

Park Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

August 26, 2020

Frisco Train 1501 and Car 563, Schuman Park

Members Present: Ken Kwantes, Larry Thomas, Susan Wrasmann, Sue Arnold, and Mike Fleishhauer

Absent: Andrew Meggitt

Others Present: Floyd Jernigan, Park Superintendent Stan Busch, Kent Bagnall, Frank Snelson, and Julie Rodgers

1. Call to Order

- Ken Kwantes called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes

- Mike Fleishhauer noted one issue with the minutes. We do not yet have approval for the tree grant yet because it is still pending. A motion was made by Larry Thomas to approve the minutes of the July 22, 2020, meeting with that clarification. Mike Fleishhauer seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Financials

- Mr. Jernigan said the financials could be summed up in one word: COVID. Outdoor staff has been working weekends, opening and closing bathrooms, cleaning them differently and more often than before COVID.

SplashZone attendance was not as adversely affected as were the rentals. We did reach capacity a great deal of the time, but we had very few rentals this year.

Eugene Northern rentals were limited to two per day, so we missed out on some rentals due to that, and we still continue to have cancellations due to COVID concerns.

Pavilion rentals have been down overall. People do not want to rent them due to the homeless population in some of the parks. Stan added that we have had to repair breaker boxes. The homeless have broken the locks and they have damaged the breaker boxes.

They've figured out how to turn off the lights in the pavilions so they can't be seen so easily.

Ken Kwantes asked Mr. Jernigan if we have received any federal money as reimbursement for COVID expenses. Mr. Jernigan said we have not as of yet. The department has sent in updated numbers. The City is still collecting information and will submit.

4. Old Business

- Frisco Train restoration presentation by Kent Bagnall and Frank Snelson

Mr. Jernigan introduced Frank Snelson and Kent Bagnall. They were here on behalf of Nick Barrack who was out of town and could not be at this meeting. Kent Bagnall said that Mr.

Barrack was in Colorado to visit a train restoration project. Mr. Barrack reported to Mr. Bagnall that ours was better.

Mr. Jernigan said Mr. Snelson was a big factor in coordinating the painting of the train. Lettering and measurements were stenciled and glass windows were etched by Mr. Bagnall. Mr. Bagnall said everything that was done, was done at the direction of Mr. Barrack. He was at the top of the pyramid, orchestrating the movements, and all the rest were the ones who helped it be accomplished.

Mr. Bagnall told the group there are temporary history panels posted at the train. They will remain until we are able to place permanent signs. For proofreading purposes, Mr. Bagnall printed five of those signs on 11"x17" paper and distributed them to the group. He said there are definitely things that need to be corrected and some images that need to be changed and all will need to be credited. They are in the process of getting final approvals of pictures, etc. Mr. Bagnall said he will give the Advisory Commission a month to check for errors, changes, omissions, or edits. He asked the group to please return sheets by Sept. 25.

Mr. Bagnall also handed out a sheet with proposals regarding the newly renovated train. The train volunteers accumulated an approximate 3,000 hours of time and put their heart and soul into the project. The volunteers, CSE Construction, USA Tours, and USA Shuttle, led by Nick Barrack, would like to open up the train for tours every Friday. Nick has volunteers. Several of his staff members are in this group. Mr. Bagnall also suggested keeping a list of docents for groups who might prefer to come on Saturdays for private tours or special events. The sheet Mr. Bagnall handed out lists what the volunteers propose. They request weekly open hours, with a vetted volunteer to answer questions and provide security. In consideration for improving the site, they propose security cameras and lighting, as well as an expanded fenced area which would provide an area for events. They want to move the fence out to the edge of the building, so picnic tables for events and activities would be inside the secured area.

Mr. Kwantes expressed that the change from the work the group accomplished is amazing, unbelievable, and hands down a masterpiece. It would be a shame if something were to happen to the train. He said he is behind what Mr. Bagnall asked. Security is the key. We underestimated when we originally put in the fence. He also agrees that docents would have to be vetted. Mr. Bagnall said tour guides would be Nick's employees, City Ambassadors, and those who have invested their time.

Mr. Jernigan said the Parks Commission has already approved installation of cameras and we are waiting on city admin approval. Fencing was put in by Steve Hargis through a grant. We've looked at improving the strength of same. Mr. Jernigan asked Stan Busch for a quick guess in cost for improved fencing. Mr. Busch said it would probably be about \$20,000. Stan suggested limiting the number of gates, since they are expensive. The lighting was already changed to LED and there is electric there, but it is on a timer.

