



MINUTES  
PARK & RECREATION SUBCOMMITTEE  
January 8, 2002

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mel Dreyer, Tim Henderson, Van Lindquist, Robert Schlotman, Bob Scull, Sheri Zimmer

STAFF PRESENT: Marcia Elkins, Keith Johnson, Rod Johnson, Sharlene Mitchell, Lon VanDeusen, Adam Altman

OTHERS PRESENT: Patricia Lynch, Bob Ackerman, Jay Powell, Jasper Green, Wally VanSickle, Joyce Payton, Russell Payton, Ed McLaughlin, William Janss, Gerti Janss, Judie Giddens, Jim Kuehn, Eirik Heikes, Jim Keene

Call to Order

Zimmer called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Zimmer acknowledged the communications received from individuals regarding the Mary Hall Park issue.

Approval of Minutes

**Dreyer moved, Lindquist seconded and carried unanimously to approve the Minutes of the December 4, 2001 meeting.**

Mary Hall Park

Dreyer briefly reviewed the December discussion regarding the development of Mary Hall Park noting the concerns voiced by area residents with the Kiwanis proposal. Dreyer clarified that the development completed to date has been reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission and City Council under the Use on Review procedures outlined in the City Municipal Code. Dreyer indicated that the goal of the meeting is to develop a consensus between the two parties that will allow development of the area as a nature park to be utilized by area schools for science education purposes. Dreyer acknowledged the concerns of the adjoining property owners noting the need to balance their wishes with the needs of the community.

Zimmer indicated that the subcommittee supported the Kiwanis development proposal noting the need to find a consensus between the two parties to allow the project to move forward.

Patricia Lynch, wildlife biologist, spoke on behalf of the Friends of Mary Hall Park and presented an alternate plan for development of the area. She identified the main issues of concern as the destruction of the wetlands for a nature trail and the increased activity along the creek bank. Lynch indicated that the Friends were supportive of the Kiwanis project but preferred less development and elimination of all structures in the floodplain. Lynch summarized the alternate plan as restricting structures in the floodplain while providing group areas along portions of the stream. Lynch expressed concern with the placement of an observation deck over the natural spring. Lynch outlined the following goals of the Friends of Mary Hall Park:

1. Provide for protection of unique natural area of Mary Hall Park;
2. Provide an educational resource for environmental and science educators;
3. Reduce tax burden to the City of Rapid City;
4. Provide a natural setting for park visitors; and,
5. Encourage ownership in Rapid City natural resources by encouraging volunteerism, education and a new experience to the visitors of the Rapid City park system.



Lynch voiced concern for the damage daily access would have on stream activity and recommended that the Kiwanis plan be reduced in scale to allow for the natural exploration of the area. Lynch provided a cost analysis for the two development concepts.

Eirik Heikes, Wyss Associates, encouraged a compromise between the two parties regarding development of the park. Heikes encouraged a passive recreational use level of development noting that access to the park, including the nature trails, must meet the needs of those individuals who are physically challenged. Noting that the park has been "borrowed scenery" for area residents, Heikes acknowledged the concerns of area property owners with its development.

Heikes addressed the location of the shelter/classroom facility with regard to the floodplain and the amount of disturbed area within the park. Payton clarified that her comment at the December meeting pertained to the disruption of 40% of the riparian area only, not the entire park. Heikes presented the compromise proposal prepared by Pat Wyss. In response to a question from Zimmer, Heikes indicated that 60% of the wetlands trails would be constructed using the limestone chips.

McLaughlin briefly reviewed his history with the park as an educator noting the development of natural trails and educational programs in 1970. McLaughlin indicated that the Kiwanis targets projects that will benefit children noting that the park project will enhance the school curriculum. Noting the many complements received on the project to date, McLaughlin indicated that the Kiwanis is willing to compromise on the project for the betterment of the community.

Wally VanSickle recommended that both parties work for the betterment of the park. VanSickle suggested that development be limited to a well designed nature trail that would meet ADA requirements noting that the park does flood annually. VanSickle indicated that the Canyon Lake Senior Citizen Center has volunteered the use of their parking lot. VanSickle stated that the nature park is a treasure and should be retained as such for future generations.

James Nelson spoke against the Kiwanis proposal indicating that it is overdevelopment and would result in the relocation of the existing wildlife. K. Johnson clarified that all creek improvements would not be constructed during spawning season. In response to a question from Nelson, Elkins indicated that an environmental assessment is not required for the park project.

G. Janss spoke in favor of utilizing the Senior Citizen parking noting that access from this area would comply with ADA requirements. She spoke against the creek side trail and recommended that individual in/out trails be constructed to lessen the impact to the creek bank. In response to a question from Lindquist, Payton indicated that formal authorization to utilize the Senior Citizen parking is contingent upon the level of development and use volumes proposed for the park.

