

Parks Committee

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

8:00 am

5920 Tahoe Dr. SE

ARTICLE 1. Call to Order

All members in attendance: Chair Mike Reese, Vice Chair Eileen Boekestein, Supervisor Grace Lesperance, Ryan Bruneau, Bill Otten, Ken Kaiser

Others Present: Nick Govan Administrative Assistant and others listed on the sign-in sheet.

Chair Reese called the meeting to order at 8:00am

ARTICLE 2. Approval of Agenda

Motion by member Otten to approve, seconded by Member Bruneau.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 3. Public Comment (5 minutes/individual)

Jeff Hughes (7250 Red Bud Ln) advocated for an advisory committee to assess Burton Park and Peace Park's health and preservation needs, suggesting the committee should confirm deer overpopulation issues and have forestry experts conduct assessments.

Director Manion acknowledged their expertise in conservation biology and agreed there is a deer problem. They affirmed an advisory committee will be formed by summer's end but noted implementing a hunt requires extensive planning beyond biological considerations. Director Manion also emphasized that deer management is only one part of a multi-pronged approach needed, potentially including invasive species removal and reintroduction of native plants.

Chair Reese agreed action is needed but understood other priorities exist. Member Bruneau expressed concern about potential fence requests if deer overpopulation isn't addressed, noting their personal experience with deer damage.

Supervisor Lesperance explained the need for a proper process through an advisory committee due to lack of board consensus. They emphasized that following this process would lay the groundwork for presenting an easy decision to the board, avoiding the risk of derailing deer management efforts.

ARTICLE 4. Approval of March 19, 2024 minutes

Member Bruneau suggested changes to Article 6. Director Manion mentioned adding discussion about reservation policies. Chair Reese suggested adding comments about public communication regarding parking lot issues.

Motion by member Bruneau to approve, seconded by Member Otten.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 5. Approval of April 16, 2024 minutes

Member Otten mentioned including comments on fees. Member Bruneau recommended removing corrections tracking.

Member Otten motioned to approve with additions and removals. Seconded by Chairman Reese.

Motion carried unanimously.

ARTICLE 6. Director's Report

Director Manion presented recent park events and improvements, including museum landscaping plans developed by the Kent Garden Club. Chairman Reese and his company offered to review and formalize the plan using CAD software. Director Manion also mentioned that a new Christmas tree for Memorial Park had been selected. Supervisor Lesperance mentioned that the committee received a

\$4,000 donation from Daily Bread after one of their employees was saved by a defibrillator used by the fire department. Mentioning using part of the donation for the Memorial Park Christmas tree, which would allow the township to showcase to Daily Bread how their contribution was utilized.

Director Manion discussed plans for Memorial Park landscaping, noting its location on a former brownfield site, which may impact landscaping decisions.

Director Manion highlighted volunteer efforts in removing invasive species, particularly praising GE Aviation volunteers for their work at Cascade Recreation Park. Member Bruneau inquired about offering discounted rentals to corporate volunteers, leading to a discussion about launching an "Adopt a Park" program possibly in the future.

The success of native plantings in various parks was emphasized, with Director Manion noting the survival of species like American chestnut and the thriving elderberry plants.

Director Manion explained improvements at Friendship Park, including plans for a new sign with a green roof and enhancements to the library's accessibility and aesthetics. These plans will be unveiled at the Independence Day dedication.

Updates were provided on various park projects, including Tassell Park bathrooms and Wycliffe Trailhead Park improvements. Director Manion also introduced Nick Govan the new administrative assistant and mentioned the implementation of DaySmart, the new reservation software.

ARTICLE 7. Old Business

a) Park Rules Discussion

Director Manion presented a draft parks ordinance consolidating rules for different parks. Member Bruneau expressed concerns about excessive regulation, providing examples of rules that seemed overly restrictive, such as the specific prohibition on golf. Director Manion explained the intent behind specific rules, such as the golf ball prohibition being focused on safety concerns during crowded events.

Chair Reese suggested reorganizing certain prohibitions for better clarity. Vice Chair Boekestein suggested adding language about permits for restricted activities. Member Kaiser shared a personal example of witnessing potentially dangerous

activities in parks to illustrate the need for specific prohibitions. Members discussed the need for balance between allowing enjoyment and avoiding infringement on others' experiences. Supervisor Lesperance acknowledged the challenge in crafting rules that strike this balance and suggested striving for a reasonable middle ground.

ARTICLE 8. New Business

a) Cascade Recreation Park Pickleball Etiquette

Member Bruneau suggested implementing a "paddle rack" system and inquired about the reservation system. Director Manion noted privacy considerations in the software. Grounds Supervisor Ryan mentioned on-site posting of reservations. The committee discussed reviewing court rental fees.

b) Capital Improvement Plan

Director Manion presented a draft 5-year plan, requesting feedback. Member Bruneau inquired about the process for identifying improvements and asked about specific projects like resurfacing pickleball and tennis courts. Chair Reese emphasized the urgency of finalizing 2025 items and mentioned that the master planning process would clarify the full scope of desired improvements.

Vice Chair Boekestein stressed the importance of detailed plans for grant applications. Director Manion clarified that the presented figures were placeholders and that total costs might exceed initial estimates. Supervisor Lesperance brought up a minor capital improvement need for replacing a door at the old township hall building. The committee agreed to review proposed items individually and provide feedback, particularly for 2025 needs.

ARTICLE 9. Other Business

No other Business

ARTICLE 10. Adjournment

Vice Chair Boekestein motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:40am, seconded by Member Bruneau.

Motion carried unanimously.