

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
Halley Park Board Room
November 14, 2019

The meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 5:30 pm on Thursday, November 14, 2019 with the following members present: Vice Chairman Greg Oleson, Michael Calabrese, Brett Lawler, Samantha Linhart, and Shon Hanczyc. The following members were absent: Karen Olson and Tom Willock. Also present were City Council Member Greg Strommen, Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Biegler, Recreation Division Manager Doug Lowe, Parks Division Manager Scott Anderson, Landscape Designer Melissa Petersen, Cemetery Supervisor Craig Nichols and Administrative Coordinator Jeri Taton.

Public Comment

No public comments were made.

Minutes

Motion was made by Hanczyc seconded by Linhart and carried to approve the Advisory Board Minutes of October 10, 2019 as presented.

Agenda

The Agenda was approved as presented.

Liaison Reports

Anderson reported that the Urban Wildlife Committee met yesterday and discussed the operation and cost of the annual deer harvest program. Parks Division staff members conducted the deer trend survey and the data was submitted to the SD Game, Fish & Parks Dept. Based on the data received, GF&P is recommending that 250 deer be harvested. This recommendation will be presented to the City Council at their next meeting. Anderson also noted that staff is requesting proposals from companies who are interested in processing the meat from the deer harvest. The meat will be donated to the local food bank.

Anderson also noted that the first archery season was implemented in September of this year. Only one deer was taken but the season started late and GF&P anticipates that it will be more successful in future years.

A proposal was submitted to the Urban Wildlife Committee that Rapid City become a Bee City USA. There are criteria that will need to be met and the UWC will consider these and take action at a future meeting.

The Urban Forestry Board did not have a quorum at their meeting this month.

Beautification Committee

Motion was made by Linhart, seconded by Lawler and carried to acknowledge that Arlene and Jack Mattis are the Yard of the Month Award winner for October.

Motion was made by Lawler, seconded by Calabrese and carried to re-appoint Steve Doshier and Vicky Steelman to the Beautification Committee for three year terms to expire on December 31, 2022.

Proposal to Rename Founders Park

Alderwoman Laura Armstrong noted that she originally presented the proposal to rename Founders Park to the Advisory Board in September. This idea originated with a Committee convened to look for ways to improve race relations in the community. Armstrong stated that while working with this committee she learned the history of the Founders Park area. Based on the work of the Committee and the idea of changing the name, she reached out to community members from a variety of areas and they were receptive to the proposal. Armstrong added that she also met with representatives of the Stanton family who were instrumental in the development of the Founders Park Plaza in its current location. She stated that there is no intention to change Founders Park Plaza. We want to grow this area to be more inclusive for the entire community. Armstrong added that the Committee doesn't want to take away the tribute that exists to the founders of Rapid City. Several letters of support were presented at the September 9th meeting and Armstrong submitted three additional letters supporting the name change to Ancestor's Park. The hope of the proposal is to accommodate all the ancestors that were in the Black Hills region.

Kirby Johnson asked why the proposal to change the name is being submitted. Armstrong again stated that the new name would be more inclusive for ancestors of the Native American community. Johnson opposed the name change and did not think it would have any impact on race relations in the community.

Bobby Jo Jarvinen stated that she worked on the original Founders Park project and she feels they made a mistake by not including the Native American community at that time. This action would rectify that mistake.

Daniel Stanton stated that he thinks this is a great conversation for citizens of Rapid City to be having. It is a great idea to combine all the history of the area in the story being told about this area. Stanton explained that the project began as a Leadership Rapid City class project that his mother participated in. Nearly 20 years later it is amazing to see what has happened in this location. He added that this area includes a large number of petroglyphs which show that this area was used as a camp site before the city of Rapid City was founded.

Glenn Goehring expressed concern about the fiscal side of changing the name. He asked if this organization will raise funds to cover the cost of changing signage, maps, etc. that will need to be changed. He added that he doesn't feel the name Founder's Park excludes anyone. At the end of the day all we are doing is creating a financial burden to make the changes being proposed. Changing the name of this area doesn't fix anything. If you want to be more inclusive we should find another way to accomplish that.

Karen Mortimer explained that she works with the Ambassadors Group which includes community leaders from a wide range of areas. This group has been working for five years to improve relations between the native and non-native community. That group supports the proposed name change for this area. By taking this action we are beginning to act and respect the people of the native community in Rapid City. She noted that this is an important step for the community to take. She added that we are not taking away from the important work of the founding fathers, but adding the Native American culture to the area.

Tasha Swanson suggested leaving Founders Park as it is and creating an area for the Native American Culture on the other side of the creek and the bridge can connect the two. There

could be displays showing how the two sides came together and created the city. There is no reason to change the name of the park; we can create another park on the other side of the creek that showcases the Native American Culture and connect them via the bridge.

Armstrong stated that she is only asking for discussion on this issue. One is not better than the other and we are not trying to erase history but include all the individuals who participated in that history. We need to continue to discuss in a positive manner and show that we really want to do something to improve native connections.

Parks and Rec Director Jeff Biegler explained that the City has a Policy that covers naming park and recreation facilities. Per that policy the final decision on this type of proposal will be up to the City Council.

Linhart stated that she feels the Advisory Board should schedule a work session on this issue so that more discussion can be had. Motion was made by Linhart seconded by Calabrese and carried to schedule a work session on the proposal to change the name of Founders Park.

Cemetery Ordinance Changes

Cemetery Supervisor Craig Nichols went through the changes being proposed for operation of the cemetery. Several of the changes deal with procedures to buy and sell grave spaces and the refund process if one is sold back to the city. Nichols noted that this is information only and the Ordinance will be presented to the City Council for approval. No action is needed from the Advisory Board.

Director's Report

Recreation Division Manager Doug Lowe reported that winter recreation programs have started and the leagues are full. He noted that for the first time since he has worked for the city the final games of the Flag Football tournament had to be cancelled due to weather. The teams who did not get to play their games will receive a partial refund of their fee.

He added that the greens at both Meadowbrook and Executive golf courses have been covered for the winter and 2020 Season Passes are now available.

The Annual Christmas Show at the Ice Arena is scheduled for Dec. 14th and 15th. There is also a swim meet scheduled on Dec. 14th so there will be lots of activity at these facilities on this date.

Anderson reported that parks staff is doing snow removal and all the irrigation systems and restrooms have been winterized. Staff has also started putting all the Christmas decorations in the park system.

Melissa Peterson reported that the disc golf project is scheduled for completion this week. There is no grand opening event planned at this time but we will probably have something in the spring. The deadlines for the Bridge Imp. Project and the 2019 Asphalt Project have been extended until May 2020 due to complications from the weather.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM.