

City Council Work Session

5:30 PM
Council Chambers
January 30, 2012

ATTENDANCE:

Mayor/Council (please check) x Hanel, x Ronquillo, x Cromley, x Cimmino, x Pitman, x McFadden, x Bird, x Ulledalen, McCall, x Astle, x Crouch.

ADJOURN TIME: 8:44 p.m.

Agenda

TOPIC #1	Park District No. 1
PRESENTER	
NOTES/OUTCOME	

- Tina: introduction
- Mike Whitaker: introduced Rick DeVore, Margy Bonner and Cathy Grott.
- Rick DeVore, Park Board chairman: presentation on deferred maintenance, projects and details about them. Projects came from five (5) planning documents, including the CIP, City-wide Needs Assessment, Trail Asset Management Plan, park master plans, community surveys and meetings. Shows the \$9 million of deferred maintenance projects by name and cost. Park Board used five (5) priorities to weight scores and rank projects. Three (3) years was the starting point and to include all projects would mean a 6+ year plan. Bricks and mortar projects are important, but need to improve day to day maintenance, so there is funding for improved operations and maintenance. Mike answers questions about restroom operations.
- Jon Thompson: improve trail maintenance; trail asset management plan recommends routine maintenance and one (1) full time staff to manage trails (30 miles total). Adopt a trail management (coordinate volunteers), weed management, trash removal, tree/shrub pruning, graffiti removal, and sign replacements.
- Ronquillo: who maintains trails now? Who plows snow?
- Jon: pulled people out of the General Fund parks, so they deteriorated. Parks plows snow from all 30 miles but Public Works clears from special areas such as sidewalks or trails within street/road rights of way.
- Cimmino: volunteer coordinator is separate from the trail maintenance coordinator? \$94,000 all for salaries?
- Jon: no, one job. \$94,000 identified by trail management plan. \$45k for the trail maintenance person and \$49k to improve trail maintenance.
- Ulledalen: \$52,500 for 75 tables per year replacement?
- Jon: will answer in a few minutes if that's OK. No additional staff in past years, this assessment would allow hiring two (2) FTEs (full time employees); an equipment operator/maintenance worker and an arborist for tree maintenance in the parks.

- Pitman: clarify that the underground irrigation projects were supposed to automate and reduce personnel needs.
- Jon: it definitely helped but didn't deal with wide range of issues in the parks.
- Astle: how many new parks (25 since 2003) are PMDs?
- Jon: all of them, but while more money came in and more parkland had to be maintained, PRPL did not get any new employees.
- Cimmino: where did the 25 parks come into the deal?
- Jon: developed in new subdivisions, SIDs for improvements and PMDs for maintenance.
- Ulledalen: 20%-25% of households are in a PMD.
- Jon: could be. Park bathrooms aren't heated, so have to open late and close early. Plan to insulate some of them and keep them open when it gets to 20 or 25 degrees. Bring back weed control in parks – had to stop 15-20 years ago due to budget. Would also allow controls in undeveloped parks like Pow Wow, Swords and Phipps and trails. New state regulations will require cities to do a better job with noxious weeds.
- Ronquillo: how many weed applications per year?
- Jon: only applying in PMDs now, by contract, two (2) times per year. May have to do more frequent treatments until we get weeds under control. Picnic table replacements due to old, wooden tables in parks. Old design, repaired each year, built new ones but they deteriorate quickly. Stop building wooden tables and buy commercial grade tables and benches. Have used Cobb Field aluminum bleachers to build 130 picnic tables but are nearly out of supply.
- Astle: every year replace 75? How many do we have?
- Jon: had about 450 picnic tables. Eliminated about 200 wooden ones as they deteriorated but haven't replaced them.
- Bird: PMD restrooms seasonal too? Any requests for them? Cost to build or restore them? On deferred list, we have \$640,000 for restroom replacement and \$450,000 for the work in first year plan; why the difference?
- Jon: there are no restrooms in PMD parks. Cost for prefab is \$80,000, complete.
- Mike: park master plans don't usually include them because stay time at PMD parks is less and restrooms may not be needed.
- Mark Jarvis: \$450,000 for nine (9) parks but there are greater needs.
- Crouch: church has adopted a small park. Others doing the same?
- Jon: none adopted but have groups that do work in the parks for us.
- Cimmino: \$450,000 for restrooms is a lot. Looked at porta-potties as affordable alternatives?
- Jon: get lots of use during peak season and costly if pumped frequently, no water in them, etc.
- DeVore: firsthand experience – porta potti tipped over weekly, clean them well but then we're without for a day. Can also be more easily damaged or destroyed.
- Cimmino: \$640,000 for nine (9) restrooms?
- Jon: no, there are more than nine (9). We picked the nine (9) worst ones for \$450,000.
- Devore: 25 new parks, some were triggered when a certain number of lots are developed. 2nd and 3rd year projects review.
- McFadden: cemetery restroom still in use? Thought that it would be a higher priority.
- Lee: built in the 1920s, closed to the public about 25years ago. Not ADA accessible. New restroom would be open to the public.

