

CITY OF MERRIAM PARK AND RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
Tuesday, September 28, 2021  
6:00PM

**Roll Call**

The September 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, Evan Quinley and Tony Scott. Staff member in attendance was Anna Slocum, Director. Public in attendance included Nancy Hupp

**Public Comments**

Nancy Hupp shared the Merriam Park, Recreation, and Community Center Foundation (MPRCCF) support of scholarships for the Parks Department. The Dolphin Fund support allowed 4 children to participate in swim team and 9 children in swim lessons. The MPRCCF funded 5 household scholarships. In total, \$2,746 in funding was provided in 2021.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Billy Croan made a motion to approve the August minutes. LaVera Howard seconded the motion. No questions or discussion of the minutes. 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:

- No other staff are available this evening due to vacation and work injury.
- While McCarthy has been approved to release materials, with the supply shortage, they are anticipating at least a 4 – 8-week delay if not longer. As supplies are received, they will coordinate installation.
- Staff has been working with Westport Pools to schedule winterization. At this time, the project is slated for either the week of 10/4 or 10/11. As part of the construction contract, this is the final winterization training that will be provided.

There was no discussion.

Membership / Visit Reports

- The membership and visit report was included in the packet. Memberships continue to grow with 163 added during August of 2021 compared to 88 in 2020. The year-to-date cancellations, suspended and expired memberships have been corrected after the error discovered in August.

- Visits did fall slightly from July, which was expected with school starting. August visitation is the third best of the year averaging 369 visits per day. The highest attended day was right before school started on August 9.
- Insurance visits continue to increase. In August, Sylvester Powell was closed for several weeks which caused many people to seek MCC to continue their fitness routine. In addition, this week staff was informed that a gym in Shawnee will be closing as many people are now exploring new facilities.

There was a question about insurance reimbursement. Typically, the reimbursement is a month behind. For Silver Sneakers, the reimbursement for August was received in late September and was approximately \$1,800.

### Summer Recreation Report

Included in the packet was a recap of enrollment and participation in programs for the Summer 2021 season. Next year there will be a comparison between Summer 2021 and Summer 2022. Due to the facility not opening until July 2020 along with complications of COVID there were minimal classes offered; a comparison did not seem impactful. To provide a benchmark for the 45,119 people participating in programs, events and visits during the Summer of 2021, past reports from similar time frames were reviewed. In 2019, IBFCC had a total summer visitation of 9,961. The MAC last operated in 2018 with a total of 18,216. The two facilities totaled 28,177 visits.

### **Assistant Director Report**

#### Farmers' Market Update

The update included in the packet is through the second weekend of September. The final report will be in October reflecting the last two weeks of the season. One item to point out is the difference in vendor participation with the Turkey Creek Car Show from 2020 to 2021. Visitation did drop slightly this year with the relocation to the IBFCC parking lot. This is a free weekend for vendors recognizing that they are impacted by the change in venue. This year there was a parking concern for visitors used to parking close to the market. Staff learned a lot about field parking for an event and are discussing various modifications for next year.

#### Program Evaluations

Included in the packet was the Concert in the Courtyard evaluation. Staff is proposing to continue this event on an annual basis. In addition, promotion as "free day" for Merriam residents will be more prominent. There will be other free days offered throughout the year that will center around days that Shawnee Mission School District is out of school.

#### Discussion:

- There is an appearance that the event made money. Are sponsors provided a refund? Several of the expenses associated with this event were credits from events cancelled in

2020. The money had been expended in a different budget year and not reported as a direct expense for this year. The expenses listed are only the hard costs associated with the event. There is no staff time calculated, which would greatly change the bottom line of all events. When sponsors decide to participate, depending on the level of sponsorship, there is a list of marketing items that are promised. As long as staff met those obligations we have fulfilled our commitment to the sponsor.

- There was a suggestion that staff consider offering one-day camps for children when the school district has a one-day professional development day. These days provide a child care issue for parents.

### Upcoming Events

#### A Moment in Time, Thursday, October 7, 2021

The October art exhibit opening reception will take place at the Tim Murphy Art Gallery featuring the work of Laura Hewitt, Geoffrey Ristau and Sylvia Augustus. As with all receptions in 2021, beverages will be served.

