

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Rapid City Swim Center – Conference Room
September 11, 2008

The meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 4:30 pm on Thursday, September 11, 2008 with the following members present: Chairman Van Lindquist, Vice Chairman Jim Smoragiewicz, Chuck Tinant and Wes Storm. Also present were Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Cole, Parks Division Manager Lon Van Deusen, City Council Member Karen Olson, and Administrative Assistant Jeri Taton.

Motion was made by Smoragiewicz, seconded by Tinant and carried to approve the Advisory Board minutes of August 14, 2008.

The agenda was approved with the addition of a report from Growth Management Director Marcia Elkins relative to the Federal Greenway project, and a request by Smoragiewicz for a discussion on the use of Memorial Park.

Memorial Statue for Scotty Backens

Bruce Backens, Doug Pitts and Dick Wolf presented a model of a memorial statue and plaza for Scotty Backens. They would like to place the statue in an area just west of Fifth Street, north of Rapid Creek. Scotty lived and moved through this area frequently. Wolf stated that Backens was involved in a lot of things and was an inspiration to many people in Rapid City. Now that he is gone, they feel it should be a memorial not just to Scotty Backens, but for all people with disabilities. We want to provide an area for them which would signify we recognize their abilities. This area is the highest spot in all of Memorial Park and would lend itself to the memorial plaza very well. It is adjacent to the bike path and along 5th Street. We also want to provide a plaque commemorating the people who donate funds for this project. We think this project will be an asset to the community and something that Rapid City needs; and it won't cost taxpayers anything.

Doug Pitts noted that he moved to Rapid City approximately 18 years ago and Scotty Backens was one of the first people he met who had a disability. This plaza would be a memorial to Scott Backens as well as a tangible, accessible symbol which would represent the positive qualities that are important to people with disabilities as well as all citizens of Rapid City. Pitts stated that it would represent a lot of the good and positive things that he has personally seen happen in Rapid City in the last 18 years. Pitts stated that he is very much in favor of this project.

Lindquist asked if other options have been considered for this project. Director Cole explained that there is a process in place for memorial plaques, benches and plantings. In his opinion something of this magnitude is out of the scope of our existing policy and needs to go to the City Council for approval. If it were to fall within the scope of the memorial policy, the Advisory Board would need to hold two public hearings and forward their recommendation to the City Council. The City Council could then uphold the recommendation, or reverse it. Wolf stated that they are aware they have to meet all the city's statutes and obtain the necessary permits for this project. Elkins stated that an

11-6-19 Review would be needed and most likely a floodplain permit as well. She added that the railing around the project would cause concerns because it would catch debris if there is flooding in this area.

Olson asked if there is another location for this project that would not be in the floodplain? Wolf stated that they would like to focus on this location because it is in Scotty's neighborhood and in close proximity to where he lived. Smoragiewicz asked if a bench would be more appropriate rather than a statue. Wolf noted that initially were looking at a bench, however, they felt that this would be like taking a back seat and Scotty would never settle for that. Olson suggested that other locations be considered because the City is constantly dealing with developers and other individuals who want to place structures in the floodplain. Other locations suggested were: along the accessible trail in Chuck Lien Family Park; entrance to the Civic Center; near the YMCA; and on a corner in the downtown area. Elkins suggested that action on this request be continued so that staff can work with these individuals to find a suitable location.

Motion was made by Smoragiewicz, seconded by Storm and carried to direct staff to work with this group to look at alternative locations for this memorial statue.

Growth Management Director

Growth Management Director Marcia Elkins reported that Rod Johnson has been put in charge of the ISTEIA project for the bike path through the fairgrounds. We may need to look at hiring someone for this project because other large projects have been assigned to Johnson as well. She added that staff in the City Attorneys Office has been working on a land swap arrangement to facilitate this project. Cole noted that the Parks and Recreation Department received several complaints this past year that the bike path was closed off for two weeks during the Central States Fair. If there is any way to do it, we need to be able to keep it open. This is a problem and concern for our citizens.

Regarding the greenway funding project, Elkins stated that she is scheduled to meet with the Federal Highway Admin. Staff to try and get an idea what projects they intend to fund. We hope to know some specifics in approximately 2 weeks.

Memorial Park

Smoragiewicz expressed concern about the heavy use in Memorial Park during the summer months and the lack of time for the park to recover from these uses. The grass in this park, especially near the Bandshell, takes a beating during large events like the Heritage Festival and Hills Alive. Smoragiewicz suggested that we limit the use and size of events that can be held in Memorial Park. Cole noted that at the present time there is nothing on the books limiting use of this area. He added that the events will resist moving to other locations because the fee to use the park is extremely low. For example, the Hills Alive organization pays \$100 to use the Bandshell, and then they schedule their event using the entire park. This is what has been allowed to happen. Cole stated that he has discussed this with the Parks Division Manager and they both feel that something needs to be done. This park is getting injured each year and it

doesn't have time to heal before fall comes. Turf areas have been destroyed, rose gardens are abused and the sprinklers are broken by the equipment being used. Cole stated that it is not a good scenario and these events should be moved to another location. Cole added that Memorial Park was designed and built as a memorial, a place for reflection.

Lindquist stated that he sees the impacts as two-fold: 1) direct costs to the Parks and Recreation Department with staff time and repair costs; and 2) physical impact to the park itself. We need to find a solution that addresses both sides of this equation.

Cole stated that the Bandshell was built at this location but it was for small events drawing between 200-300 people. What is happening is that groups are renting the Bandshell for \$100 and then holding a large event using the entire park. These organizations don't want to pay for another location because they get this area for free. The City is impacted to a great degree because of the damage done to the park. Storm added that he feels there should be a fee to use the parks for these events and it should be commensurate with the type of activity being planned. Cole suggested that staff draft a policy dealing with use of the City's park system for the Board's consideration. He noted that it would have to go to the City Council for their approval as well. Motion was made by Storm, seconded by Tinant and carried to direct staff to draft a policy on use of the City's parks for the Advisory Board's review.

Director's Report

Cole reported that the Design Day for Vickie Powers Park Playground is scheduled for Monday, September 15th. The designer will meet with area school children in the morning and begin drawing a concept plan in the afternoon. The plan will be unveiled at a community celebration beginning at 6:00 in the evening.

Cole added that staff is conducting a trail count on the Swanson Pathway for approximately one week. This count will give the City valuable information on how the path is used

The next meeting of the Advisory Board will be held on Thursday, October 9, 2008 at 4:30 PM.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 PM.