

**PARK BOARD MEETING
December 11, 2017**

Pursuant to due call and order, the Board of Park Commissioners, Dickinson Park District, met for a Park Board Workshop and Public Hearing at 4:45 pm on Monday, December 11, 2017 at the West River Community Center.

ROLL CALL: Commissioners present were Scott Kovash, Tim Daniel, Scott Karsky, KC Homiston, and Carol Herauf. Also present were Director James Kramer and Clerk Leah Hoenke.

Timetable Agenda

4:45 pm – Park Board Workshop

Future First Committee Update (Attachments 1-2) - President Scott Kovash spoke when they went to the national NRPA conference he and Director Kramer went to a session on the future of parks and recreation. He said as we have grown, we are still trying to maintain with the same amount of people and he has felt for years that we need to have an assistant director to help alleviate Director Kramer from making some of the day to day decisions so he can concentrate on other things like policy making, etc. President Kovash also said there are some issues that concern him, such as security and emergency plans for our facilities and staff and he also commented that he thinks we run a pretty lean budget, probably too lean and now we need to look at staffing and what we need to do to move forward. Commissioner Carol Herauf asked if we've thought about going out and recruiting for positions other than just opening up a position. Director Kramer said this conversation goes back several boards ago, previous Park Board Presidents Mike Lefor and Carol Herauf both made recommendations to have an assistant director as well. He said now he thinks he is in a place where he realizes that it is in the best interest of the Park District to expand the admin operations moving forward. He said he put together a committee of employees to focus on reviewing the policy and procedure components of the Park District. For a while now we have been focusing on building facilities and growing but not administratively. Director Kramer explained the process of the committee and said these are the things they are looking at: Security and safety; organizational structure; staff orientation/training/communication; policies and procedures; and the last being a melting pot. He explained each one and said he challenged the committee to come up with a footprint of the organization which came down to the Park Board, Executive Director, three Assistant Director's for the three departments of recreation/facilities, business and maintenance operations. He also reviewed the positions that are open currently or will be open in the near future: Marketing, maintenance specialist, customer service, membership services along with retirements within next few years in maintenance and recreation. Director Kramer reviewed the topics the committee reviewed were organizational chart, branding of parks and recreation, flexible work schedule, initiate staff review, employee orientation process, background check, job training, all staff meetings, department meetings, professional development, policies and procedures, develop Park District ordinances, review of facility rules, create policy manuals, explore out-source work opportunities. He also reviewed the melting pot of issues the committee thinks we should look at. He said the key is to stay on top and keep moving forward and put to a timeline and hold us accountable. President Scott Kovash said this is just a start but we are moving in the right direction. Commissioner Carol said this is a great idea and we need to start talking about these issues. Commissioner Homiston asked if we could go back, would we have started raising revenues a long time ago. Director Kramer said looking back we were not nearly aggressive enough when economics allowed us to be aggressive, we were always extremely tight and lean and didn't levy any more than we needed. Commissioner Scott Karsky said he commends the way we have done it, we don't have the stable growth of other communities, we have a lot of highs and lows. Discussion followed.

Land Planning (Attachment #3) – Director Kramer reviewed land developments. He showed the City's Boundary Map, showed areas of growth, when you talk about the influx of kindergartners, do we have the field space for that. He said part of it is developing a better relationship with the school district, how can we participate with them in development space. Discussion followed. He said land planning should be a priority and we need to continue to move forward. He said we have approximately \$1,000,000 from developments. Discussion followed on future field space and trail expansion.

Projects Update – Director Kramer then reviewed the Major Project - 3 year plan – He said the City is decreasing their pledge by \$10,000 every year. He showed the Capital Betterment, golf course and community center have their own capital betterment line items. He said we are currently carrying \$89,600 in projects that are unfinished in 2017 as well as carrying special assessment districts to update infrastructure, we will initiate again in a couple years. Discussion followed on the grant funds for the phases of crooked crane trail. Director Kramer said we are still sitting on \$190,000 from Bureau of Reclamation funds. He said currently the trail group likes the trail the way it is. They want to improve the gates, parking lot, signage, restrooms, enhancing its current form. Commissioner Carol Herauf said she would like to see a longer trail. Discussion followed.

Financial Update – Director Kramer reviewed the Fund Balances. He said the biggest was capital betterment that we took out for Veterans Pavilion, park land development, total is just over 2 million dollars. He said we like to keep the general fund at \$250,000 and is running low now. Discussion followed on the possibility of increasing the mills. President Scott Kovash said at some point raising the mills is something we are going to have to do. He thinks we'll have to take it publicly. Director Kramer said the City raised the sales tax to fund the community center and we've never had to touch it but it is still set up to cover us if we need a subsidy. Discussion followed.

NDRPA Request – Direct Kramer said NDRPA is updating the association's park board manual. He said there is a webinar training process for new commissioners and a formal training process for the board. They are doing a pilot project and wondering if we are interested in being a test group for their training.

6:15 pm – Public Hearing – Park Development at Gum Avenue (Attachment #4)

President Scott Kovash opened the public hearing at 6:15 pm. Director Kramer gave a background on the project, he said we started working in June with an organized group of individuals interested in building an inclusive playground. He said the Park District had already identified this project in its master plan and set aside \$200,000 for the project. He compared this playground to the one in Mandan viewable from the interstate. He said the location has not been finalized, everything is in it schematic phase. He then explained the type of the park that it will be, he showed a potential location and site layout of Interstate Park, off of Gum Avenue and 10th Ave E. He said the next step would be to get the City more involved in the plan and work with Planning/Zoning to work out details. He also said we want to be cognitive of surrounding neighbors of the park, possible planting of more trees and shrub to buffer the area. President Scott Kovash asked if there was anyone present to speak for or against the project. Sarah Carlson, Chair of the Friendship Park group spoke for the project and gave a speech on her son Beckett who has disabilities. She spoke about how people with disabilities have been treated in the past, she talked about inclusion vs. accessibility and said Optimist Park is largely unusable for people with disabilities. She said all families will benefit from this park. Dickinson resident Elaine Carter who lives on the end of Gum Avenue was present to speak and said the traffic to the park will impact her family and there are drainage concerns coming across the park and flooding issues. She said she is in support of the project, but there are some things that will need to be addressed before proceeding. President Scott Kovash said he doesn't have any reason to believe that we can't provide more trees. Elaine's husband Jim Carter also spoke, he said he's lived on the end of Gum Avenue for 20 years and spoke about asking for trees from the very beginning. He also asked if taxes would be raised for this project. Director Kramer said the \$200,000 allocated by Park District is not tied to any taxes and President Scott Kovash said the rest is from fundraising. Mr. Carter also said he has concerns about the narrow road in front of his house, will it affect his homeowner access and has concerns about snow removal in the winter. President Scott Kovash said this is the purpose of the public hearing to hear the concerns of the public. Dickinson resident Connie Monson, homeowner in the area was also present to speak. She said she wants to make sure the area residents still have access to their backyards and is asking the Board for their consideration to allow vehicle access to their backyards. With their being no one else present to speak, President Scott Kovash closed the public hearing. President Scott Kovash thanked everyone and this the Park Board has endorsed this project and they will let the homeowners know how it is progressing.

Adjourn – MOTIONED BY: Scott Karsky; SECONDED BY: Carol Herauf to adjourn the meeting at 6:41 pm. Upon vote, all aye. Motion carried.

PREPARED BY:

APPROVED BY:

Clerk

President