- Pitman: remodel the restroom in the house/office? Seems like we're doing just ½ job. Really need a building for restroom and adequate office, etc.
- Lee: remodel the entire structure, not just one room.
- Astle: how much more space in the cemetery?
- Lee: about 60 years worth of lots, but pre-purchased ones mean that we'll be burying for 200 years.
- Ulledalen: anyone ever looked at borrowing internally or using expansion fund?
- Lee: \$50,000 probably won't cover full cost; some money will come from expansion fund.
- Bird: estimated total cost? Life of the Skatepark restroom?
- Lee: don't know but would like it to be year-round so it will be higher than the Skatepark restroom.
- Mike: \$50,000 budget number but could be higher cost. Skatepark restroom will last 40+ years.
- Hanel: cemetery restroom in the right place?
- Lee: should be near the office.
- McFadden: roads in poor shape. Address them with this money?
- Lee: will be redone with expansion money.
- Cimmino: provide chairs for funerals?
- Lee: yes.
- Astle: the Skatepark restroom is for hard use. Need that kind for cemetery?
- Mike: still subject to vandalism.
- Bird: rationale for nine (9) restrooms in parks being higher priority than restroom at the cemetery?
- Mike: two (2) things stuck out in the 2009 survey were needs for parks restrooms.
- Devore: this is a proposed spending plan. Unique feature of the district is that Council has final decision. This is our recommendation to you. Schedule and phasing projects to get them done for use seasons.
- Ulledalen: batting cage was originally private and city took it over; should it go back to private ownership and operations? Castlerock tennis courts were brought up in hearings. Partner with school district or others for some of these projects?
- Devore: anything is possible.
- Ilene Pinkerton: VP of tennis association. Skyview courts have cracking issues too. Surface could be vandalized, so they're locked. Tennis lessons are run with PRPL. If there are programs and facilities, people will use them. The Heights need public courts. Concrete was the recommendation; expensive but will still need maintenance.
- McFadden: if we build it, will they come? City puts money in them and they aren't used. Programs for kids and others to encourage their use? Elks courts going to encourage more tennis use?
- Pinkerton: nine (9) week course each summer. Hope Elks will encourage use.
- Hanel: why cost difference between Castlerock and Pioneer tennis courts? Are we talking to enough people about what would be best or how best cooperate with others?
- Mike: company building courts in the state looked at them last year and gave us the estimates. Hope actual will cost less.
- Pitman: Priority based budgeting starting; have we asked if these projects are really the highest priority; should we be doing this now? Disk golf and Dog Park are heavily used.

Batting cages a good example of there are options; did we ask the question, should we be doing water slides at Rose Park. Is it an asset to the facility. Did anyone talk to the disk golfers or just talk to the tennis folks.

- Fedin: batting cages built 20-21 years ago. Knew it would be popular but didn't have money to do it. Private owner was given a 15 year lease. 6-7 years to amortize the cost, so made money on it for 7-8 years. Generates \$30k - \$40k per year and put only about \$20,000 in it for the past eight (8) years. Is going to require lots of work soon. Think privatizing them is the wrong thing to do.
- Bird: why can't revenue go into a special fund?
- Fedin: have always been told that money has to go to General Fund, but it could probably be changed. New rules and mandates are always changing and require us to change operations and equipment and spend money.
- Tina: need the money to balance the fund. Unused money goes back into the General Fund at the end of the fiscal year.
- Bird: if pool and batting cage are generating revenue why has the maintenance issue not been considered before the money goes back into the General Fund.
- Pitman: we think there is money but the shell games have to stop. You can't rob Peter to pay Paul. We need to change the way we are doing things.
- Tina: budget and mill levy limits short the park department raised fees and reduced personnel. Trade-offs in the budget unless there is more money. No other way to fund this much in needs from the General Fund; have to do the district assessments.
- Pitman: We learned from our mistakes with Dehler Park, we need to rely on the maintenance fund to keep the park maintained.
- Ulledalen: discussion is about maintaining capital facilities and reassuring the public that money isn't shifted to other uses in the future.
- Bird: comment about retaining some of the money from batting cages, etc didn't mean that's what I want to do now. But it needs to be considered.
- Fedin: Park will never be self-supporting.
- Ulledalen: but need to ask questions and discuss with the public.
- Fedin: more and more requests to use the parks for profit.
- Tina: hot issue several years ago to charge groups the actual costs of park use.
- Devore: thought that it was important to listen to user groups and that's one way we prioritized projects. Tennis Association spoke up. Up to Council to direct money for projects; this is our recommendation.
- Cimmino: why not assess \$3 million per year and wipe out the needs in three (3) years.
- Devore: didn't want to give you a six (6) year plan. \$1.5 million per year takes six (6) years to equal \$9 million. Other facilities will decline and need work. Assessments can vary each year dependent on needs.
- Pitman: timeframe that we have to work in.
- Tina: set mill levy in September, but if park board wants to start work in July, so you have until July to decide.
- Devore: giving you more details now but want your guidance.
- Bird: go on record about support for restroom at the cemetery. Est. of tax was made when district was created. Don't support raising more money than originally stated. If cemetery is a high priority, move one of the nine (9) park restrooms to a future year. Obligation to keep our word about amount of assessment.

- Devore: council can move projects around in the schedule.
- Cimmino: \$16/\$100,000 house, etc we need to keep our word. Problem is that we say that we have \$9 million of work but only a three (3) year plan to raise \$4.5.
- McFadden: borrow funds to make improvements early? Automatic sunset?
- Devore: only to do some design so that we're ready to go with construction early next year.
- Brooks: no matter what, Council has to go through the dissolution process if it wants to end the special district.
- Devore continued with presentation. Park Maintenance Districts have caused the possibility to form Ad-hoc committees.
- Pitman: objection that park board is creating ad-hoc committees.
- Cimmino: object to receiving this detail so late in the process.
- Devore continued with presentation. Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Board had direction from council to provide information of ways to handle the PMD.
- Ulledalen: created the district but haven't decided the assessment. More money that can be raised by selling parkland, use that instead of assessments for projects. Do the developed parks have to be maintained at the size and the level that they are? Everything should be on the table.
- Devore: If that is the council direction we'll work on it.
- Ulledalen: ideal to fold PMDs into this assessment district. One option would be to not assess property owners in PMDs.
- Pitman: \$2 million assessment and if we sell \$500,000 of parkland, that doesn't mean that you have \$2.5 million.
- Recess at 7:35 and reconvene at 7:50
- Whitaker: any information that the Council needs?
- Bird: projects not listed that park staff thinks should have a higher priority?
- Mike: no, staff likes the board's recommendations.
- Ulledalen: one suggestion was how to make some small steps, public sees what we're doing and then increase as they get comfortable. For example, concern about big project like Stewart Park. Heard recently that the city needs to get better at accepting gifts. Solicit donations for naming rights. Incentive grants if citizens or businesses want to raise funds for their park.
- Mike: will continue working to bring costs down. Will try to not spend the whole \$2 million on the projects.
- Ulledalen: going to do citizen survey, can we ask specific questions to help guide us?
- McFadden: big numbers for projects, are they maximum or budget numbers?
- Mike: estimates only but think they're high and bids will be lower.
- Ulledalen: Dehler Park events – be more proactive and market it for other events that make money for us. Multi-use facility but it's been too limited.
- Hanel: concert was successful.
- Cimmino: city made money after paying expenses?
- Mike: yes, don't recall exactly how much.
- Tina: commissions and boards can create subcommittees. If council wants to establish ad-hoc committee, there is a specific process in code on how to do that.
- Mike: one subcommittee met without notice.
- Cimmino: was it a legal meeting?

