

CITY OF MERRIAM PARK AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, November 24, 2020
6:00PM

Roll Call

The November meeting of the Merriam Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 pm, by Chairperson Christopher Leitch. Board members in attendance included: LaVera Howard, Katie Leary, Billy Croan, Kathy Stull, Staci Chivetta, Tony Scott and Evan Quinley. Staff members in attendance included: Anna Slocum, Director; and Nicole Ritter, Customer Service Representative. Due to COVID-19 gathering restrictions, other staff did not attend. Public in attendance: Nancy Hupp.

Public Comments

There were no comments.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Evan Quinley made a motion to approve the October minutes. Billy Croan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Director's Report

COMMUNITY CENTER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

Daily communication continues with McCarthy to determine remaining work and impact to patrons. The list remaining has approximately 25 items and is the responsibility of 12 trades to complete. Several of the items should be wrapped up this week, but others will not be completed until the first week of December due to scheduling issues or the arrival of hardware. "BASK" is still not lit. McCarthy and the electrical contractor worked with the manufacturer of the electrical component to troubleshoot the issue with no success. It is now back in the manufacturers court which may require travel. There is no forecasted completion date at this time. McCarthy's goal is to have all work completed by mid-December.

Kathy Stull asked why a significant amount of concrete from the parking structure to the courtyard had to be replaced. There were accessibility issues with the slope of the concrete that were not in compliance. There is other concrete work out of compliance on site that will need to be removed and poured again.

MONTHLY COMMUNITY CENTER MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

During the month of October, there were 131 membership units sold for a total of 538 units. There are a total of 1,100 people assigned to those units of membership. There has been another corporation to complete the corporate membership process. In the December Highlights, there is an article about the corporate membership benefit. The communications team is creating a story for the Chamber "Newsbrief" and a flyer has been created that will be included in all the completed business licenses that will be mailed in December. In December / January, to build upon the New Year's resolution, anyone who purchases a paid in full membership they will receive FREE Merriam swag. This will include items similar to what Charter Members received. In addition, staff is evaluating other opportunities to sell these items or provide them as a door prize for future events.

In October there were 3,159 membership visits, an average of 102/day. This is a 69.4% increase from September. Through the first 15 days in November the membership visits almost surpassed the entire

month of September. Unfortunately, with the closure of pools, there has been a significant dip in daily visits. In addition, there have been approximately 20 memberships suspended until the pools reopen.

Insurance visits continue to be strong with a significant increase in Silver Sneakers and RenewActive. Starting December 1, the partnership with Silver & Fit / Active & Fit will be activated. The agreement with PeerFit is with the attorneys. It is staff's goal to have this go to City Council on December 14 if the agreement can be finalized in time.

TIM MURPHY ART GALLERY UPDATE

This year the High School show will look significantly different. Instead of having thousands of works submitted there were 462 entries from 18 area schools. There were a total of 80 works accepted representing 70 students from 16 schools. The awards ceremony will be a virtual event. This year, with limited number of entries coupled with budgetary concerns to the Transient Guest Fund, it was necessary to restructure the awards which will continue to be Visa gift cards. This year there will be a Best of Show \$150; second place \$100; third place \$50 and three awards of merit. Each participant accepted into the show will receive a finalist certificate. The show will run from December 3 – January 2.

Included in the packet is the art exhibition schedule for 2021. It is staff's goal to explore bringing receptions back to the gallery in April, depending on the state of the pandemic. Receptions will look different when they do come back.

New Business

2021 FARMERS' MARKET SEASON SCHEDULE

Included in the packet was a memo regarding the proposed operation of the 2021 Farmers' Market season. In 2020, the season was reduced to 19 weeks to prepare for COVID-19 protocols. During the season 10,329 shoppers visited the market averaging 544 weekly shoppers. With only 18 stalls available, almost all stalls were occupied weekly thanks to the 49 daily vendors throughout the season. For 2021, staff is prepared to return to a full 22-week season starting with COVID-19 protocols in place with a plan to expand vendor participation if restrictions are lifted. The season will run from the first Saturday in May to the last Saturday in September from 7 am – 1 pm. Staff is seeking Park Board recommendation to approve the proposed operating schedule for City Council approval. Billy Croan motioned to approve proposed operating schedule Kathy Stull seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

HIKING AND BIKING AND WALKING TRAIL CODE MODIFICATION

Before the board this evening is language to update a section of Merriam's Municipal Code as it pertains to Chapter 47, Article III; Section 47 -90 – Parcourse, hiking and biking trails and walking paths. Included in the packet was a memo outlining the need for the update along with a red-lined and clean version of the proposed changes. The discussion of modifying the code started in November 2018 to determine how to remain in compliance with Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Johnson County Parks and Recreation Department (JCPRD) took the lead on pilot program to determine the use of electric bicycles on the trails. After their program was completed, area directors discussed the need to unify trail regulations between local municipalities as there are several linking trail systems throughout the metro area. To ensure changes proposed did not impact any vehicular codes, staff worked closely with the City Attorney and Chief of Police to develop the proposed changes. The major changes include renaming the code eliminating the term parcourse; defining various modes of

alternative transportation to ensure there is a clear definition for enforcement and outlining the permitted and restrictive use of these alternative modes of transportation. In conversations with the Chief of Police and City Attorney, codes should be clearly written from an enforcement perspective. Portions of the code that deal more with etiquette were removed as they are difficult to monitor and enforce. Staff is seeking a recommendation to City Council regarding the changes proposed to the code.

Discussion among members included eliminating the term “hiking” from the title and including pedestrian verbiage. After discussion, it was determined that the pedestrian language was deemed to be etiquette and difficult to enforce. “Hiking” is a relative term and would remain in the title.

Kathy Stull made a motion to send recommendations forward to City Council as proposed. Billy Croan seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

2021 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

This is a one-year assignment with no term limits. There are two positions to be filled – Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. It is the role of the Chairperson to lead the meetings. The agenda is determined by staff but there is always a place on the agenda for Other Business, in the event the chair or another member of the board has items to discuss. There has been, on occasion, the need for the Director to have separate meetings with the Chairperson regarding sensitive matters for guidance on how to proceed with a topic prior to a meeting. The Vice Chairperson, fills the role of the Chairperson in their absence. There will need to be a nomination for each position followed by a vote of the majority for the nomination to pass. Those elected will begin their service at the first meeting of 2021. Members of the Board interested in serving were encouraged to state their intention.

Kathy Stull nominated Christopher Leitch to continue to serve as Chairperson. LaVera Howard seconded the motion. During discussion, Christopher Leitch graciously declined the nomination stating that due to personal issues he was not able to continue to serve in the role for 2021. After his withdrawal from running, Christopher Leitch nominated Staci Chivetta to serve as Chairperson. Billy Croan stated he was interested in serving as Chairperson.

Before calling for a vote, Christopher Leitch stated that with two candidates interested in serving as Chairperson, one would serve as Chairperson the other as Vice Chairperson. A vote was called for those in favor of Staci Chivetta – with Staci abstaining from the vote she received 5 votes. The vote was called for Billy Croan- with Billy abstaining from the vote he received no votes. Staci Chivetta will serve as the Chairperson for 2021 Park Advisory Board with Billy Croan serving as Vice Chairperson.

Other Business

There was no other business to discuss.

Adjournment

Katie Leary made a motion to adjourn. Billy Croan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.