City of Milwaukie

Milwaukie Park and Recreation Board (PARB)

MEETING MINUTES

City Hall Conference Room

July 28, 2015

Members Present: Lisa Gunion-Rinker (Chair), Lisa Lashbrook (Vice Chair), Lynn Sharp (Treasurer), Erin Willett Holcomb (Secretary)

Staff/Visitors: Mitch Nieman (City Staff Liaison), Jeroen Kok (NCPRD Liaison), and Amy Aschenbrenner (City Staff)

1) Welcome and Introductions

Chair Gunion-Rinker called the meeting to order.

2) Review & Approve June 2015 Minutes

Chair Gunion-Rinker found a few typos in the June minutes, but said the content was fine. **Mr. Nieman** said he would fix the typos. **Secretary Holcomb** motioned to approve the June 2015 minutes, **Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook** seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

3) August 4 Joint City Council Meeting – Parks Goal

Mr. Nieman read the City Council's goal related to parks: "Complete neighborhood parks and develop stronger strategy for maintenance of existing parks." He commented that could be two separate goals: "complete neighborhood parks" and "develop a stronger strategy for maintenance of existing parks". He discussed what "complete neighborhood parks" might mean in relation to funds and in relation to NCPRD. Mr. Nieman also discussed what "maintenance" details might include for the different parks. **Mr. Nieman** wrote bullet points and key words on a large notepad throughout the following conversations.

Chair Gunion-Rinker said that "Friends" groups could be created, and there was likely a strong pull for that type of organization. She explained how people could get involved by showing up and helping mulch, plant plants, and more, and that it would be very effective and helpful.

Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook brought up the "Adopt a Street" program and mentioned how those could be located near parks. She was not sure if it would be best to have one "Friends of Parks" group that would go throughout the city, or have multiple groups linked to the neighborhoods.

Treasurer Sharp said the NDAs were pretty diverse, and suggested having one Friends group. She also added that meetup.com could be utilized.

The group discussed if the Friends group should be NDA-based or be a singular group city-wide. They also talked about getting different groups involved such as Boy Scouts, Bob's Red Mill, etc.

Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook talked about her experience with Friends groups.

Mr. Nieman talked about his experience with the City's Earth Day event and how people wanted to help, they just needed to be plugged in the right groups.

Chair Gunion-Rinker explained the importance of having leaders for each group.

The group decided to have one Friends group in charge of all the parks, and underneath the large

group to have the "Adopt-A-Park" people for help and support.

The group discussed manners to guide and oversee volunteers.

Chair Gunion-Rinker explained how the Friends group that she is involved in walks the park area, plans the year out accordingly, creates the work list for what happens when, has a specific goal in mind for the year, and works toward that goal.

Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook asked if a Friends group decided to do things such as plant trees, to what extend did they need to have permission from NCPRD.

Mr. Kok explained that a Friends group would likely have the appropriate knowledge regarding how to handle similar situations. Not only would they need to get the "okay" from NCPRD, but they would also plan resources and partnerships. Mr. Kok said that NCPRD would want to know details such as the tree species, how it would get maintained, etc.

Mr. Nieman discussed enhanced NCPRD and City communication; he explained the City (including himself) had been meeting with NCPRD regularly and thought it was a good strategy to do check-ins and delve into task items.

Secretary Holcomb asked if the enhanced communication came from a specific issue.

Mr. Nieman replied that no, they were not reacting to a particular issue, just wanted to improve the communication. He also talked about the importance of communication and education about signs, issues, etc.

Chair Gunion-Rinker added that having a Friends group to plan out projects a year in advance would greatly help create projects and work with NCPRD to anticipate what would come up during the year.

Mr. Nieman talked about the importance of being proactive instead of reactive.

The group discussed funding and how a Friends group could help.

Mr. Kok talked about both capital funding and how to take care of maintenance. He suggested a possibility to have a subcommittee of PARB to focus on the challenges and opportunities of funding. He added that funding likely would involve the voters, and that it was just a matter of when and how.

Mr. Nieman commented that there were not many grants available for maintenance, and that funding would have to be figured out; work could be done with Council, voters, etc.

Mr. Kok said that given the current budget, it would be hard to take on the maintenance of four new parks. Lowering maintenance standards was an option or choice that could be made. An analysis could be done of how they were currently maintaining parks, including where savings could be found and funds spread elsewhere.

Mr. Kok added that in a debrief meeting with the Board of County Commissioners, the board was not supportive of an effort to go out to the voters anytime. It was a matter of working with the District Advisory Board to evaluate when and if to go back to the voters. NCPRD was trying to organize a retreat with the Advisory Board in the fall to talk about a strategy going forward, because it was impossible to go forward with their current funds. Mr. Kok explained that costs kept going up but funding was not.

The group talked about the need to be clear to voters about how if they vote in favor, they would get more parks, facilities, etc.

The group talked about if the vote was to come up during the November 2016 election cycle, voter turnout, and other groups that would likely be vying for funding at the same time.

Treasurer Sharp asked if there could be a get-together with PARB, NCPRD maintenance folks, and City

staff to have a brainstorming session.

Mr. Kok said he would chat with Kevin, the supervisor with NCPRD, and get details about what was happening maintenance-wise at each location. Mr. Kok would then share the information with PARB, and they could look at where there might be potential savings.

Secretary Holcomb said it was good to hear other voices as well, and suggested opening the channel of communication to the community. It could be in the form of "let us know" communication; what could be done to help improve parks. She asked what could be done to open up the channel for people that did not know to come to PARB to voice their questions and/or concerns.

Mr. Kok said they could come up with some signage with a phone number or website listed.