- Mike: just an organizational meeting, no action taken. Future meetings will be advertised.

Public comments:

- Tom Zurbuchen, 1747 Wicks Lane: this is an assessment, not a tax, so I can't deduct it from federal taxes. Mixing assessments and taxes and city shouldn't do that.
- Astle: Heights task force stated projects they want, how did you come to those conclusions – why not Castle Rock tennis courts?
- Tom: can't speak on behalf of the task force. Personally, no one at the meeting thought that tennis courts were important. Turf would be used more than courts.
- Ulledalen: where do we get the biggest impact? If courts can't be used, not fair to say they won't be used. How do we make sure that we spend the best way possible?
- Tom: task force never heard from tennis players but hear from dog park supporters, disc golf, soccer, etc.
- Joe Fedin, 2533 River Oaks Drive: Heights resident too. I can show Castle Rock courts crowded during lessons, before city had to close them, lots of seniors play tennis.
- Cimmino: how long have courts been locked? Where do seniors play now? Support courts if they're constructed properly, but have to represent our constituents.
- Joe: Pioneer or other parks. Castle rock courts may not have been properly constructed but the concrete courts solve the problem. Lots of people play tennis who does not attend the task force meetings.
- Frank Ewalt, 2131 Phoebe Drive: Heights resident. If it wasn't for apathy of people, would have had a public vote. Apathy from residents. Started coming to council meetings over the street fees – 47% increase. Park district is 57% increase. Hold back money for the pool facilities' replacement. Homeowners associations could maintain the parks. Pools a poor investment in this part of the country.
- Don Jones, 1945 Clark: charter says city should find alternative sources of money. Whitaker can't raise money, that's not his job. City could make incentive grants work if it tried.
- David Carter, 1829 South Mariposa Lane: council being tasked with deciding what we want our parks to be. Parks compete for leisure activities and have to be high quality. If you're going to replace Rose Park slides, consider how you're doing that because that could drive demand for them. Need to get good returns on investment.
- Ulledalen: Council gets a menu of choices. Get stuck with some things. Two (2) groups of immigrants; older ones think we have it good enough, newer ones realize we compete with other cities and we have to have amenities.
- Carter: rather have fewer, high quality services and facilities. Heights needs facilities and I'm willing to pay even though I don't live there.
- Tina: need some guidance on how to restructure the budgets.
- Ulledalen: got lots of feedback, have park board meet and digest what we said, look at adjustments and fine tune it and bring back to Council in March or April.
- Astle: Nine (9) restrooms on the list, but maybe want a cemetery one (1), so if that's done, what gets removed from the list. Vault toilets can't be used where sewer is available.

- Pitman: Federal priorities process allowed us to prioritize various projects. Use that process for these projects. General agreement that the process might work.
- Hanel: March work session? Consensus is yes.
- Astle: park board subcommittee on land sale – I'd like to be on it.
- Bird: concur with Mr. Carter's comments about making high quality investments. Rather do less and do it well. Alternative heat sources for park restrooms so that they can be open year-round? Like to see some information on that.
- McFadden: park board and staff said #1 priority is public safety. If that's true, Rose Park pool improvements should be at the top of the list.
- Cimmino: explore installing restrooms in Swords Park due to higher usage on trails.
- Ulledalen: it's in the master plan.

