

CITY OF MERRIAM PARK AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, July 27, 2021
6:00PM

Roll Call

The July meeting of the Merriam Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairperson Staci Chivetta. Board members in attendance included: Billy Croan, Kathy Stull, LaVera Howard, Christopher Leitch, Katie Leary and Tony Scott. Staff members in attendance were Anna Slocum, Director and Dave Smothers, Assistant Director. Public in attendance included: Nancy Hupp.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Christopher Leitch made a motion to approve the June minutes. Katie Leary seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

Director's Report

Community Center Update

A detailed memo was included in the packet. Updates to information shared in the memo included:

- The lone emergency light that was still on during the day has been repaired.
- The Desert Aire Unit damper repair is scheduled to occur on Thursday morning. The repair should take 4 hours and will require a brief shut down of the unit but this should not impact operation. Test and balance of the system is scheduled on Monday. The unit is now communicating with the BMS system and should alert staff if there is a problem in the future.
- Due to the unit not operating properly there has been significant damage to equipment in the natatorium. Staff is working with McCarthy to create a comprehensive list of items with photo documentation. There is a meeting scheduled for August 2 with TempCon's insurance adjuster to discuss replacement / cleaning of items impacted by the system not operating properly.
- Child Watch opened on July 6 and as of Tuesday, July 27 there have been 16 children utilize the service.

Discussion after the update included:

- Corrosion of stainless is not rust. The correct gauge of stainless was used but with the unit not working properly, it presents as rust. Once the unit works properly, regular cleaning will be required to keep it shiny but it should not present as corrosion.

- The recycle / trash emblems on the outdoor trash receptacles are coming off. These were purchased separately from the furniture contract. Staff has been working with the vendor to correct the problem and has additional transfers to apply.
- The chain around the convenience gate was needed briefly due to a liability issue that was identified. The safety guard broke which prevented someone from accessing the strike of the gate and gaining entry. While correcting that issue, another access issue was identified. Both of those liability concerns have been corrected and the chain will be removed. Staff is adding signage to the outside of the gate that will read "EXIT ONLY" as there has been some confusion from patrons.
- Outdoor pool speakers have been heard very early in the morning throughout the neighborhood.
- There have been a few times when there are no loungers available. Is there the opportunity to add more? Staff will continue to evaluate deck furniture. The walking paths need to be maintained so chairs are limited to the north and south end of the deck. There are a few chairs in storage, but finding space would require the chairs to be closer together which staff felt the current spacing was appropriate.
- A future project should consider extending the terrace on the south end with concrete eliminating the "slide" and adding more space for deck chairs.
- Consider a solution for the lower level parking structure conflict with pedestrian traffic. There is concern that that neither the pedestrian or the motor vehicle see each other. Staff is aware of this concern and have had several conversations about possible solutions.

Membership / Visit Reports

Included in the packet were the monthly reports. Due to the limited number of summer memberships sold, staff believes that many patrons purchased annual / monthly options. There could be a significant number of cancellations after Labor Day.

Visitation in the month of June skyrocketed more than doubling previous months' visits. There were a total of 12,779 visits averaging 426 visits / day. This number does not take into consideration the number of people that participated in programs or classes. July visits are on pace to surpass June, as of Monday, July 26 visitation was already at 11,000.

Insurance visits continue to hold steady. Through the first half of the year, visits in most categories have doubled over the last half of 2020.

Discussion involved the types of visits occurring with the thought they were mainly for the pool. While individual visits are not traced, there has been significant activity with the pool and the gymnasium.

Assistant Director Report

Farmers' Market Update

The July 2021 update was provided in the packet. With the lifted restrictions related to social distancing outdoors, vendors are purchasing additional spaces. Attendance continues to follow past year trends.

Program Evaluation

Included in the packet were program evaluations for Family Fun Friday at Quail Creek and Dive in Movie events. Staff would like to be able to serve food again in 2022 at these events. For the Dive-in Movie, direct patrons through the gender specific locker rooms to access the outdoor pool versus sending them through the family locker room as the indoor pool is closed. Improve communication with Facility Attendants regarding event details to ensure proper details are shared when people call with questions.

Upcoming Events

National Night Out

Flyer included in packet. Annual event for the Police Department will occur at Waterfall Park on August 3.

Tim Murphy Art Gallery

Invitation for the August 5 reception was included in the packet. Beverages will once again be served.

Turkey Creek Cruise Night

Flyer for event included in packet. A warm-up for Car Show will be August 14, featuring music by Ronnie Ward Band and Eat Schmidt food truck.

Concert in the Courtyard

Flyer for event included in packet. The event is free and this will also be a free day for Merriam residents to utilize the community center.

New Business

Geocache and Metal Detecting Department Policies

Draft policies related to these subjects were included in the packet. Staff researched how other departments handled these requests for suggestions and input into drafting these policies. While it is not staff's intent to write a policy for every situation, staff deemed the request from the public for these two specific activities rose to the level to require policies to ensure consistency when answering questions. Staff is seeking Board review and input prior to implementing. Staff is still researching how other departments handle non-compete and public use for private gain issues.

Discussion of the policies included:

- Staff provided a better understanding of what geocaching is and clarified that the policy is more for the person placing the cache than for the seeker. While there are rules about not digging this is to ensure that the cache is easy to find.
- Due to how bullet point #3 read in the Geocache Policy, there was a suggestion to add a comma in the sentence.
- There was a question regarding allowing digging for metal detecting. The concern was that plants and trees are not allowed to be dislodged, is grass not a plant? While technically it is a plant, staff sees it as ground cover. Bullet #1 addresses preserving the “plug” similar to a divot on a golf course, this plug, when replaced can regenerate and survive unlike a landscape plant or tree.
- Recommendation on bullet #2 for Metal Detecting Policy is to add punctuation to better explain the point being made. In addition, adding verbiage to better describe “litter” so the person participating in this activity would understand their responsibility for removal.
- There was a recommendation when drafting the non-compete policy, to consider that if someone is using the facility for personal gain and not interfering with users, the activity be ignored. As a steward of city resources, this will likely will not be the approach that staff takes in drafting the policy. There was significant discussion with several board members providing opinions supporting staff’s approach to the policy. Currently, there is already precedent in charging for-profit entities for using public space. Rentals are asked if they are charging a fee as there is a commercial rate. Food trucks that participate at special events have to pay an entry fee as do vendors that participate in the Farmers’ Market. Instructors, not employed by the City of Merriam, sign an instructor agreement outlining percentages of revenue sharing from registrations.

Other Business

Municipal Parking Lot Ordinance Update

Based on the input shared at the June meeting and input from various departments, staff drafted a change to the current ordinance for the attorney to review. Staff is proposing two defined terms related to parking, Municipal Parks and Municipal Campus. Parks will not allow parking from dusk to dawn mirroring the hours of operation of those amenities. Municipal Campus will be no parking after dark with three exceptions: city vehicles, city employee vehicles and approval of City Administrator or designee if on sight for an approved activity which covers the operation of the community center. The timeline for when this item goes before City Council has yet to be determined.

Downtown Corridor Updates

Christopher Leitch and Staci Chivetta serve on the committee. They had their first meeting in July. Committee members will provide updates as information is available.

Johnson County Public Art Library Committee

Kathy Stull is serving as the board representative for the committee. Currently, the library has completed a call for artists. There were no other updates at this time.

Adjournment

Billy Croan called for a motion to adjourn. Kathy Stull seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.