

Parks Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 10, 2015
6:00 p.m., Council Chambers



1. Call to Order by Reinert at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

Present: Cobbs, Fitzgibbon, McAlear, Toneman, White, Reinert
Absent: Moore

3. Approval of Agenda

Reinert noted that a motion is needed to replace page thirty-nine (39) with the handout provided by Halberstadt.

Motion by Cobb, second by McAlear to replace page thirty-nine (39) of the agenda with the handout provided by Halberstadt.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Motion by McAlear, second by Cobbs to approve the agenda as amended.

All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes for the Record – February 10, 2015

Motion by White, second by Toneman to approve the February 10, 2015 regular meeting minutes for the record.

All in favor. Motion carried.

5. Public Comments and Inquiries Concerning Items not on the Agenda

None at this time.

OLD BUSINESS

6. Commission will be requested to review revised plans for improvements to the South Beach restroom and concession area.

Nate Bosch with GMB Architects. One of the items that came out of our discussion at the last meeting was the need for a permanent covered structure for use during inclement weather. All of the new plans incorporate some sort of shelter.

Bosch then reviewed the plans, noting that these show future build-out, such as the proposed splash pad, so some of the project may be completed in phases.

Bosch explained the various components of the three options, noting that each plan changes the way the site functions and access through the site.

Jeff Hoag, GMB Architects. Removing the parking lot and putting that area to use as the splash pad area allows better utilization of that area and access through the site is improved. However this was not part of the original plan and will probably require phasing the project.

Reinert asked if GMB has a recommendation to which Hoag responded, "We want to hear from you. Option One (1) would be the most cost effective solution, although it might not necessarily be the best solution. Based on conversation with Brian Dissette and Roger Huff the best way to think about this is as a phased project. That is what master planning is all about."

Halberstadt suggested that the board review the floor plan options.

McAlear assumes Plan One (1) is least expensive and Plan Three (3) is most expensive. After corroborating McAlear's assumption, Hoag responded to another question by stating that Option Three (3) includes retaining the pavilion, which would be refinished due to its worn condition.

In reviewing the floor plans with the board, it was noted that the first floor plan in the packet shows the existing restroom layout "as is." The next floor plan shows what the women's remodel could look like within the existing restroom building while turning the existing pavilion into a men's restroom. The Second Option shows the renovated men's room, with family and storage in the existing women's.

The next plan renovates the men's room, expands the women's room and adds three (3) family restrooms, closest to the proposed splash pad. This assumes an addition to the existing restroom facility.

The final floor plan shows the pavilion being turned into a combination concession stand/pavilion. Downfalls to this option would be the location of the concession tucked back into where the pavilion is, which could affect visibility and as a result, sales, and the covered pavilion area might be mistaken as part of the concession and not for the use of people who are not purchasing something from the concession.

After a question from Fitzgibbon about the suggestion from the last meeting of covering the area between the two facilities, Hoag responded that he felt that with the facilities being restroom facilities, it would be good to kind of separate the restrooms from the covered shelter.

After questions regarding the size of the splash pad, Halberstadt noted that these drawings are just conceptual, and do not reflect any particular size. The idea was to show how this area could serve both the beach and the splash pad.

McAlear asked, in doing this, knowing that South Beach is extremely busy, how the consultants come to the determination of how many restrooms are needed. Hoag said that generally is driven by the number of parking spaces or by fixed seating, so with users walking in or parking elsewhere to access the beach, it is difficult to know how many fixtures are needed.

McAlear asked if all three concepts are cost effective. Hoag responded that for all work we are showing, specifically the parking portion will stress the budget, beyond what is cost effective for a Phase One (1) project. Hoag noted that the city manager urged that GMB look at breaking the plan apart, bringing the plan within budget, and phasing it.

McAlear noted it would be nice to have those family restrooms on the beach; likes that concept very much. Hoag pointed out that Option Two (2) and Three (3) are clearly more expensive based on the scope and added, "That doesn't mean we couldn't work back and forth between the two to make them more cost comparable."

In response to Reinert's question of what the commission's task is this evening, Halberstadt said, "We would like to hear whether any of these is something you would accept and if not, tell us where you would like us to go."

Toneman agreed with McAlear about family bathrooms, but asked how the commission can make this decision, knowing that we may not be able to afford it. McAlear said his understanding is that the commission is supposed to bless the concept and the financial part goes upstairs. Toneman agrees that the second and third options are better than Option One (1) and would like to see the cost comparison. Halberstadt said if you would like to see costs on Options Two (2) and Three (3), staff can bring that back to you.

