

Ad Hoc Parks, Recreation & Forestry Committee Meeting
Monday, June 6, 2011
8:00 a.m.

Present: Jane Lardahl, George Adrian, Audrey Stowell, and Beth Arneberg.

Absent: Brian Flynn.

Others: Dick Hebert and Carmen Muenich.

1. Discuss Structure of Parks and Recreation Department, staffing and replacement for Director's position. Possible recommendations to City Council. Jane Lardahl brought the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. Discussed keeping fairly detailed minutes of discussion so that everyone would have a good idea of what had been discussed and evaluated. Review of job descriptions and organizational chart. Discussed combining Parks with Streets dept. Did not feel this was something that should be explored at this time. Reviewed the differing pay scales as well as separate union contracts with different hours/scheduling issues. Also discussed that the skill sets and responsibilities of the departments are different with different emphasis. Discussed using Manpower for busy times. George indicated that has been done in the past and was not very successful. Did discuss the cost savings of having one director and discussed that streets has been moved to public works already and it may not be desirable to move another dept. because of the additional duties. Also discussed importance of having a director who can be an advocate for Parks only. Discussed the public's perception in giving donations to the park if parks isn't its own dept. While it was felt donations for the Parks would not be lost or accidentally used for other purposes, discussed that the general public may not be so sure it wouldn't happen. After discussion, it was felt merging Parks and Streets was not desirable. Then discussed looking at shifting responsibilities to various areas. George has indicated that in the past, the street dept. has helped out parks, etc., but Dick commented that hasn't occurred as much recently because of staff reductions in both depts. Jane suggested we see where there might be overlap areas between the dept. and maybe have an employee that can be borrowed from one dept. to the next for busy times of the year. Forestry was an area that was identified for additional discussion. The actual cutting down of the tree is contracted out. Our responsibility would be to identify trees and work with the property owner. This has more recently been done by Bill, but probably could be done by Joe if it stays within the parks dept. Joe has a specialty in trees and could be utilized more in that area. Also discussed working something out with the county to have them perform forestry services for us. A cost analysis would have to be done to see whether we wanted to free up Joe's time to allow him to work more in forestry vs. moving the responsibility. Grass cutting was also discussed. Wondered whether we can take grass cutting responsibilities away from higher paid employees to free up their time to do something else and hire an additional seasonal (whom we pay \$7.50/hour) or perhaps contract grass cutting out completely. Dick felt this was definitely an option for neighborhood parks and possibly Irvine Park. He did not think it would be a good idea at

Casper where the length and timing was more crucial on the ball and soccer fields. Discussed park board dealing with this possible change.

Discussed the organizational structure. Ideally, there would be a Director, Parks Supervisor, and Recreation Supervisor. Discussed that over the years, with the elimination of Tod, Andy and Ade's positions, there has been a cut of \$150,000 even though two part-time and working foreman positions have been created. Discussed that union members cannot discipline each other, which comes into play with the working foreman position. Dick indicates that right now there are many things that are not being done that need to be done. Workers are more important than supervisors. So, while having the director, parks supervisor, and recreation supervisor positions might be better, because of the current economy it is probably feasible to work things out with a lead foreman type position in lieu of the parks supervisor. We simply need to make sure we have divided the responsibilities of the parks supervisor position correctly and compensate accordingly.

Discussed the zookeeper position and the additional responsibilities that position has and can potentially take on that were previously done by the parks supervisor, specifically recordkeeping responsibilities for the animals. However, then again, we need to be sure we have someone available to feed the animals and clean the pens. Discussed the need to define that position more clearly.

Discussed staff having insights and meeting with them to discuss changes they would like and things they see that could be done better. Will meet at the Park and schedule time with each employee. One of the questions we would like them to think about is what needs are not being met because of the elimination of the park supervisor position. Dick indicates most if not all were employees before the elimination of the position. Dick said one he can think of right now is training for seasonals.

Discussed possibility of contracting with Bill Faherty for grant writing and obtaining donations; also discussed having Jayson Smith do grant writing.

Dick indicated that it really was necessary to fill the Interim Rec Supervisor position quickly. He indicates there were about 10 applicants, and Jared Faherty was selected. He has been Dick's right-hand man and was able to step in quickly and be productive.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, June 22, at 7:00 a.m. at Activity Building to facilitate discussions with staff.

2. **Adjournment. Motion by Beth Arneberg, seconded by George Adrian, all present voting aye, to adjourn.**

Submitted by:

Audrey Stowell, Secretary