

CITY OF MERRIAM PARK AND RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, March 26, 2019
6:00PM

Roll Call

The March meeting of the Merriam Parks & Recreation Advisory Board was called to order at 6:00 pm, by Chairperson Billy Crook. Board members in attendance included: Kathy Stull, LaVera Howard, Christopher Leitch, Thelma Fowler, Katie Leary and Grant Getzlow. Suzanne Downey was absent but called in to listen to discussion. Staff members in attendance included: Anna Slocum, Director; Dave Smothers, Assistant Director; and Renee Nagle, Recreation Supervisor.

Public Comments

There was no one present for public comments.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

Christopher Leitch made a motion to accept the February meeting minutes and LaVera Howard seconded the motion; motion was approved unanimously.

Staff Reports

Director's Report

Community Center Update

Staff shared the monthly construction video produced by McCarthy. On-site pier drilling has started and staff has seen a sample form of the pre-cast wall that will be used for the community center.

Assistant Director's Report

Reports

Heartland Artist Exhibition Evaluation

The evaluation was included in the packet. Artist participation was down slightly from 110 to 91 artists in 2019. Based on feedback received by staff it is possibly due to having an abstract juror. The opening reception attendance was down from 300 to 275. This is likely due to the reduced number of artists and the unfavorable weather forecast the evening of the event. The quality of the art continues to improve each year.

Updates

2019 Farmers Market Season Update

To date, there have been 25 out of the 36 stalls sold. Staff is actively searching for new vendors. It is important to note that the vendors not returning are not moving markets but have personal conflicts. Unfortunately, there is a high competition for vendors with the increase in markets in surrounding cities over the past several years.

- Board members inquired if there will still be daily drop-in vendors allowed. Yes, there are two rates for daily – one for non-prime time (May and September) and a prime rate for June-August).
- Is there a relationship with other markets that would allow for vendor referral if their space is full? Typically, vendors will apply with the larger markets first, filtering to smaller markets as space fills.

Turkey Creek Festival 5K Run Volunteers

Staff asked the board members if they would like to volunteer for the TCF 5K run on Saturday, May 18, 2019. Several members commented about checking calendars. Billy Crook and Kathy Stull confirmed availability at the meeting.

Upcoming Events

Layers of Creativity... Mixed Media Unleashed

The next art gallery reception is slated for Thursday, April 4, 2019.

Recreation Supervisor's Report

Reports

Turkey Creek Festival Update

Turkey Creek Festival is Saturday, May 18. There are 13 confirmed food vendors. Staff has secured \$8,400 in sponsorship to date. There will be new roving entertainment as well as Drum Safari. The Police Department will be sponsoring a fundraiser for the two Merriam Police Officers battling cancer. They will have a dunk tank and Home Depot is providing a BBQ grill to auction as part of the event. Volunteers are needed for a variety of tasks the day of the event.

Upcoming Events

Volunteer Reception

The volunteer appreciation reception will be Thursday, April 11. Invitations were sent out the week of March 18. RSVPs are starting to come in. The event will be catered and feature live music.

Brunch with the Bunny

The flyer for the event was included in the packet. The event will be April 13. Maximum attendance is 100. Chris Cakes will be serving pancakes. In addition, the event will feature a visit with the Easter Bunny, egg hunt, games and giveaways.

New Business

Hometown Heroes Program

During a recent City Council meeting an area business owner requested a banner program for US Military Service People. The request was the program be similar to the existing banners that hang from the streetlights throughout town. The focus of the program would provide a way to remember local heroes and put meaning back into Memorial Day as being more than a kick-off to summer. The mayor has requested a discussion at Park Board about developing a program of this nature. The concept presented were individualized personalized banners. The decision point for the meeting is: "Should staff work to develop a draft program concept to present to Park Board to determine if this is a program to pursue with future recommendation to City Council?"

Discussion included:

- Does it have to be a banner program?
- Who manages the program?
- Should it be inclusive – honoring every veteran no matter what the economic status of the family might be?
- Would this be a break even program or would there be a need for profit?
- If the banner is purchased by a citizen, can the city legally retain possession?
- Should donations be pooled and honor one person each year?
- Should the banners be generic versus personalized?
- It should be easy to manage.
- Is this something that Flags4Freedom would manage?
- Should the City provide some subsidy to help cover expenses?

After discussion, staff will research how other entities have established their programs for future discussions.