Fitzgibbons said Council's priority is to bring a concession stand to the site, adding, "That is first and foremost in our minds. Yes, we want a splash pad; that can come later. The bathrooms need improved also. The addition would really be necessary when we have the splash pad."

Reinert noted, "We probably all agree that Option Three (3) would be great to have. McAlear asked if we could recommend one of the three for the city to explore to which Reinert responded that would probably be good. Halberstadt pointed out that would let the city move forward with plans, adding, "If you choose an option with family restrooms, staff might be able to leave the family restrooms open for longer than typical seasonal use."

Reinert said the first choice is Option Three (3) but we need to look further. "Could we entertain a motion of support for Option Three (3) pricing coming back to us with the understanding that alterations might need to be made to that due to financial need?"

McAlear asked if the Parks Commission decides the financial side to which Reinert responded that the Parks Commission just looks at the concept.

Motion by McAlear to approve Option Three (3) for City staff to move further in exploring the concept including cost estimates. Second by Cobbs.

Yeas: Cobbs, Fitzgibbon, McAlear, White, Reinert
No: Toneman

Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Commission will be requested to review the Master Plan for improvements to the Lake View Cemetery prepared by Abonmarche.

Lisa Vanbladeren with Abonmarche Consultants Inc. presented the Master Plan for Lakeview Cemetery.

The motivation is to extend the overall lifetime of the cemetery infrastructure, including timely upgrades over a period of time. In developing the Master Plan of the cemetery, Abonmarche did a walk through, a site review, met with city staff to get an idea of wants and needs, reviewed existing conditions and prioritized projects. The Developed Master Plan includes storm sewer and drainage, waterways and hydrants, as well as retaining walls.

Storm drain conditions: there is a lot of impediment with the structure, such as dirt and leaves. Unable to get a good idea of what is occurring in the storm sewer system; catch basins are eighteen (18) to twenty-four (24) inches below grade which is a problem for vehicles moving through the cemetery. The storm sewers cannot easily be replaced in their current alignment because they wind through the grave system.

There are three (3) overall catchments in the overall cemetery which Abonmarche will work with to create the new storm system. This has been broken up into more feasible chunks of work.

Catchment A: will include replacement of five (5) storm structures and reconstruction of the road over that. Work will include removal of existing structures in the roadways; catch basins will be located at roadway edge and run up to flush with the grade and the roadway will be reconstructed. Salvaging of the old storm sewers is unlikely due to the nature of the existing network.

Catchment B: the bottom left corner is an area of concern due to the existing grade which gives this a higher priority in the storm sewer network. Towards the center near the North Bailey entrance is a crumbling concrete swale, causing erosion due to overflows and spillage. Abonmarche proposes replacing this with an earth swale.

Catchment C: another area of concern is flooding in the maintenance building area where most funerals are staged, which has a higher priority. Phase 2 will include replacing the catch basins and roadwork.

Yard hydrants: Of the thirty-one (31) hydrants in the cemetery, eighteen (18) are standard post mounted spigots which are mounted at eighteen (18) inches and the balance are hand pumps. Staff has received complaints that the hand pumps are hard for elderly people to

operate and the eighteen (18) inch mounting of the spigots is too low for ease of filling watering cans. Abonmarche proposes replacing all of those, choosing one style to make a uniform choice throughout, putting in either the spigots mounted higher or using the hand pump hydrants since they are frost free.

Storm sewer system road reconstruction: Abonmarche used a standard rating system scaled one (1) to ten (10) with ten (10) being the best. There is a lot of variability in the condition of the roads; it is a low traffic area. There are six sections of pavement in need of immediate resurfacing. The remaining roadways can be maintained for the next ten (10) years with immediate resealing followed by resealing every three (3) years.

Building and grounds improvements: The City's priorities are improving the Bailey Avenue entrance, which is the main entrance, and some interior retaining walls that need addressing as well as the building/restroom/office and way finding.

At the main entrance, wall replacement and replacing the signage on the wall to make it obviously the main entrance, adding a monument or pillar to enhance that area.

Retaining Walls: Several are in poor condition with cinder blocks coming apart and the concrete wall with stone inlay also deteriorating. Abonmarche proposes replacing all four (4) walls with something uniform that will withstand wear and tear.