Other public comments:

- Don Jones, 1945 Clark: 46% street maintenance assessments increased. Broadwater and sidewalks plowing on Saturday night – unneeded since the higher temps will remove it anyway.
- Hanel: street department responded to citizen complaints about snow on the sidewalks.
- Ronquillo: appreciate street department cleaning on S. 28th – plowed snow out of the gutters so there is capacity.
- Doug Ruebke, 110 S. 31st Street: city talks about what boards should exist and trouble getting members to volunteer. Could Council create an ad-hoc committee to deal with that problem?
- Hanel: good suggestion. Explains why ads run when they do.
- Ruebke: qualifications prohibit elected officials from serving on boards, but not employees. Solve those kinds of problems.
- Bird: pleased that the city spends money on clearing sidewalks. It is unacceptable for the city to plow snow onto the sidewalks and make it dangerous and inconvenient for pedestrians, but thankful that they remove it eventually.

Additional Information:

City-wide Park Maintenance District

- City Council requested the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Board to develop FY2013 proposed spending plan to address the deferred and ongoing maintenance in Billings parks.
- Determine City-wide Park District Assessment for FY2013

How were the Billings park maintenance, repairs, upgrades & efficiencies identified?

- **Where did the information come from?**
 - Billings Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
 - Only maintenance and repair related projects
 - City-wide Needs Assessment
 - Trail Asset Management Plan
 - Meetings with User groups
 - Pioneer and Riverfront Park Master Plans

\$9 Million in Deferred Park Maintenance

• Amend Park Water Service Upgrade	\$250,000	• Rose Park Playground Replacement	\$150,000
• Castlerock Park Tennis Court Renovation	\$275,000	• Sacajawea Park Building Remodel	\$150,000
• Park Restroom Remodel/Rebuild	\$640,000	• South Park Sidewalk Replacement	\$20,000
• Pioneer Park Event Shelter	\$200,000	• Stewart Park Batting Cage Renovation	\$75,000
• Pioneer Park Tennis Courts Reconstruction	\$300,000	• Stewart Park Quad ADA Access	\$345,000
• Playground Safety/ADA Compliant Surfacing	\$360,000	• Tennis & Basketball Court Resurfacing	\$120,000
• South Park Playground Replacement	\$180,000	• Trails End Park Replace Playground	<u>\$300,000</u>
• South Park Spray Pad/Wading Pool	\$500,000	• TOTAL	\$9,502,000
• Stewart Park Batting Cage Equipment Replace	\$50,000		
• Stewart park Infrastructural Improvements	\$1,200,000		
• Black Otter trail Roadway Reconstruction	\$550,000		
• Cemetery Access Ramp to Mausoleum	\$40,000		
• City Wide Park Signage Program	\$200,000		
• Edgerton Park Building Remodel	\$300,000		
• Hawthorne Park Spray Pad	\$500,000		
• Park Tree Replacement	\$120,000		
• Parking Lot Reconstruction & Repair	\$800,000		
• Pioneer Park Accessibility Ramps	\$27,000		
• Primrose Park Playground Renovation	\$250,000		
• Riverfront Park Road & Parking Lot Repair	\$500,000		
• Riverfront Park Upgrade Walks	\$100,000		

Project Ranking Criteria

- **Priority 1 Safety, Health & Welfare**
- **Priority 2 Preventing Closures/Removals**
- **Priority 3 State & Federal Compliance (ADA)**
- **Priority 4 Survey Responses/Public's Priorities**
- **Priority 5 Efficiency Savings**

(source: PRPL Advisory Board, 9/2010)

Proposed 3-year Spending Plan

Proposed First Year Funding Plan (Dec 2012 to Dec 2013)

- **One time park improvements**

– Replace existing water slides at Rose Park	\$300,000
– Replace South Park playground equipment	\$180,000
– Rebuild Castle Rock tennis courts	\$275,000
– Replace batting cage equipment	\$50,000
– Emergency and general maintenance (roofs, pumps, irrigation systems, etc.)	\$248,500
– 9 three-season restrooms (renovations/replacements)	\$450,000
Sub Total	\$1,503,500

- **Ongoing operations and maintenance**

– Trail maintenance (Includes Volunteer Coordinator)	\$94,000
– Improved park maintenance (Includes 2 maintenance staff)	\$90,000
– Keep park restrooms open 3 months longer a year (three seasonal employees)	\$15,000
– Weed management in general fund parks	\$245,000
– Annual picnic table replacement (75 tables)	<u>\$52,500</u>
Sub Total	\$496,500
Grand Total	\$2,000,000