On Thursday, October 14 at 5:30 p.m., “Celebration” will be unveiled in the lobby of the community center. This piece of work was commissioned by Nancy Hupp in memory of Ron. Nancy had asked staff if there was a need within the new community center in which she could use memorial funds from Ron and donations received in honor of her service on City Council. Staff gave Nancy a proposal of the idea along with the recommendation of Michael Walsh, knowing how much Ron and Nancy admired his work. Nancy worked closely with Michael Walsh to design the piece that will be added to the City’s permanent collection.

#### Merriam Drive Live Saturday, October 2, 2021

Volunteers are still needed for the race on several of the corners and as a DJ Spotter. Anyone interested in volunteering, please reach out to Renee or Dave. Staff is closely monitoring the weather. Unfortunately, rain will cancel cornhole but the other activities can easily be moved under the Marketplace. There are approximately 50 runners registered for the race.

#### Discussion:

- Could cornhole be moved to the gym at MCC? Staff considered that option but anyone participating would not have access to the other activities of the event and would be completely secluded. In years past, IBFCC was in the footprint of the event allowing for participants to have access to food and beverages. There was discussion of moving it under the pavilion. The bags are loud when they hit coupled with the echoing would be a distraction to those listening to music.

#### Garage Sale, Saturday, October 9, 2021

The garage sale returns for the first time in many years to the Merriam Marketplace. Participants will rent a stall for \$15 and must provide their own tables. It will run from 7 a.m. – 1 p.m.

## New Business

### 2022 Schedule of Fees

On an annual basis, staff is tasked to review fees charged for various services. Throughout the first operating year of MCC there have been three areas identified that could be enhanced for patron experience.

1. Add a Nanny Pass – this would be an add-on option for a household membership purchased by the head of household. This would allow for the household to add a Nanny or baby sitter to their pass. The pass could be in a specific name offered as a benefit to the nanny or left generic for more fluid babysitter situations. This must be purchased as an add-on membership; it is not a stand-alone membership for someone who has the job as a nanny or babysitter. The proposed rate structure is:

<b>Nanny Pass</b>	<b>Annual</b>	<b>Monthly</b>	<b>Summer</b>
Resident	\$200	\$25	\$70
Non-Resident	\$250	\$30	\$80

2. Add a Youth/ Senior day pass rate. Over the course of the summer, staff received many comments that children do not have access to all of the amenities of the facilities. In addition, seniors pointed out that there is a reduced membership rate but not a reduced day pass rate. Youth are defined as someone 2 – 17 and seniors are defined as someone 60+. The proposed rate structure for this change is:

<b>Day Pass Fee</b>	
Resident Youth / Senior	\$7
Non-Resident Youth / Senior	\$9

3. The last proposed change is related to how fees are charged for child watch. Prior to operating the area, the fee was established as a per child per hour rate. Upon implementation, there has been significant concern in applying the visit rate consistently. The change recommended is to move from a per rate per hour but to a per visit rate. This would align charges to neighboring facilities. The proposed rate structure change is:

<b>Child Watch Fees</b>	<b>Currenty</b>	<b>Proposed</b>
Member	\$3 / hour / child	\$3 / visit / child
Non-Member	\$4 / hour / child	\$4 / visit / child

Discussion of the rate changes:

- There was clarification on Child Watch fees that there is a potential loss of revenue with this change. Staff acknowledged that it will be a reduction if a patron remains longer than an hour but this is a service for members not designed to cover expenses. In addition, this aligns with how the service operates among other community centers.
- There was concern that the Nanny pass could be abused. Unfortunately, that is the case with several membership options currently offered today. The goal is to be easily accessible which does provide loop-holes for those who are more creative to find ways to

potentially abuse the system. One safeguard is that this pass can only be purchased as an add-on fee to a household membership. It is not a stand-alone membership

- Several board members commented that it would be a great benefit for families researching summer options for pre-teen children.
- Christopher Leitch made a motion to recommend all three changes to the 2022 fee schedule be approved by City Council. Kathy Stull seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

## **Other Business**

### Johnson County Public Art Library Committee

Kathy Stull reported that the committee has shortlisted the applicants to four, one from the Kansas City metro area. The artists will visit the site and various libraries in the coming weeks. The goal is to have the recommendation of artist to be presented to the Public Art Commission at the November 4, 2021 meeting.

### Downtown Corridor Update

The committee has not had any additional meetings but staff have attended several events seeking public input.

## **Adjournment**

Christopher Leitch called for a motion to adjourn. Bill Croan seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.