The meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 5:30 pm on Thursday, April 14, 2016 with the following members present: Vice Chairman Karen Olson, Greg Oleson, Rick Askvig and Domico Rodriguez. The following members were absent: Nick Stroot, Chuck Tinant and Shon Hanczyc. Also present were Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Biegler, Parks Division Manager Lon Van Deusen, Parks Maintenance Chief Scott Anderson, Landscape Designer Alex DeSmidt, Urban Forester Andy Bernard, and Administrative Assistant Jeri Taton.

Public Comment
No public comments were made.

Minutes
Motion was made by Askvig seconded by Rodriguez and carried to approve the Advisory Board Minutes of March 10, 2016 as presented.

Agenda
The agenda was approved as presented.

Liaison Reports
The Beautification Committee has not met since their March meeting.

Van Deusen reported that the Urban Wildlife Committee met last week and the main topic of discussion was changes to the ordinances governing parks relating to trapping within the city limits. City staff will continue to work on this issue with the City Attorney’s Office.

Memorial Bench - Larry Amburn
The next item on the agenda was second reading on a request from Patricia Amburn for a Memorial Bench to be located near Canyon Lake in honor of Larry Neil Amburn. No one was present to speak on this item. Motion was made by Askvig, seconded by Rodriguez and carried to approve the request for a memorial bench honoring Larry Amburn.

Liaisons to Aquatics, Ice and Golf Committees
Staff asked if any Advisory Board members would be interested in serving as liaisons to the Aquatics, Ice and Golf Committees. These committees are very informal and meet quarterly to discuss use and policies for the individual facilities. Since their inception, these committees have served to increase communication between user groups and staff on various items impacting the facilities. Rodriguez volunteered to serve on the golf committee. Askvig suggested that this item be included on the agenda for the next meeting so that all Board members could be included.

Proposed Shelter Belt at Dakota Fields Soccer Complex
The next item discussed was a proposal to create a shelter belt in a Rapid City park. Biegler explained that a request was submitted from the Sustainability Committee and
Alderman Jerry Wright to create a shelter belt in one of the City’s parks. The only City park that would have adequate space is the new soccer complex on Elk Vale Road. He added that the proposal is in the very early stages. The west half of this property is separated by a fence and is currently being hayed. The proposal at this time is to locate a row of trees on the opposite side of the fence. Biegler added that staff made it clear that this is something we can accept but the City doesn’t have any resources to contribute to the project. The proponents of the project are considering fund raising options to cover the costs of creating a shelter belt at this location.

Memorial Bench Report
Urban Forester Andy Bernard presented a list of all the benches currently located throughout the park system as well as a map showing the location. There are 82 benches and 71 markers and plaques. Van Deusen stated that at some point we will need to begin limiting the number of benches we allow in certain locations. Olson suggested that the location of the benches should be up to the parks department and not the person requesting the memorial. Biegler stated that he thinks this would be a good idea, even if we revise it to reflect that the decision on placement will be up to staff. We could give the person requesting the memorial bench a list of options that they can choose from. This would take some of the pressure off staff during these often-times emotional discussions. Rodriguez suggested that we also make a determination on what serves as a bench and what is a headstone. Biegler concurred that staff could be more pro-active in determining what type of bench is allowed. Oleson suggested that staff contact other communities to see how they handle the issue of memorial benches in the park system. This item can be discussed again at the Advisory Board meeting in May.

Dead or Diseased Hazardous Tree Removal Program
The proposed Dead or Diseased Hazardous Tree Removal Program was submitted to the Board for consideration. Staff explained that this program expands on the Mountain Pine Beetle Program to include any type of diseased tree as well as dead trees. Bernard stated that in addition to aesthetics, removing as many dead and diseased trees as possible will put the City’s urban forest in a better position to withstand future pest and disease issues. Motion was made by Askvig seconded by Rodriguez and carried to recommend approval of the Dead or Diseased Hazardous Tree Removal Program. Biegler noted that this program will be submitted to the City Council for final approval.

Director’s Report
Biegler reported that the Tennis Courts and Play Courts Surfacing Project will begin soon. A contract has been signed with Pro Track and Tennis, Inc. and they will begin work on May 1st. Staff is working with the contractor and all user groups to find the best schedule that will be least disruptive to summer tennis programs and activities.

Biegler also reported that the new Horace Mann Pool and the 50 Meter Pool at the Swim Center will open for the summer on May 27th. The other pools will open on May 29th. He added that a new play structure was installed in Horace Mann Park and a lot of work was also done on the baseball field at this location.
Work is schedule to begin on May 1st on the West Memorial Park parking lot project. This includes removing the old tennis court surface and returning this area to green space.

Biegler also noted that the next public input meeting on the Robbinsdale Park Master Plan will be held on Thursday, April 21st at the South Middle School cafeteria. The final draft of the master plan is scheduled to be submitted in November.

The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will be held on Thursday, May 12, 2016.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.