Mr. Bagnall asked the group if he could tell Mr. Barrack we are OK to go.

The group discussed when tours would be conducted. It was suggested we have a season for tours, since it's not practical to do during the winter months. It was suggested tours be available from St. Pat's to Thanksgiving.

Volunteers would all have to have background checks through the city and would have to sign a hold harmless agreement.

Mr. Snelson relayed a story about a recent graduate who brought his parents to see the train while they were here for his graduation. He wanted to take his graduation pictures at the train. There have been documentaries and video stories done on the train. People are hearing about it. Interest will only continue to grow.

Mr. Kwantes entertained a motion to support all that Mr. Barrack and the volunteers are asking. Susan Wrasmann made a motion to support their requests and was seconded by Sue Arnold. Mr. Kwantes suggested to Mr. Jernigan that Mr. Barrack deserves some sort of award for all that he has done in this project. It was suggested that it be done soon, perhaps the same night as the Tree City presentation is made to City Council. Mr. Jernigan said he would check with Mr. Butz to see if the 3rd Monday will work for a presentation.

- Proposed budget and summary for new year

Mr. Jernigan noted that he put major budget items in the summary. The biggest item is the all-inclusive playground at BerJuan Park for \$150,000, with \$100,000 from Parks fund and \$50,000 from Parkland dedication fund. Also budgeted is a camera system for the Frisco Train. We put in some additional money for a pump replacement. We need new vehicles and two new mowers. We plan to laser level all six fields. The four we did this year really helped with drainage from all the rain we got this summer. We replaced the fencing around the backstops of two fields but we need two more. We did outfields. We poured concrete at the shade structure. We are pouring a concrete slab at Green Acres for basketball. Public Works will pour a slab at Sheron Avenue and we will put in a basketball goal. We put signs in at Wedgewood and Barnitz Parks and Mr. DiPardo is doing repairs on the Buehler Park sign.

5. New Business

- ETC survey results

Mr. Jernigan said there has been an ebb and flow of money available for Parks. There was a dip before Prop P passed. Staff still worked hard regardless of funding. This spring due to COVID, we lost our prison crew, which was inexpensive labor. We still added leveling of ballfields, we made improvements to disc golf, bathrooms, etc. We are very low on staff right now. But, overall, the trend line shows, compared to our peers, we're significantly outdoing others.

Mr. Jernigan said it is noteworthy that the survey shows people feel safe in parks 91% during the day, but it goes down to 37% at night. Mr. Jernigan says he thinks there is a correlation to the homeless population being in the parks at night. Overall we received a good report. Mr. Butz and the Mayor are happy with the trends.

Mr. Kwantes added that ETC has been doing these surveys a lot of years. The ebb and flow of funding does show through the years of the survey. Compared to other cities, we're head and shoulders above. The accuracy of the survey has always been +/- 4%. It speaks so well of Rolla. Mr. Kwantes asked Mr. Jernigan, since we are here at SplashZone, if he had anything to say about this facility. Mr. Jernigan said that redoing the entire pool was money well spent. We replaced the heater, so we can offer comfortable water temps. We had to replace the grates.

Sealing and leaks will need to be done on the large water slide. We replaced one pump which was necessary. We purchased another other pump, but we will replace that pump after SZ closes for the season. We need to get the chemtroller working better, so it is automatic. The Pool Manager we hired did not work out. We have had only one report of a possible COVID exposure at the pool, from the health department of a patron who may have been infected. All of our active staff who were tested were negative. The chlorine in the pool kills Covid literally in seconds. All of our guards and our Head Guards did an exceptional job this year. We are having a guard party for them this Saturday night after close. Mr. Jernigan said he has been very pleased with them. Overall, despite the large drop in rentals due to COVID, we have had a good year.

6. Commission comments

The group switched gears to discuss Green Acres Park. Stan Busch said that pickleball is doing well. Mr. Kwantes said he is on a committee that used the pavilion for a meeting. He said Rolla Municipal Utilities folks were using the pavilion as a meeting place. He noted that Green Acres Park has changed complexion a bit. People have noticed the positive changes that have been taking place in that park.

Mr. Kwantes asked for input on the date of our next meeting. He suggested meeting at Green Acres Pavilion. Budget should be finalized by the end of September. Group will meet again the fourth Wednesday, on September 23.

A motion to adjourn was made by Chairman Kwantes, seconded by Larry Thomas.

7. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 6:39 p.m.