Ongoing Operations and Maintenance

- **Trail maintenance**

- Trail Asset Management Plan
 - Trail Maintenance Coordinator
 - Routine maintenance

- **Improved park maintenance**

- Two Park Maintenance Staff Positions
 - 25 new parks developed since 2003
 - 1 Equipment Operator
 - 1 Arborist
 - Added to existing 12 Park Maintenance workers
 - Improved ability to provide ongoing park maintenance

Ongoing Operations and Maintenance, continued

- **Keep park restrooms open 3 months longer each year**
 - Pioneer Park Master Plan-2010
 - Three seasonal staff
- **Weed management**
 - Developed Parks – Community and Regional Parks
 - Natural Area Parks – Pow Wow, Swords, Phipps; etc.
 - 30 Miles of Trails in Parks
- **Annual picnic table replacement**
 - Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment - August 2009

Proposed Second Year Funding Plan (Dec 2013 to Dec 2014)

- **One-time park improvements**

– South Park Sprayground	\$500,000
– Rebuild Pioneer Park tennis courts	\$355,000
– Amend Park water service upgrades	\$250,000
– Upgrade playground fall protection (36 sites)	\$360,000
– Emergency and general maintenance (roofs, pumps, irrigation systems, etc.)	\$38,500

Sub Total \$1,503,500

- **Ongoing operations and maintenance**

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Sub Total \$496,500

Grand Total \$2,000,000

Proposed Third Year Funding Plan

(Dec ²⁰¹⁴~~2013~~ to Dec ²⁰¹⁵~~2014~~)

- **One-time improvements**

– A large event shelter at Pioneer Park	\$200,000
– Cemetery Restroom	\$50,000
– Emergency and general maintenance (roofs, pumps, irrigation systems, etc.)	\$53,500
– Stewart Park infrastructure improvements (roads, parking, etc.)	\$1,200,000
Sub Total	\$1,503,500

- **Ongoing operations and maintenance**

– Trail maintenance (Includes Volunteer Coordinator)	\$94,000
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Proposed First Year Project Funding Plan Timeline (Dec 2012 to Dec 2013)

Project Priority	Projected Timeline
• Water Slides Rose Park*	July 2012 to May 2013
• 9-Restrooms *	July 2012 to Jun 2013
• Castlerock Tennis Courts	Oct 2012 to Jun 2013
• Batting Cage Equipment	Nov 2012 to May 2013
• South Park Playground	Jan 2013 to Sep 2013

*Assumption: The City loans PRPL funds for engineering services

Proposed Second Year Project Funding Plan Timeline (Dec 2013 to Dec 2014)

Project Priority	Projected Timeline
• Pioneer Park Tennis Courts	Oct 2013 to May 2014
• Playground Fall Protection	Dec 2013 to May 2014
• South Park Spray Ground*	Nov 2013 to Oct 2014
• Amend Park Water Service*	Oct 2013 to Sep 2014

*Assumption: The City loans PRPL funds for engineering services

Proposed Third Year Project Funding Plan Timeline

(Dec 2014 to Dec 2015)

Project Priority	Projected Timeline
• Pioneer Park Event Shelter	Dec 2014 to Sep 2015
• Cemetery Restroom	Dec 2014 to Jun 2015
• Stewart Park Infrastructure*	Jan 2015 to Dec 2015

*Assumption: The City loans PRPL funds for engineering services

Parks, Recreation & Cemetery Board

Newly Formed Ad-hoc Committees

- **Park Maintenance Districts**
 - Purpose: Determine what to do with existing PMDs
 - Rick DeVore, Chairperson
- **Sale of Parkland**
 - Purpose: Determine the process and what parkland should be sold or traded
 - Rachel Cox, Chairperson
- **Public Information**
 - Purpose: Keep City Council and the community updated on assessment district projects
 - Provide quarterly reports to council
 - Cathy Grott, Chairperson

Recommendation

- The Park Board and staff recommends that City Council approve the first year spending plan of \$2 million as presented.

Questions?