Office/Restroom: The existing walk is very narrow and Abonmarche recommends widening the walk to make it ADA (American with Disabilities Act) accessible. Interior remodel will consist of replacing lighting, ceiling, flooring and painting, replacing the furnace with a split system, updating electrical which is not up to code and updating exterior walls, windows, doors and painted surfaces. Abonmarche also proposes a more formal kiosk located at the central location.

Block markers and way finding system will include upgrading the current sticker letters which are stuck onto wood or concrete posts which need to be frequently replaced. Abonmarche proposes something uniform at a standard height with standard lettering; something more attractive and easier to use.

Final cost estimates and schedule; The City would like to address the obvious issues first and spread the rest of the project over the next few years.

Fitzgibbon questioned getting rid of all the storm sewers to which Abonmarche responded that they cannot be removed due to the graves and the manholes cannot even be accessed. Attempt will be made to investigate further closer to the time of construction.

Fitzgibbon questioned whether anything better than the hard to use hand pumps are available.

Fitzgibbon asked whether any of the retaining walls worth replacing to which Lisa Vanbladeren responded that she believes all are crumbling. Halberstadt said the ones near the entrance are made of a nice stacked stone which we could salvage and re-lay. The other are cinder block and somewhat haphazard walls would be replaced with something different, which Vanbladeren said would be something more robust.

Fitzgibbon commented that there is a perpetual care fund and a capital fund. Halberstadt noted we have a fund balance to begin the work, a good chunk of change to begin addressing some of the things we have noted, but the more expensive storm sewer work will have to be phased in future years. Halberstadt is not sure we can do things as aggressively as shown, but these are things to keep in mind as money becomes available.

Fitzgibbon informed that seven (7) to eight (8) years ago city council raised the cost (of interment) with the condition to continue to be raised in three percent (3%) increments to keep up with the cost of inflation. Halberstadt said we may need to look at those costs again and make sure we have them set in the right spot to meet those needs. Fitzgibbons said a lot of people like to be buried in South Haven just because, so council did raise the rate three (3) times higher for non-residents.

Reinert asked what is being asked of the commission tonight to which Halberstadt responded that staff would like to see this plan formally adopted and once again, if you want to take a month to think about it, that is fine. Reinert responded, as did Toneman, that they did not even know the cemetery was under the jurisdiction of the Parks Commission until she looked at the agenda yesterday. Halberstadt said the code of Ordinances states that the Park Commission is the board of trustees of the cemetery.

Reinert said there are some issues, like the hydrants, that she questions. Tony said the issue is the elderly, and Abonmarche has been trying to find out if we can put secondary spigots, staff wants to look at the maintenance of the pumps to see there is something that could be done to make the pumps work more easily. Huff noted we will continue crack-sealing and other road maintenance, we have budget for that, starting with the next fiscal year. Halberstadt said city staff drains the spigot/pumps so there is not a need for the frost free as the system is drained in winter.

White wondered if there is anything particular staff wants to start with. Halberstadt noted we want to start the project in July; the budget, as Huff said, is for the next fiscal year.

Reinert and Toneman agreed that they would like more time to look at it, see how bad the walls are among other things.

Discussion ensued regarding considering a different main entrance than off Bailey. Halberstadt noted that road is not in the best shape. Halberstadt said staff has discussed Bailey, knowing that it will be a major project when time comes to reconstruct it. Staff's thought is that when it is time to rebuild that road it will be a very expensive project due to its condition and location. Halberstadt noted there are additional entrances off Blue Star Highway and Wells Street. Halberstadt noted that site distances at the Bailey driveways are less than ideal. Reinert suggested looking at the other entrances with that in mind since some of it will be part of a long-term plan. Huff agreed this is a master plan. Toneman also felt this would be the time to look at the entrance issue. Fitzgibbon suggested having a meeting at the cemetery or plan to meet out there prior to a meeting. Reinert said she will take a look herself, but maybe that would be a good idea.

8. Commissioner Comments

Fitzgibbons: Was taken by her daughter in Houston to a wooden park like Kids Corner, built by Robert Leathers in 1996, all wood. Noted that in 2010 the community redid the park, in

sections, using composite wood, but there is still a lot of real wood in the system. She has tons of pictures, will have that put into some sort of program that the commission can all look at. In addition, various community organizations have built a little wooden train; kids love playing in this wooden train which has separate train cars with seats inside, each donated by a different community organization. Fitzgibbon suggested little boats for South Haven's Kids Corner.

9. Adjourn

Motion by Fitzgibbon, second by Toneman to adjourn at 6:55 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary