

City of Lawrence

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board May 10, 2005



MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chair, Bill Penny, Tom Bracciano, Chris Schumm, Kelly Barth, LHS Student Matt Riley

STAFF PRESENT: Fred DeVictor, Mark Hecker, Roger Steinbrock, Ernie Shaw, Gary Hines and Crystal Miles

GUESTS Marie Stockett, Jeff Bollig, Carrie Riordan, Bonnie Johnston, Al Hack

Meeting called to order by Vice Chair Bill Penny. Minutes of the April 12 meeting were approved on a motion by Bracciano, 2nd by Barth.

Barth asked about what was going on in Riverfront Park west of Hwy 24/40/59 junction. Staff reported there was some clearing of brush for better visibility to the boat ramp and for a new off-leash dog park and a second disc golf course. The dog park should be completed soon and the disc golf course built this summer. There was some concern expressed to not destroy much of the underbrush habitat for wildlife.

Penny asked about the internal appearance of the Carl Knox Natatorium which he felt need dressed up some. Bracciano said lockers were replaced several years ago and the locker room flooring is scheduled to be replaced this summer.

Staff reviewed the updated Chapter 9 on Parks and Recreation in the Horizon 2020 Plan (handed our last meeting) and considerable discussion was held about the ½ mile service area standard for neighborhood parks and the ¼ mile service area standard for mini-parks.

Bonnie Johnston, Chair of the joint committee to update Chapter 9, which included Planning Commission and Parks and Recreation Advisory Board members, talked about the process and work of the committee. DeVictor thanked Bracciano and Hecker and all the members of this committee, who met 4-5 times.

The request of Mayor Highberger was discussed at length. Board members indicated there were difficulties with meeting a ¼ miles service area standard in new areas of the community that could not be met in existing developed areas of town. The updated chapter recommends and emphasizes connections via greenbelts and trails to neighborhood parks throughout the community. Barth presented some suggested additions to the chapter and gave them to Bonnie Johnston.

On a motion by Bracciano, 2nd by Barth, the Board voted to accept the chapter update including the changes suggested to be incorporated into the report. Motion carried unanimously. Chapter 9, with continued emphasis on neighborhood parks with ½ mile service areas, will be forwarded to the Planning Commission with Parks and Advisory Board support.

In response to a City Commission request to move in this direction, staff reviewed a report about pesticide free parks with the Board. The report included discussion about plant hardiness zones in Kansas, a listing of parks and public areas of responsibility, over 50 areas which could be pesticide free in 2005, elimination of all Category I and II pesticides in parks, budget considerations, notifications policies, record keeping, public education and pesticide use at Eagle Bend Golf Course.

Marie Stockett, pesticide free parks representative, indicated she was happy to see some of the items addressed in the plan, such as the time table to be pesticide free but expressed numerous concerns about other items in the proposed plan including Eagle Bend not reducing pesticide use more than they have already.

Jeff Bollig and Carrie Riordan both representing the Golf Course Superintendents Association of America, spoke about the difficulty of operating golf courses without pesticide because of the adverse affects on the course conditions and lack of interest of patrons to play a course that is not well maintained.

After considerable Board discussion, Bracciano made a motion to approve the pesticide plan and take it to the City Commission as presented, recognizing there needs to be additional funding and budget support as the plan moves forward. Motion passed unanimously.

Al Hack addressed the Board and asked to review the Board action from the April meeting in regard to funding and support for the Boys and Girls Club after-school program. There are 1,400 youth enrolled and about 800 served daily at eleven sites, four of which need funding to stay open. It costs about \$100,000/site to operate annually. He was hoping the Board would support some City funding and show support for the programs or Parks and Recreation provide some programs. He asked for \$50-\$75,000 of financial support from the sales tax when some of the bonds are paid off later this year or next.

The Board asked a number of questions and Chris Schumm reviewed the discussion from the April meeting by stating they need to be good stewards of the sales tax to fund more parks and recreation facilities and park improvements. There were lots of park projects waiting to be completed. Penny stated that the Board and staff felt the after-school programs were important in the community but did not have the source of funds to assist. Bracciano asked if there was more collaboration with recreation staff that could be done but again funding was an issue. No action was taken.

Shaw reported on the January-April revenue where 33% or \$455,650 of the projected revenue was reached and the peak summer months are coming up.

The Board was invited to the 10:00A.M., June 4th dedication of the Rotary Arboretum.

Meeting adjourned at 2:15P.M. Next meeting scheduled for June 14th.

Meeting adjourned at 2:35P.M.