

FAIRFIELD PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD

MINUTES

TUESDAY, JULY 12, 2011

The monthly meeting of the Fairfield Parks and Recreation Board was conducted on Tuesday, July 12, 2011 at the Fairfield Community Arts Center. Chair Doug Meece called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. Board Members in attendance were: Bob Myron, Bob Breen, Dr. Stanley Goodman, Don Hassler, Doug Meece, Richard Wood and Terry Senger. Staff members present were: Bob Schappacher, Parks Facilities Manager; Cindi Lewellyn, Recreation Manager; Ben Strickler, Parks Events Manager; Brad Williams, Recreation Programmer and Cyndi Kreke, Secretary.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE: None

MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING: A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes from the June 2011 meeting. The minutes were approved as presented.

REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Operations Reports (May 2011): Acting Director, Bob Schappacher, reviewed the May 2011 operations reports for revenues, expenses, and participation/programming numbers from the Golf Courses, Community Arts Center and the Recreation programs (attached).

CAPRA Update: Brad Williams brought forth the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan 2012-2016 (attached) for the Board to review.

Brad explained that the plan defines the department's mission, vision and priorities for the next 5 years and beyond. It addresses challenges the department faces and concentrates on viable opportunities that will make the department more efficient and sustainable well into the future.

Five Priorities were identified:

1. Enhance the "Quality of Life" for all citizens
2. Maintain and enhance city parks and recreational facilities
3. Administer the Parks and Recreation Department in a cost effective, operationally efficient and professional manner
4. Preserve and manage natural, historic and cultural resources
5. Educate the public on the benefits of Parks and Recreation

Priorities and corresponding goals and objectives were established based on input from City Council, Parks and Recreation staff as well as industry best practices identified through CAPRA accreditation.

Members of the Parks Board will provide feedback and input by the next meeting on August 9th.

Huffman Farm Property: Acting Director, Bob Schappacher, updated the Board on the current status of the Huffman Farm Property. Mr. Schappacher stated that the entire 20 acres of land was being donated to the City of Fairfield by the Huffman family. Also, \$600,000.00 dollars was being donated to start the proposed design (for 10 acres) presented at last month's meeting. This proposed design will go before the Planning Commission at their July 13, 2011 meeting for review. Mr. Schappacher distributed an aggressive timeline (attached) breakdown of the project to the Board.

The residents of Firestone Drive, whose properties back up to the Huffman property, will be invited to the August 9, 2011 Parks Board meeting for a public hearing.

The City will officially take over the property at the first Council meeting in September 2011. Then the bid process will begin. There will be 3 readings at City Council meetings. Project will go out for bid and will be publicized October 14 and October 21, with a bid opening date of October 31, 2011. At the November 8, 2011 Parks Board meeting, the Board will approve the bids and the project will begin sometime at the beginning of 2012.

Mr. Schappacher reminded the Board that there is not CIP funds set aside for this project. The \$600,000.00 donation is all the money that will currently be available for this project.

The Board was encouraged by this news and is looking forward to the process. The Board members asked Mr. Schappacher if it would be possible to have all 20 acres of the property graded at the same time even though only 10 acres are included in the proposed design project. (additional 10 acres on the golf side to be developed at a later date) Mr. Schappacher stated that the grading of all the acreage at the same time is the logical way to proceed. He also informed the Board that there is \$15000.00 set aside for an Environmental Study that will be done.

Jim Bell, Parks Director, will be touring the Huffman House on July 13, 2011 with members of the Huffman family to determine if the structure is in good repair and worth keeping. Mr. Bell will update the Board on his findings at the next Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Active Military Fees: Per Council instructions from Monday, July 11, 2011, this item was added to the original agenda.

Last week, it came to Staff's attention that the employees at Marsh Fishing Lake had been granting "free" fishing for active military personnel and had been doing so for quite a while. This practice was never discussed or approved by the Parks and Recreation Board as policy. Therefore, Management instructed the employees to stop this practice until it could be reviewed by the Parks and Recreation Board.

Terry Senger, Council Representative to the Parks Board, stated the issue was brought up on Council floor at last night's meeting. Bob Schappacher stated that the suggestion was made by Council to immediately reinstate the practice with the possibility of extending it to include golf while Parks Board deliberations are being conducted.

Mr. Senger said that it is his opinion that because of comments that were made at the Council meeting pertaining to this issue and the fact that the media was present and will

want follow up, an official policy by the Parks Board needs to be established. Mr. Senger appreciated the sentiment and good intentions of the comments made at the Council meeting, but he is not in favor of “free” fishing with restrictions or anything “free” in general. He does not think the “free” fishing policy is the best way to go and that other taxpayers need to be considered. He gave the example of how Hamilton was criticized for its policy of free golf to employees. Mr. Senger informed the Board that the City of Fairfield is already providing a generous benefit to anyone receiving military pay by said pay not being subject to the local city income tax. This benefit was implemented in the mid 1990’s and continues presently. However, most people are unaware of this policy. The Board members shared that they were unaware of this benefit. He stated that this is fair practice across the board to all military personnel. Mr. Senger stated that he would support whatever decision the Board makes but because the Board learned of this issue so suddenly an immediate solution may not be the best answer.

After Mr. Senger’s comments, the Board members discussed how best to proceed with this issue. Doug Meece expressed his concern about establishing a practice that offers “free” fishing. His concerns were that should it be all or nothing. (not just fishing) Where does it stop? Can the golf course afford to offer free play? Other suggestions were made to offer a fixed discount to military personnel on Parks and Recreation activities or have a fixed day of the year set aside for “free” fishing for military personnel.

The question was asked by the Board if Staff was aware of how many active military personnel reside in the City of Fairfield or how many had taken part in the free fishing. Bob Schappacher stated that the numbers for the free fishing were: 2009 – 3, 2010 – 28 & 2011 – 8 to date. Mr. Schappacher stated that there is no publicity or advertising of this practice. Also, the “free” fishing practice requires that fish caught are returned back into the lake. As far as the number of active military personnel residing in the City of Fairfield, Staff does not know that statistic.

Another concern by the Board is the short time frame given by Council to resolve this issue. Twelve hours is not a sufficient time frame to make a well thought out decision. The Board expressed its concerns about how Council would react to the delay if a decision was not reached this evening. Mr. Senger stated that he does not want the Board to reach a hasty conclusion because Council wants them to. The Board was in agreement that they would like to give this issue extended consideration and return to next month’s meeting with their suggestions and a decision will be made at that time. Mr. Senger and the Board told Mr. Schappacher to send a brief summary of what transpired at this Parks Board meeting to the Council members.

Mr. Schappacher stated that he would send the summary and that this issue would be added to next month’s agenda for further deliberation.

REPORTS OF AD HOC COMMITTEES:

City Council Update: Terry Senger reported that the contracts for the interchange improvements at Gilmore Road and I-275 have been let. He also stated that the new Environmental Commission candidate, Dave Colteryahn, was approved by Council.

Planning Commission Update: Don Hassler stated that the last Planning commission meeting was canceled. At tomorrow night's meeting (July 13), the Planning commission will be reviewing the Huffman Project. Mr. Hassler also told the Board that Kroger is interested in the Taco Bell / Flowerama corner for a gas station.

Environmental Commission Update: No report

Cultural Arts Advisory Commission Update: No report

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

The Board adjourned the meeting at 6:50 PM. The next monthly meeting of the Board is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, August 9, 2011, at 5:30 PM, at the Community Arts Center.

Cyndi A Kreke
Secretary