The group talked about how input received from the public could be reviewed, organized, and utilized to see what was important for each of the parks. The group also discussed the importance of education and open communication with the public.

Mr. Kok talked about the importance of being careful with what you ask for; noting that people will want responses and actions. He just wanted to make sure PARB kept that in mind.

The group discussed the importance of getting a consensus of goals and priorities with Council. They talked about leaving the August 4th meeting with a solid priority list from Council.

The large notepad that **Mr. Nieman** wrote during the previous conversation:

<u>Maintenance (goal):</u>

1) Creation of Friends Groups
2) Adopt-A-Park
   - –Work with NDA
   - –Work with Businesses
   - –Church Groups
   - –Service Organizations
3) NCPRD/City Communication
   - –Monthly-Weekly
4) NCPRD Maintenance Analysis
   - –PARB Recommendation
5) Community Relations
   - –Priorities

The group discussed the next part of the Council goal, the completion of new parks. Phase III of the Riverfront Park was quoted at $10 Million.

The Group talked about Riverfront Phase III and the pros and cons of the feasibility and the completion of the park. Pros: attraction, unique, connectivity to farmers market and trolley trail, great venue for all of Milwaukie to use. Cons: expensive, money could be spent elsewhere, a lot of neighborhood parks could be created using that amount of money, etc. The group decided it would be helpful to have Council decide on either the completion of Phase III or the building of more neighborhood parks. While there was different funding for each, it would still be a choice for where to allocate funds and resources.

Mr. Kok said PARB did not need to walk away with a decision with a priority, but that it was important to get the conversation going.
Secretary Holcomb added that if Council gave the directive, then that would be the project with which PARB moved forward.
The group talked about finding different sources of funding with grants, and which park may be more likely to get funding.
Mr. Kok had a list of available grants, and would show PARB by next week.
The group talked about which of the four parks to go with first. They talked about which ones were more expensive, which might have more funding available, and what was best for the community. They also thought it would be good to ask Council which park they would like to go with first.

The large notepad that **Mr. Nieman** wrote during the previous conversation:

Construct Parks:

1) Prioritization
   –Created by PARB/council
2) NCPRD competitive Assessment of viability/constructability of which parks.

4) <u>Mission/Vision Statement</u>

Chair Gunion-Rinker discussed the email she sent PARB members with her ideas for new mission and vision statements.
The group discussed the fact that they have not done much with "recreation"; maybe "sustainability" or "livability" could replace "recreation" for the name of the board.
The group talked about the broad term of "sustainability" and what it would mean for implementation.
Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook mentioned that JoAnn Herrigel's position as Milwaukie Parks and Sustainability Director was a great link to the community.
Mr. Nieman said there is talk about bringing a similar position back, but not anytime soon, due to funding and the current budget cycle.
Secretary Holcomb said she would shy away from having "sustainability" in the board's name, as they could get pulled into bigger conversations that would be too big for what they could accomplish. However, she suggested having the term "sustainability" in the mission statement, since the board was dedicated to the idea.
The group talked about the importance of possibly having a Sustainability Board all in itself. Parks could even be a subcommittee of a much bigger Sustainability Board. The group also talked about the importance of Tree City USA, creating a Friends group, etc., and that they wanted to do those projects well, not add too many projects that are beyond their means.
Chair Gunion-Rinker summarized that PARB would hold off on a new mission and vision statement until they talked with Council. The board does know that they liked the term "livability," however.
Treasurer Sharp mentioned along with the idea of livability that walking is important. She suggested setting up a "MilWALKie" walking group to get people out in their community.
The group discussed the mission statement Chair Gunion-Rinker created.
The group also talked about and conflicting roles and disconnect with the Riverfront Task Force and

PARB. They hoped for better communication going forward.

Mr. Nieman said PARB could show Council their ideas and options about the new statements. He would leave the vision statement as is, and include the edits for the second mission statement, with the caveat that they were looking for a better "sustainability" definition. Mr. Nieman informed PARB that the next City Council meeting was at 4:30 next Tuesday August 4th.

The large notepad that **Mr. Nieman** wrote during the previous conversation:

Livability:

Sustainability?

–Micro -> parks

–Marco -> city

5) Flight Control Plus Recommendation

The group talked about funding and feasibility. They also discussed the possibility of getting RFPs. The group decided that the game plan and the funding was what needed to be figured out.

Chair Gunion-Rinker researched the Flight Control Plus more thoroughly, and shared with the group her findings. While she was originally hesitant about the chemicals involved, after further research she was not very concerned. She explained that there was not enough data about the carcinogens. Although the phrase "don't release it into the environment' was stated often, after reading though it, the product did not seem as lethal as first thought. But, she added, if chemicals are knowingly put into a public park, there was always a risk.

Mr. Nieman said that was good information to share with Council.

6) Member News/Reports

Mr. Nieman reiterated to the group about PARB's presentation and Tree Ordinance draft submission to Council in August. He suggested that PARB may want to substitute their August meeting with the Council Study Session where the Doctor would speak regarding the economics of trees.

Mr. Nieman also informed the group that three applications were pending interviews for the open PARB positions.

Treasurer Sharp said the next Tree Subcommittee meeting would discuss comments from the City's engineering department before submitting the ordinance to legal. It was decided that the subcommittee would meet Thursday afternoon at 3pm. Chair Gunion-Rinker would send comments via email, and Treasurer Sharp and Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook would call Mr. Nieman for a conference call.

Chair Gunion-Rinker updated the group about the sustainability tour and that it was making good progress.

7) Adjournment - A motion to adjourn was made by **Vice Chair Lisa Lashbrook**, with a second by **Treasurer Sharp.** Motion passed unanimously, meeting adjourned 9:11am.

DRAFT