

City of Lawrence

Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

May 8, 2007

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair, Kelly Barth, Bruce Muzzy, Tom Bracciano and Bill Penny

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sharon Spratt

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Hecker, Ernie Shaw, Roger Steinbrock and Jimmy Gibbs

I. Meeting was called to order by Chair Kelly Barth.

II. Minutes of April 10 meeting were approved on a motion by Bracciano 2nd by Muzzy.

III. Bracciano asked about the recent rain and how much of the parks were under water. Hecker said it was a big mess. Several parks were under water; approximately 1500 acres. Bracciano asked if there was damage sustained. Hecker said it looked like it didn't damage anything and that it would bounce back. Penny asked if the 2007 budget would have enough to fund any work needed or if it was left out of proposed cuts. Shaw said we were going to talk about the budget as the next item and that we could talk about it now or wait until the next item on the agenda. Gibbs asked if there was any Federal money that could be received. Hecker said not often.

IV. Shaw reported the CC has a study session on infrastructure needs. Shaw stated he met with the CM and ACM and there were going to be cuts to the 2007 budget. The request for the 2008 budget would be just what we need to operate and preliminary reports indicated one commissioner has stated the 2008 budget to be 95 percent of 2007 actual. Shaw said the defense of the P&R 2008 budget was 10:20 a.m. on June 6. Hecker said the funding source for the department's project list has been the sales tax and several projects that were approved were scheduled to be bid in 2007. Hecker went on to state many of the projects were put on hold because the sales tax wasn't coming in at its projected level. Hecker added that operational cuts would also be conducted with the 2007 budget in the amount of 5 percent. Shaw pointed out the recent City service survey results just released had Parks and Recreation rated high and this would be a negative for the department. Shaw stated programs were the main source of revenue and that we couldn't cut them because then we couldn't reach our revenue goals. Penny stated the Board needed to be an advocate for parks. He added at a recent event he attended the Chamber of Commerce representative had stated one of the biggest things people look at when coming to a city was quality of life issues – parks. Hecker stated the funding source (sales tax) worked for the department, what needed to happen is to find a fix for streets. Penny advocated speaking to the CC by phone. Shaw stated programs that didn't make any revenue may need to be eliminated or scaled back. Programs like the Summer Playgrounds, which doesn't generate revenue but relates back to the citizen survey and the quality of life in Lawrence.

V. Shaw stated the PLAY group held a public meeting on April 16 and they were holding a committee meeting on May 14. Shaw went on to state a meeting was being scheduled for May 24 for a meeting of the City Commission, County Commission, School Board and Chamber of Commerce. At the meeting Treanor Architects would be presenting their recommendations.

VI. Shaw and Gibbs presented the proposal to adjust the admission fees to a flat rate, making them standardized. Penny asked if they would be incremental increases instead of raising the rates all at once. Gibbs said it has been proposed this way in the past. Bracciano said kids become the target with the rate increases. Commission needs to see aquatics as not a revenue generating entity.

VII. Shaw stated he and Penny had met with Roger Henry and Frank Saab to discuss land near Mary's Lake as a way to make a connection and get across 31st Street, as a trail option. Shaw said we will continue to work with it as 31st Street continues to be developed. Penny stated that we need to ride the back of transportation and as it is developed the trail would be developed.

VIII. Staff Reports

A. Shaw provided monthly revenue reports for Recreation Division and Eagle Bend Golf Course. He stated EB can't spend more than we make. Indicated that carts were included in the April expenses (last year was paid in May). Shaw stated Recreation Division was gearing up for Summer programs.

B. Steinbrock reported he was preparing the Fall Activities Guide.

C. Hecker reported the rain was affecting the mowing mows, ball diamonds and flower planting.

IX. a. Fred DeVictor was honored with the Buford Watson Public Service Award at the Leadership Lawrence graduation breakfast.

b. Penny provided everyone with an article about making bike paths effective.

X. Meeting Adjourned. Next meeting June 12.