

SUMMARY MINUTES

BENTON COUNTY PARK BOARD

March 10, 2015, 6:30 p.m.
Benton County Justice Center
Kennewick, WA

Board Members Present

Richard Nordness, Chair
Diana Ruff, Secretary/Treasurer
Michael Crowder - Member
Donna Raines, Member
John Becker, Member
Robin Emmingham, Member

Benton County Employees

Adam Fyall
Cami McKenzie

Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance/Roll Call

Chair Richard Nordness called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance and roll call was taken.

Review & Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved as presented.

Approval of Minutes

The Minutes of February 2015 were approved as submitted.

Chair Report

Chair Richard Nordness reported on the chili feed and ride and said it was a beautiful day with good attendance.

Additionally, he announced that Bert Lake would be stepping down from the Park Board effective immediately and there was a letter from Bert announcing his resignation that was available if anyone wanted to read it.

Staff Report Update

In addition to his written report, Adam reported on the following:

- Valley Fever Affliction - there were samples found in the soil at Hover Park. He had a conversation with the Health District and they would be doing some air and soil monitoring.
- Boardwalk Project - The Department of Fish & Wildlife issued a report that an HPA process was not needed since this project did not meet the criteria. Additionally, they received buy-in on the wetland mitigation from The Corps of Engineers so they were on to the next steps for this project.

Vista Park

Adam gave a Powerpoint presentation on Vista Park and briefly discussed the following:

- Remodeling Options
- Background - established in 1970
- Issues
 - Playground equipment & safety
 - Stump/arborvitae/mature junipers
 - Retaining wall/parking area
- Future Ideas
 - Modern play structure
 - Community gardens
 - Demonstration gardens, etc.
 - Grass
- Sent letter to neighbors; no letters or calls were received
- Budget ideas and County labor ideas; schedule

Rich Hillmer, Two Rivers Park Ranger, commented on some of the projects, including removing the tire, difficulty in getting his equipment into the park for removal, and the trimming projects.

Comments from Neighbors

Tom Budgell (?), property owner in the neighborhood for 25 years, said he had a full view of the park. He said it was used a lot on nice days, mostly by young families. He had never heard of any injuries on the playground equipment and if they were removed and not replaced, it would be a loss. He also commented on the following:

- Drinking fountain - not working
- Arborvitae and junipers were really in need of thinning
- Tire - was not used; the large rocks were just for looks
- His main concern was cleaning up the foliage and grinding out the stump
- The sprinklers worked fine; he made sure the water ran at the appropriate time
- Approximate age of children (5-12); some walked in to the park but most would drive

Greg Sylvia (?) said the park had been part of his family since it was put in; there were not many parks back in that time. He said there were a lot of people involved in putting in the park but it was meant to be a low maintenance neighborhood park.

He played in it, as well as his kids and grandkids. He said it was a flowing park, not a destination park, and he appreciated the County taking over the park. He mentioned it was a safe park and there was not a lot of crime. He also commented specifically on the following:

- The playground equipment had a unique feel to it due to its era; maybe they could add some bark or soft fall
- The old tire was actually a sand box and could be removed
- The rocks were left there because they were too heavy to move
- Cinderblock wall/fencing could be addressed
- Arborvitae could be taken out
- Water fountain could be removed - it was not functioning
- Everything installed was heavy duty

Robin said he felt very strongly about having safe equipment within current standards and was impressed and pleased to know kids were using the park and wanted to bring it up to current standards.

Diana said she agreed and was glad to hear people were using it; she personally would rather go to a pocket park like this with her kids. She said she wanted to put this park second to Two Rivers Park in replacement of the playground equipment since Two Rivers had more kids and less supervision. Additionally, she wouldn't want to remove the equipment until it could be replaced.

Rich Hillmer commented that whenever he was at Vista Park doing maintenance, the children were supervised.

Adam said he would ask the current contractor about the junipers. Diana recommended putting off replacement until they could afford it. The neighbors expressed their desire to keep the swings and slides.

Robin said he would like an assessment of the playground equipment and safety and whether it was ok to continue to use the current equipment. Adam said he would work with Bryan Perry to see if he could get an assessment.

MOTION: It was moved and seconded to begin spring 2015 projects at Vista Park to include the following: grind the stump, remove the high bar, post a sign about ongoing projects, and remove the arborvitae. Upon vote, the motion carried.

Priority Projects

Adam presented a list of priority projects for the Board to consider and the Board also discussed the following:

- Identifying playground equipment needs for Two Rivers Park & Vista Park;
- Higgins Field electrical & camping upgrades - Donna suggested the Board consider this need;
- Hover Park parking lot - Donna asked if this project could be moved forward since it had been on the list for some time but there had not been any movement. Adam said the Board would need to decide what it wanted there since Toothaker was determined to be the proper access. Robin said they would need to identify funding but did not feel it was a priority for 2015. Michael said he was not in favor of it being a 2015 priority project. Donna said she just wanted it to move forward because it continued to be there with nothing done. Richard suggested a new site visit to evaluate the Park. The Board agreed.

MOTION: Michael moved to approve the following as priority projects: Horn Rapids Irrigation Upgrade, Barker Ranch Use Agreement, Candy Mountain Acquisition, Playground equipment review at Two Rivers Park and Vista Park, and the Boardwalk at Two Rivers Park. Diana seconded and moved to amend the motion to remove Barker Ranch as a priority project.

Discussion

Diana said it was out of the Park Board's hands and they had already done what they could do on the matter. Michael requested to leave it in and said he wanted

to make one more run at it and then would drop it. Diana withdrew her amendment but said she would bring it up again the next quarter.

Upon vote, the motion carried.

The Board agreed to have the dedication for Dennis Rockwell at the June meeting at Two Rivers Park.

Guest Comments/Poll of the Board/Adjournment

The guests and Board members gave closing comments.

With no further business to report, the meeting adjourned at approximately 8:45 p.m.

The next regular meeting will be the first Tuesday in April at the Kennewick Justice Center.