that everyone had been supportive including the Mayor, the City Administrator and the Board of Aldermen, but ultimately the financial aspect was the most difficult aspect to tackle. Julie Wolfe added that it was important to be open to options and consider all possibilities. Wes Stoner added that it could be like the dog park where there was a well thought out plan and the opportunity for funding came forward, allowing the dog park to become a reality. Jaimie Whiteis inquired if there would be a way for people to donate towards the expansion ideas when they were registering their children? Jason stated that it was something they would discuss and determine if it was feasible. Bob added that this was just another example of how the department was practicing good stewardship of the tax payer's money by showing a willingness to work with what you have.

4. Review of the new downtown position was the next item on the agenda. Jason stated that this was the position that was being added to not only take care of the downtown restrooms and Liberty Plaza, but also the trash, streetscapes, and plant maintenance. Jason went on to say that they had hired Kory Klein for the position. He then shared with the board the schedule and the idea behind the daily zones. Bob asked if there had been any coordinating done with the Downtown Association, as they have some responsibility in the area as well. Jason indicated that to this point they had not, as they had been predominately focused on getting Kory in place and started. Jamie asked how it worked with events such as Plumb Nellie Days. Jason explained that the event coordinator would apply for a special event and in that process any expenses incurred by the various City Departments would be listed and those cost considered. Jason then went on to share that currently they were planning on four summer concerts at Liberty Plaza along with one movie this fall.

5. The next item on the agenda was the review of the new park sign initiative. Jason opened this item by showing the board a photo of the new John Nygard sign with the Lucia Ridge designation and shared what a nice addition the signs were for not only the parks but also the neighborhoods. Jason added that Joel was working with other neighborhood groups to be able to receive grants to add new signage and improvements to other parks.

6. The review of the recreation update and newsletters was the final item on the agenda. Jason opened this item by sharing with the Board that the Community Center had received a grant for exercise equipment and that the local news stations had recently run a story about the impact that it was having on our seniors. Additionally, he shared that the community garden at the Community Center was doing well and had creating a buzz of interest among the seniors. Jason then shared that spring soccer had 62 register teams, an increase of nearly 20 teams from 2017, and that baseball/softball had 94 teams this year, also representing a significant increase from 2017. Jason shared that the first concert at Liberty Plaza would be this weekend followed by a movie-in-the-park in two weeks, and Relay for Life on June 1st at the RecPlex. Jason concluded by stating that the community was very fortunate to have a facility like this to be able to host these great community events. Bob agreed, stating that it gave the right exposure and allowed everyone to be more involved.

Member's Report

1. Wes Stoner shared with the board that there would be semi pro soccer games on June 1st at the Branson High School as a fund raiser for the high school soccer teams.
2. Wes Stoner also shared the idea of senior adult out trips. This was a program he had seen when visiting another park's department and thought it might benefit our department.
3. Garrett Vanderpool asked about an update on the software, specifically at the campground. Jason stated he hoped to have more information for him at the next meeting, but unfortunately it had been on the back burner as they were working on a few other projects.
4. Danielle Dingman shared that she was now professionally racing half iron mans and that she would be happy to speak about and to help promote this is our area.
5. Julie Wolfe shared that while at the dog park a couple from Chicago had spoken to her and expressed their surprise that you had to pay to use the park. She stated that she had explained how the park worked, and why things like shot records and payment were important.