

Parks Commission

Regular Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, June 9, 2015
6:00 p.m., Council Chambers



1. Call to Order by Co-Chair Toneman at 6:00 p.m.

2. Roll Call

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

3. Approval of Agenda

Motion by White, second by Moore to approve the June 9, 2015 regular meeting agenda as presented.

All in favor. Motion carried.

4. Approval of Minutes for the Record – May 12, 2015

Motion by White, second by Cobbs to approve the May 12, 2015 regular meeting minutes as written.

All in favor. Motion carried.

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

There were none.

NEW BUSINESS

6. Commission will be requested to review and approve the Conceptual Master Plan for the expansion of Black River Park onto the parcel formerly occupied by the Street and Water Departments at 665 Dunkley Ave.

Halberstadt reviewed the background on this item, noting that he included in the packet an excerpt from the September 9, 2014 minutes and a copy of the Black River Park Master Plan that Cornelisse developed. The commission's primary discussion when first presented was regarding the unmown grass areas and whether or not that would be a good idea. Some discussion ensued at the September 2014 meeting regarding including Celery Pond

Advocates. Halberstadt noted that staff did meet with the celery pond group; there was no formal commitment but Halberstadt feels the group is interested in partnering with the city on this. Pointed out the parking lot and fishing pier noting that the city has received a grant to develop that part. Halberstadt stated he is hoping to approve this plan by the Parks Commission so as we further develop this area we are moving in the direction you want to see it going.

Moore wondered if the presented plan is set in stone. Halberstadt responded that this is a large area that the city street garage used to occupy and noted that the city has struggled over the years with what to do with this area. Staff requested Requests for Proposals (RFPs) from outside firms but did not receive anything solid. The city has come to the point of just leaving everything as open area; what we put in this open space is still up for discussion. Moore said that his observation is that most people that use this area are fisherman. Halberstadt agreed that the area does not get a lot of use right now because it is not in very nice condition.

Toneman questioned the size of the fishing pier, noting that he recalled seeing a plan at one point that had a much longer fishing pier. Moore asked if there are plans for benches along the river. Halberstadt responded that those options are open, adding, "If you think certain amenities should be there we want to get that feedback from you."

Moore questioned how this area connects with the bike trail which Halberstadt noted that the bike trail runs along the roadway and the paved trail connects to that bike trail. "Then in the upper left (of the map provided in the packet) there is a bridge; staff is working on building a pedestrian bridge that would connect to the rest of Black River Park. This will also provide a connection to get people over to the restrooms."

Regarding the size of the fishing pier, Halberstadt explained that there is another plan that was developed for the purpose of a grant. That plan shows the dock running all along the shoreline. Halberstadt stated that he and another staff person have been working on the project which may have caused some confusion on the size of the dock and overall plan.

Discussion ensued regarding Moore's recollection of the Celery Pond Advocates having input into some of the planning for this area.

Toneman commented that it is a waste to put twenty parking spots in an area where it appears there is a place for three people to fish. Halberstadt agreed that he thinks he needs to take this plan back to Cornelisse, along with the grant plan and see if the two plans can be combined into a final concept.

Toneman wants to look at the size of the fishing pier while Moore would like to see additional benches placed along the river. The consensus from the commission is to look at the area again after the two plans are combined.

Halberstadt pulled up a web site and said, "This is the image that was used to apply for the grant and the fishing pier goes pretty much all the way across."

The commission agreed that the fishing pier on the grant plan makes more sense with the size of the parking lot and would like to see more detail at the next meeting.

7. Commission will be requested to review the erection of number signs on the beach safety flag poles.

Halberstadt stated the addition of number signs on the beach safety flag poles is a request which came from emergency dispatchers. On the south and north beach when they get an emergency call they are having a hard time locating where exactly on the beach the emergency is. These numbers could be used by dispatchers to direct emergency responders. Someone calling 911 could be asked to look for the beach safety flag pole closest to the incident being reported and tell the dispatcher the number on the pole.

Moore asked how many flag poles there are and Halberstadt responded there are (fourteen) 14 to sixteen (16) flag poles in place on the south and north beaches. Moore also pointed out that the numbering system could help families or groups determine a place to meet.

Toneman asked for clarification that these signs are being request for the purpose of identifying where an emergency is occurring.

Halberstadt pointed out that, as Moore suggested, the idea is to make the signs visible but unobtrusive.

Toneman reiterated that the idea is when the dispatcher tells a caller there are signs with numbers then the caller can say something like the emergency is taking place by marker twelve (12); also people can use them while at the beach as a point of reference.

Moore suggested there might be state regulations to consider. White and Cobbs agree with Toneman and Moore that it would be good as long as the signs are beach and family friendly.

Halberstadt said we may get a couple of samples and put them out on the poles and see what is visible. Moore commented that a couple of considerations will be how to attach them to the poles and expense. Halberstadt gave an example of the cost of some street signs he recently ordered, which he felt were very reasonable.

Toneman stated the board is in favor of staff getting some samples and taking a look, making sure the safety people are happy with the proposed signage.

8. Commission will be requested to review and approve the Memorial Bench Master Plan for Monroe Boulevard, South of Clinton Street and for Riverfront Park.

Halberstadt said at the last meeting we discussed putting together a master plan for benches, so the city mapping technician, who has also been acting as the memorial bench coordinator, has created some maps for the commissioners to review. Halberstadt noted on page twenty-six (26), that property is some the city has been trying to acquire and it cannot be included until we actually own that property. Halberstadt also pointed out the areas on page twenty-seven (27) and twenty-eight (28) indicating bench locations along Monroe Boulevard and Riverfront Park.

Moore asked what happens when these spaces are used up. Halberstadt feels that staff could direct them to a different location.

Moore asked if there is a time frame; are these benches here for one hundred (100) years or a limited time. Discussion ensued regarding other locations, such as parks, needing benches.

Halberstadt said the gift policy states that donors are supposed to maintain their gift or provide funding for maintenance, however Halberstadt is not sure that this is being enforced.

Moore and Toneman expressed concern regarding the ultimate dispensation of the benches once they need to be replaced or need major repair, noting that having an open-ended policy could cause a problem in the future when there are no more locations.

On behalf of the commission, Toneman requested a follow up next month.

9. Commission will be requested to review the donation of a Memorial Bench from Jinny Mocerri.

Halberstadt noted this is the second bench for the same person. Cobbs asked how many benches can be donated for the same person. Halberstadt stated there are no limits or rules at this point. Moore pointed out that there may need to be limitations. Discussion ensued regarding the idea of putting two plaques on one bench for the same person.

Toneman related a story regarding additional plaques on a gravestone he observed. There was a headstone but there were also smaller plaques embedded in the ground to commemorate achievements or awards of the deceased.

Discussion ensued after Moore noted the overlook across from St. Basil's and some recent concerns. Halberstadt stated that the garden was donated by Joyce Thompson, in memory of her daughter, and that Thompson has maintained it.

It was moved and seconded that this request not be accepted, due to this being a second bench for the same person, which could set a precedent.

All in favor. Motion carried.

10. Commissioner Comments

Moore: questions about pickle ball request and status of the cemetery master plan.
Halberstadt said the cemetery plan was approved and design work has not been started but budget has been set aside for the upcoming fiscal year.

There were no other comments.

11. Adjourn

Motion by Moore, second by Cobbs to adjourn 6:47 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

June 9, 2015
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Marsha Ransom
Recording Secretary