

MINUTES
[Approved June 7, 2018]
LIBERTY PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD
May 3, 2018
Liberty Community Center

CALL TO ORDER

The regular business meeting of the Liberty Parks and Recreation Board was called to order by Patrick Flora at 6:00 p.m. Board members in attendance were: Chris Hand, Jackie Kennedy, Clay Lozier, Bob McClanahan, Buzz Taylor, and Vern Windsor. Staff members present were BJ Staab, Parks and Recreation Director; DK Taylor and Tom Garland, Assistant Parks and Recreation Directors. Kelli Houx with the Courier Tribune was also in attendance. Absent were Wil House and Karen Ridder.

OPEN FORUM

The following citizens were in attendance to discuss tennis courts at Bennett Park:

Frank Dixon, James and Kristine Piontek, Ken Barry, Jenn Bauer, Mike Fitzgerald, Andrea Montgomery, Craig and Gwen Morris, John Hoagland, Todd Otte, Jason Dilts, Libbie Werz, Marti McClanahan, and Corbett Leach.

Open Forum was opened with Patrick Flora explaining to guests in attendance the open forum process. Guests may speak to the issue at hand; if guests agree with others, please state in agreement but don't restate the entire point; staff and Board will not provide feedback at this time. Following is a recap of the citizen input:

Frank Dixon – As a citizen involved in the first tennis courts, City Council told them the original courts were a stopgap and the next tennis courts would be at Liberty North. He would prefer Bennett Park not be a tennis facility. There's a lot of activity in the park. It's up to the City Council to watch out for all citizens. He was involved in the neighborhood input with Janet {former Parks and Recreation Director Janet Bartnik} a few years ago and there was no additional tennis courts on the list; feels hoodwinked. Stated the idea of additional courts was not shared with the community. He will be headed to City Council.

Mike Fitzgerald – Agrees with Frank. Discussion of partnerships is important and should benefit both sides. This does not look like a good partnership for the taxpayers. Stated he felt the sleeping dog has risen like a snake in the grass. He is curious about what else is going to be lost; ballfield, skate ramps, anything else that's going to be lost?

Jim Piontek – Has lived in Liberty for four years. Has always been a little disappointed that Liberty doesn't have much of a park system like Johnson County, where he lived before moving to Liberty. Doesn't think the tennis courts are negative but concerned about the community being able to gather for a picnic and play ball. Seems the vote didn't have a quorum of Park Board members. BJ Staab described the process: The School District brought the project idea to Park Board in November; the Board reviewed the project again in January and voted against the project; Council invited the Park Board to meet on April 16 after the retreat to discuss further why the Board was

opposed to the project and to also provide the Board additional information. At the April 16 gathering, Board members and Councilmembers were polled with a consensus to move forward from each group. During the executive session at the April 23 meeting, staff was directed to begin negotiations with the School District based on specific terms. Only upon the completion of that process would the final decision come before Council in the form of an ordinance.

Jennifer Bauer stated she had asked a School Board member why Bennett Park was selected for the tennis courts. The School Board member had said there are other options. Whether it's city or school district, it's still a taxpayer supported amenity.

Andrea Montgomery – what else will be taken out of the park to accommodate this feature? The biggest reason she bought her house was the park. She didn't hear anything about this major change until someone put it on the neighborhood Facebook page.

Chris Piontek – has concerns; tennis is a dying sport. There aren't many people playing tennis. Older people who used to play tennis are either deceased or disabled. What about the students? If only 80 are going to benefit then the \$1 million should be spent on other amenities. Doesn't understand the Park Department's reasoning behind supporting this amenity.

Jennifer Bauer – heard School District offered to build another ballfield elsewhere and also heard School District argument about the haves and have nots between Liberty North and Liberty High Schools and building new courts at Liberty North.

Chris Piontek – concerned with a complex this large; all of the school buses, cars, parking. There's already a traffic snarl without the school buses. This is not positive for the community. Makes more sense to build the tennis courts at Liberty North; easier access off the highway.

Jennifer Bauer – the School District has property at the South Valley area.

Libbie Wertz – owns a home in Camelot and the park is in her backyard. She agrees with all of the concerns previously stated. As a former Park Board member, she is concerned about the process.

Frank Dixon – plans to attend the next Council meeting.

Jason Dilts – has lived in the Bennett Park neighborhood across from Libbie for the past 10 years. The proposed changes make the park weaker. It is not an improvement; it is not useful. He understands from the School District perspective but from a neighborhood perspective Bennett becomes a one sport park. Current courts are never full unless the School District is there but sees the baseball field used all of the time. The real problem is with the process. Janet {former Parks and Recreation Director Janet Bartnik} came around a few years ago asking what the neighbors wanted and this time the process has been railroaded.

Chris Piontek – Sounds like the School Board and the Council got together and railroaded it through.

Todd Otte – Lives close to the park. Green space is important. If you take the park away from where it sets right now it removes green space from a large area.

Corbett Leach – Schools have an organized mechanism to get what they need; Parks has an organized mechanism to get what they need. The City needs to speak to the non-organized. There are a lot of community uses beyond paid activities: weddings in the park, graduation photo sessions, pickup game of LaCrosse, kickball, tag, church picnics. At least 90% of the activity is of the non-organized variety. We are missing the point on the mission of the Board. Do the numbers. He is moving in three months but has lived here for 25 years. Please consider the non-organized activity. Save Liberty's backyard.

John Hoagland – The traffic has been unbearable the last 20 years. He has been talking to Clay about bringing in tennis teams to the park. There's plenty of space to build at the schools. If the School District gets away with this deal what else will they take away? By the time you're done, you'll only have a place to mow.