In response to a question from Zimmer, Elkins indicated that easements would be required to allow use of the Senior Citizen parking lot, the emergency response concerns with off-site access, and the need to submit a major amendment to the Use on Review. Discussion followed.



Jim Keene noted the flexibility of the Kiwanis with regard to the level of development noting that the park project is intended as a gift to the citizens of Rapid City. He recommended that the City determine the size and location of parking based on the ordinance requirements.

W. Janss requested clarification of the number of buildings and structures proposed by the Kiwanis project. Heikes indicated that two observation decks and one covered shelter with restrooms are proposed for the site. Elkins indicated that the subcommittee supports the availability of restroom facilities in City parks.

In response to a question from Nelson, Zimmer reviewed the notification requirements of the Use on Review process. Elkins addressed the Use on Review notification process and the meeting dates for the initial park application. In response to a request by Nelson, Elkins provided Nelson with evidence that he had been properly notified of the Use on Review application.

VanSickle expressed concern with the lack of communication between the Kiwanis and area residents regarding the park development.

Dreyer voiced support for the compromise suggestions provided by Wyss. In response to a question from Dreyer, Elkins addressed utilization of the Senior Citizen parking and the zoning requirements for the minimum number of on-site parking spaces.

Lindquist addressed his history with the subcommittee and the past discussions regarding development of Mary Hall Park.

**Lindquist moved to:**

- 1. Reaffirm the Parks & Recreation Subcommittee support for the Mary Hall Park development project;**
- 2. Encourage the Kiwanis to review the all comments provided as some have merit and some do not;**
- 3. Encourage open communication with the Friends of Mary Hall Park; and,**
- 4. Utilize the Wyss letter of December 10, 2001 (copy attached) as a starting point for those discussions.**

**Scull seconded the motion.**

In response to a question from Henderson, Elkins indicated that the subcommittee recommendation would be forwarded to the City Council per their direction. Elkins briefly reviewed the process for addressing changes to the original project proposal. Dreyer indicated that as a council person he would encourage adherence to the intent of the Wyss letter.

Discussion followed regarding the definition of a structure. The subcommittee supported the removal of the observation deck at the Natural Spring location.

The subcommittee supported an Interpretive Learning Center that would accommodate the proposed uses. The subcommittee supported elimination of the two observation decks.

**Lindquist accepted friendly amendments to his motion resulting in the following motion:**

- 1. Reaffirm the Parks & Recreation Subcommittee support for the Mary Hall Park development project;**



2. **Encourage the Kiwanis to review the all comments provided as some have merit and some do not;**
3. **Encourage open communication with the Friends of Mary Hall Park; and,**
4. **Utilize the Wyss letter of December 10, 2001 (copy attached) as a starting point for those discussions including:**
  - A. **The removal of the elevated observation deck adjacent to the uplands meadow;**
  - B. **The elimination of the deck and low-flow stream crossing at the Natural Spring site;**
  - C. **The reduction of the parking lot to the minimum allowed under the municipal code; and**
  - D. **The elimination of the tot lot play area.**

**Scully also accepted the friendly amendments. The motion as amended carried unanimously.**

Discussion followed regarding development of a maintenance agreement between the City and the Kiwanis. Elkins clarified that the maintenance issue is outside the authority of the subcommittee and would need to be presented to the City Council.

In response to a question, Elkins indicated that the recommendation of the subcommittee would be forwarded to the City Council at the earliest possible date.

In response to a question from Lynch, Zimmer indicated that she felt the recommendation of the subcommittee provided a compromise between both parties. Lindquist indicated that he felt the motion addressed the points outlined in the alternative action plan. Henderson expressed appreciation for the alternative plan noting that it has been considered and is reflected in the motion.

#### Canyon Lake Park Chimney Project

R. Johnson presented the Messenger shelter design proposal for the Canyon Lake Park chimney site. Discussion followed regarding providing an interpretive site at the chimney addressing water quality.

Zimmer expressed concern with the style of shelter being proposed noting that it might garner the same type of public response as Mary Hall Park. Discussion followed regarding changes to the design of the roofing and support beams elements to provide a structure more complementary to the overall atmosphere of Canyon Lake Park. Lindquist suggested that the roofing material match that utilized on the island gazebo and that a post and beam structure be utilized for the construction of the structural supports and beams. *The subcommittee concurred that the shelter should be redesigned to provide a complementary appearance to the Canyon Lake Park atmosphere.* Lindquist agreed to meet with the Messenger family to discuss the design elements.

#### Other Business

Zimmer thanked the subcommittee members and staff for their input and work on the Mary Hall Park issue. Zimmer complimented City staff on the new ice hockey facility noting it is an asset to the City's recreational facilities.

#### Adjourn

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.