

Parks Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 12, 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, Moore, Toneman (6:26 p.m.), White, Reinert
Absent: None

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Fitzgibbon, second by Cobbs to approve the May 12, 2015 Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

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

Motion by White, second by Cobbs to approve the March 10, 2015 Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

All in favor. Motion carried.

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

John Duda, 114 South Haven Street. Spoke about pickle-ball. Explained that their spokesperson is not present and the group selected him to take the spokesperson's place. Attended City Council last month and they referred us to this meeting. Hopes the city might allocate some funds for pickle-ball courts. Spoke about the history of pickle-ball and its growth locally and nationally.

Reinert asked if pickle-ball is played on indoor or outdoor courts to which Duda responded that courts can be either indoors or outdoors. Duda said there are indoor courts in South Haven at the Senior Center on 76th Street and at Baseline Middle School in the gym.

Gerry Tremaine, 225 Dyckman Avenue. Spoke about pickle-ball being very popular in Arizona where she spends the winters, in both adult and regular communities.

Discussion ensued regarding where pickle-ball can be played; that pickle-ball is being taught in the local middle school and has been for some years; and has been introduced at the Senior Center on 76th Street.

Tremaine feels a lot of people in town that would be interested but cannot play at the senior center because it is not open evenings and weekends.

Duda outlined his efforts to speak with someone at the schools to inquire whether people could use the courts in the gym at Baseline at times when it is not in use by the school. Neither of the people he was referred to was available.

Discussion ensued regarding the tennis courts at Baseline Middle School; the type of surface needed for pickle-ball; ways to use other facilities on a temporary basis and the cost of pickle-ball courts.

Fitzgibbons explained that the first thing with anybody who wants to look for grants or a new facility in the city needs to do is to get the activity written into the City Recreation Plan which has to be redone every five (5) years by state law. Halberstadt believes that the current Rec Plan was last done in 2013 but noted that an amendment could be made at any time. Fitzgibbon suggested that the group talk to the schools, inquire at the old hotel that had racquetball courts and the Wellness Center. "Most people who come to the city and have an idea, we support it, but it's the community that needs to fundraise. Your best bet is to start a fundraising campaign; this is not something that can be done very quickly."

Halberstadt said the city could help with cost estimating that type of facility; the next step would be to begin an analysis of our existing parks facilities, and which one pickle-ball would best fit in.

Reinert suggested the group talk to the school and keep the Parks Commission posted on their response.

Duda asked how the city got the basketball courts at Elkenburg Park. Halberstadt said it was a grant the city got through the State; a Natural Resources grant which is available annually; this year the city has a request in for renovations at the North Beach.

OLD BUSINESS

6. Commission will be requested to continue their review of the Master Plan for improvements to the Lake View Cemetery prepared by Abonmarche.

Haberstadt said he did not request Abonmarche to come back; most of you were here for their presentation and if not Halberstadt would be glad to answer any questions. The basic thing is to talk about moving forward with this. There was some discussion at the last meeting about visiting the cemetery, either as a group or individually and Halberstadt is happy to arrange something if that is still an interest.

Bob McAlear read this over and thinks he has a grasp on it; read it again twice since but has some questions:

- 1.) "Abonmarche is a consulting firm? An engineering consulting firm?" Halberstadt responded yes.
- 2.) "What they did was study the cemetery and identified the issues; prioritized those issues and then laid out a schedule over a five year period, as how they thought it best to attack those issues? Then assigned a guesstimate budget to each one of those issues?" Halberstadt said yes.
- 3.) "We have a professional study?" Halberstadt responded that is correct.
- 4.) "You do not want a line-by-line analysis from us, but you need us to "pull the trigger" so city staff can get to work?" Halberstadt agreed.

McAlear proposed that he make a motion; Fitzgibbon requested discussion.

Fitzgibbon stated that she went down and talked to the staff at the funeral home because "funeral home staff is there more than any of us." Referring to some notes, Fitzgibbon stated that she did not know that South Haven Township does not have a cemetery; they are charged one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1500) to be buried there because they are non-residents. There was discussion of summer residents also requesting to be buried in South Haven's cemetery and they also pay a higher non-resident rate. Fitzgibbon noted that she recalls that the rate was made three times the regular rate to try to preserve space for people who have made South Haven their year-round home and contributed to the community.

Referring to the bathroom remodel in the Abonmarche plan, Fitzgibbon asked, "It's not a public restroom?" Halberstadt responded, "It is located in the sexton's office and it's only public if the sexton happens to be in the cemetery. To access the restroom one has to walk through the sexton's office."

Funeral home staff wondered about the maintenance building, according to Fitzgibbon, and she wondered if instead of re-doing the sexton's office restroom whether the maintenance building could be made into the sexton's office with restrooms since it is larger. Halberstadt noted it has not been discussed and he thinks there is not water and sewer to it. Fitzgibbon said it was her understanding that there was water to the building and noted that these are just things to think about when you go back to Abonmarche. It was also noted that the maintenance building is not centrally located as is the sexton's office.

Fitzgibbon also spoke about which entrance is used and noted that funeral home staff stated they use the Wells Street entrance because it is closer and easier. Funeral home staff also noted that there is no sign on Wells Street so if people get separated they don't know where to go; when they see the maintenance building near that entrance they aren't always sure they are in the right place.