The majority of the group thanked the Board for allowing them the opportunity to share their concerns. The open forum portion of the meeting concluded at 6:35 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Vern Windsor moved to approve the minutes of the April 5, 2018 meeting as presented. Motion was seconded by Buzz Taylor. VOTE:

Patrick Flora	AYE
Christopher Hand	AYE
Wil House	Absent
Jackie Kennedy	AYE
Clay Lozier	AYE
Bob McClanahan	AYE
Karen Ridder	Absent
Buzz Taylor	AYE
Vern Windsor	AYE

OLD BUSINESS

Agenda Item Follow Up – BJ Staab reported back to the Board that action reports on consulting services did not need to go to Council until such time contract negotiations are completed. This will occur after the task force gathers and determines the scope of need.

Ambassadors and Advocacy –

- Use Tax Projects Update - BJ Staab updated the Park Board on Use Tax projects progress. The projects are broken down into three categories with task forces for each (neighborhood parks, City Park, Liberty Community Center). Each assigned taskforce will work through the timelines. The neighborhood process will be first, focusing on three parks at a time. BJ asked the Board to plan to attend the meetings in their neighborhoods. Council members will also

be in attendance at the meetings in each of their Wards. In addition to project taskforces, two Council members will be working on partnerships for several of the projects (for parks and animal shelter). The outdoor pool amenity will probably wait until next summer. There's \$1.5 million for the LCC and parks. The Board inquired if the task forces had been identified. BJ Staab responded yes, from the Council, and has been briefly discussed with the Board president on which Park Board members to appoint. BJ advised the Park Board that is they preference/ interest in serving on either the City Park or LCC taskforce, please let Patrick know.

- City Council study session is scheduled on May 7, 2018 with a discussion with KCPL on Weathering the Storm.
- City Council meeting on May 14, 2018 – mowing contract goes before Council.
- City Council Special/Regular session on May 21, 2018 (this meeting may be canceled, pending P & Z cases.
- City Council study session on May 29, 2018 – follow up from Council Retreat.
- Neighborhood meeting dates TBD.

Foundation Annual Campaign Report – The annual campaign kickoff was held on April 26. There were approximately 25 in attendance. The power point presentation was reviewed, critiqued, and notes made for changes. Packets were distributed. Group assignments were made.

NEW BUSINESS

- Annual Member Development Book and Bylaws Review – According to the Park Board bylaws, the Vice President shall be responsible for the Park Board Member Development Book and its annual review at the May Board meeting. Staff distributed the 2017 yearly report for Board review. The treasurer will review the bylaws; the Board received copies for review as well. Discussion and voting will occur in June.
- Nominating Committee - The Deputy City Clerk's office has been updating the list of Boards and Commissions appointees. Staff has learned that two Board members from 2017 and three Board members from 2018 have not gone through the formal approval process. Typically the slate of officers would be presented by the nominating committee at the June meeting. With the approval process not yet complete, Buzz Taylor made the motion, seconded by Vern Windsor, to table the nominating committee to review a slate of officers until the June meeting.

VOTE:

Patrick Flora	AYE
Christopher Hand	AYE
Wil House	Absent
Jackie Kennedy	AYE
Clay Lozier	AYE
Bob McClanahan	AYE
Karen Ridder	Absent
Buzz Taylor	AYE
Vern Windsor	AYE

- TRIM Grant – The Parks & Recreation Department has participated in and been awarded similar grants for this work in the past. This reimbursement grant from

the Missouri Department of Conservation is provided to help cities subsidize a portion of the direct costs associated with the management, improvement and conservation of community forests. Expenses (direct and personnel) associated with tree care are costs that would be incurred by the City as regular, routine tree maintenance. Cities with the Tree City USA status are eligible for the maximum of 75% of reimbursable direct costs. Estimated reimbursed expense is \$15,000. Jackie Kennedy made the motion, seconded by Clay Lozier, to approve staff's recommendation for submission to Council for approval. VOTE:

Patrick Flora	AYE
Christopher Hand	AYE
Wil House	Absent
Jackie Kennedy	AYE
Clay Lozier	AYE
Bob McClanahan	AYE
Karen Ridder	Absent
Buzz Taylor	AYE
Vern Windsor	AYE

CORRESPONDENCE – BJ Staab highlighted the two emails received expressing appreciation of Devin Skillman and our Child Watch staff.

FINANCE – The Liberty Parks and Recreation Department operating budget through the month of March has a positive financial position.

REPORTS –

- Administration Division – Presented as published
- Parks Division – Presented as published with one additional note – renovations to the ballfields at FBSC have really helped prepare the ballfields quickly after a rain.
- Recreation Division – Presented as published.
- Liberty Foundation – Presented as published

MISCELLANEOUS – Mayor Brenton was in attendance at the conclusion of the meeting to clarify a possible misunderstanding from the April 16 meeting. In addition, Mayor Brenton reminded the Board that all boards and commissions are recommending bodies and all decisions are left for the eight elected officials on the Council. High functioning boards are boards that work together, allow the majority to rule, and agree to disagree. For those instances when a board may not always agree, the group should work with the majority. A dissenting voter can choose to champion the cause, stand silent, or start a negative campaign to undermine the majority opinion. A high functioning Board will choose to champion the majority. Discussion followed. Upon conclusion of the discussion, President Flora stated his concurrence with the Mayor's comments.

ADJOURNMENT – Meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.

NEXT MEETING – The next meeting of the Liberty Parks and Recreation Board is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, June 7, 2018, 6:00 p.m. at the Liberty Community Center.