Residency/Household Policy – First Review

Included in the packet was a memo outlining staff's recommendation for defining residency and households for the new community center. The memo included 12 surrounding community's definition of household with key words identified in each definition that helped formulate the proposal. The goal of the change is that the definition of household will be applied to residents and non-residents, specific enough to allow for efficient administration yet broad enough for non-traditional families. With current definitions it is too easy to find loop-holes, it is difficult to enforce and there are different definitions based on residency.

Proposed definition of residency:

- a. Any person who has a permanent residence within Merriam City limits
- b. Any person owning taxable real estate within Merriam City limits
 - Proof required with a valid drivers' license, current city business license or Notice of Appraised Value issued by Johnson County Assessor's Office.

Proposed definition of household:

Two (2) adults and up to three (3) dependent children as defined by IRS Qualifying Age Rule. Children 18 – 24 must provide proof of residency.

With the proposed definitions staff will not ask for proof of dependency but there needs to be limit on the number in household.

Discussion included:

- Children should be up to four (4).
- Should there be only individual memberships and not consider "units" of memberships?
- The definition needs to be used to regulate revenue, easily manageable, inclusive and accessible.
- Definition will manage people – any household larger than the quantity could have an "add-on" option.
- Is there a concern about overselling membership?
- Consider allowing for a utility bill as proof of residency to be all-inclusive.
- Are memberships buying a time-slot?
- Should there be a limit on children?
- Avoid binary standards.
- Should there be a definition of what combination defines a household? Should it be a number of slots with proof of residency within the household.
- Definition should reflect a combination of Roeland Park, Mission and Shawnee utilize.

Topic will be discussed in further detail at the April meeting.

New Community Center Room Naming Discussion

With the new community center under construction, staff is preparing for the operation of the facility. A key component is naming spaces within the facility that will generate revenue. Included in the packet was a memo outlining suggestions for naming the individual spaces. The three meeting rooms that open into one were proposed to have an over-arching theme that ties together. Suggestions for the classroom stem around names tied to education in Merriam. Suggestions for the party rooms tie to early entertainment. The goal is that each room would have an educational component with a plaque in the space explaining the significance to history.

Discussion included:

- Confirm the tie of Chouteau to Native American Settlers
- For Early Transportation the entire space could be the "Rails Room"
- Was there a consideration of street names?

- Is there a concern about utilizing names with the recent debate in cities with leaders who were not always law-abiding citizens?

Topic will be discussed in further detail at the April meeting with Board members encouraged to bring forth additional ideas for room names.

Other Business

Park Board By-Laws Update

Per discussion at the February meeting, the board unanimously decided to revisit the changes proposed to the By-laws at the December special meeting. Included in the packet was a memo summarizing the recommended changes as well as copy of the red-lined by-laws for discussion.

Discussion included:

- The number of absences should be limited to no more than 3 as that is approximately 25 – 30% of the meetings.
- Kansas statutes allows for telephone conferencing – is this an equipment issue?
- The National Council of Non-Profits states that allowing for teleconferencing allows for higher quorum, redefines attendance, diversity and inclusion. Attendance is required and stimulates conversation.
- There is a difference between a governing body and an advisory board. The different functions define if teleconferencing is necessary. It is difficult to have robust discussions with members linking in. There is also a concern if the space is “safe”. Who is listening in and possibly influencing the decision maker?
- City Council should make the determination if it is necessary and establish it as a policy and send it down to the boards.
- Could virtual link-up be offered on a trial period as a way to measure the basic parameters?
- With people volunteering their time the board needs to be more accommodating.

Thelma Fowler made a motion to allow virtual link up with safeguards in place. Katie Leary seconded the motion. The motion failed on with 2 yeses and 4 nos.

Christopher Leitch made a motion to recommend changes 1 – 7 be presented to City Council with three absences defined in change #4 and the term “recreational facilities” be added in change #1. Kathy Stull seconded the motion. The vote ended in a tie of 3 yeses and 3 nos. The discussion was tabled due to time limit of meeting almost to expiration.

5701 Steering Committee Update

The committee met for a second meeting on Monday, March 18. The group met the consultant, CNA, who has been hired to facilitate the process and shared ideas regarding key issues, constraints and opportunities. Meeting dates were set including the first public meeting on April 29.

Adjournment

Katie Leary moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 pm and Kathy Stull seconded; motion was approved unanimously.