Fitzgibbon noted that funeral home staff also pointed out that there are areas that are filling up and wondered about expansion. During the ensuing discussion regarding expansion, Halberstadt noted that the "Blue Star Highway dump site" may be part of the cemetery. "It's been used for river dredging; public works still uses it for storage of leaves. I don't think it's going to be a very good cemetery site after all the uses of the city." Halberstadt noted it would be good to have the projections the cemetery staff has on how long it will be before

areas in the cemetery fill up. It was also pointed out that the Blue Star dump site is across the street from the existing cemetery.

Discussion ensued regarding abandoning existing drain pipes due to them running under gravesites as well as preserving some fairly new drains that have been put in place.

Reinert said it would be recommended that Abonmarche take time to explore the entrances and think about the drain work being done and consider the area from a funeral director's viewpoint for where people will be buried in the future.

Moore asked if budget is being discussed and where the money is coming from to which Fitzgibbon responded that there is a perpetual fund which will be used.

Moore asked why we, the Parks Commission, are dealing with the cemetery which Fitzgibbons explained is because the cemetery is part of the city parks system.

Fitzgibbon spoke about the need to get the drains in and the retaining walls repaired.

Halberstadt explained that the engineering study was trying to determine the current needs of the cemetery; Abonmarche was not thinking about reconfiguring the entrances or when the cemetery will fill up.

Motion by McAlear to approve the engineering study, second by Fitzgibbon.

All in favor. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

7. Commission will be requested to approve a request from the South Haven Historical Association for creation of a donor plaza and interpretive area for the South Pierhead Light.

Halberstadt noted that the handouts provided are similar to what was presented at the March meeting by GMB Architects. This drawing has been changed to provide space to HASH (Historical Association of South Haven) for their proposed donation area along the main harbor walk north of the concession stand. This would be an area with pavers that could be engraved. Other major donors could potentially erect a small wall. Halberstadt would like to find out what ideas the Historical Association of South Haven (HASH) has and bring that back to the commission. City staff is looking for a motion that would approve moving forward with this project.

After a little discussion regarding walls and markers, Moore asked the size of the interpretive area indicated, to which Halberstadt responded he envisions something similar to other harbor walk markers. It will not be possible for people to see inside the lighthouse on a regular basis so there may be a couple of video displays so people could see what it looks like inside. Reinert said she would be concerned about any wall being erected in that area and how long does this project will go on. Halberstadt said maybe that entire length would be done with bricks and then if they sold additional bricks some of the plain bricks could be replaced with engraved bricks. Reinert asked who would maintain this area to which Fitzgibbons said according to the gift policy HASH would be required to do the maintenance.

McAlear agreed that the area needs to be something flatter (not a wall) due to the weather conditions down there. Halberstadt noted that there are some existing wall areas and a brass plaque could be mounted for larger donors and staff needs to find out more about what the historical society is thinking. Halberstadt noted that HASH does want to know that the city supports this.

McAlear said “Conceptually, I think we all agree that it’s a good concept.”

Fitzgibbons explained that a brass plaque is for really large donors like \$10,000 from a business or group. Fitzgibbons noted that according to our gift policy such a donation has to be approved and has to be maintained.

Halberstadt commented that if you approve the concept make the approval contingent on the final plans being brought back and approved by the Parks Commission and subject to the city’s gift policy.

Motion by Toneman to approve the concept contingent on the final plans being brought back and approved by the Parks Commission and subject to the city’s gift policy. Second by Fitzgibbon.

All in favor. Motion carried.

8. Commission will be requested to review the donation of a Memorial Bench from Beca Gordon.

Halberstadt said this is similar to other requests for benches in the past year; another memorial bench along the bluff at Monroe Boulevard.

Reinert asks that we get consistent with the benches; Halberstadt noted Bosscher has been ordering the same bench all along. Discussion ensued regarding what would happen if that vendor discontinues the bench, with Halberstadt noting that it is a pretty generic bench and he believes similar benches would be available from multiple vendors. Fitzgibbon asked how many of these are we going to allow along the Monroe bluff to which Halberstadt commented, “That was my question; it’s starting to turn into the Monroe Bluff bleachers.” Reinert asked if there are other locations staff could recommend. Halberstadt said benches could be located in just about any of the city parks.

Toneman agreed that this is something that needs to be looked into; come up with some kind of a plan; hopes that staff will get that back to commissioners with a plan for the future. Fitzgibbons pointed out that the original gift policy gave the parks director discretion of where a gift would be placed, unless there was an extenuating circumstance. “For instance, this man died on the pier so that is why this location was requested.”

McAlear noted that Toneman’s point is well taken and suggested that perhaps Halberstadt’s department should come up with a concept and determine where the benches be placed. Halberstadt said he could develop a master plan of where benches could be located. Reinert said, “And maybe there are other needs.”

Motion by Fitzgibbon to approve the donation of a bench by Beca Gordon to be located in the public right-of-way along the west side of Monroe Boulevard between Chestnut Street

and South Haven Street, similar to the ones already in that area, in memory of Tom Watson.
Second by McAlear.

All in favor. Motion carried.

Discussion ensued regarding the need for benches in the parks, maybe even picnic tables. Moore asked if there is a list of suggested gifts to which Fitzgibbons responded, "It's in the gift policy."

9. Commissioner Comments

There were none.

10. Adjourn

Motion by McAlear, second by Toneman to adjourn at 6:58 p.m.

All in favor. Motion carried.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary