



PIONEER PARK Master Plan Update

NEWSLETTER

February 05, 2010

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Public Meeting 2:

Date: Mar. 2, 2010

Time: 6:30 pm

Location: Billings
Community Center
at 390 N. 23rd Street

Prepared By:



The Land Group, Inc.

Public Meeting 1 Summary

The first of two public meetings for receiving public input for the Pioneer Park Master Plan Update was held Thursday evening January 28, 2010. The meeting started at 6:30 pm with a Power Point presentation followed by three breakout sessions to receive input from those in attendance. (See January Newsletter for meeting agenda).

Staff and Consultants Present:

- Mike Whitaker - Director PRPL
- Joe Fedin - Recreation Superintendent
- Mark Jarvis - Parks Planner
- Stan Griswold - The Land Group, Inc.
- David Selvage - Planet Dynamics

Noted Attendees:

- City Administrator - Christina Volek.
- 3 City Council members - Peggy Gaghen, Jim Ronquillo, and Richard Clark.
- 4 Parks, Recreation, and Cemetery Board members - Tom Iverson, Margy Bonner, Rachael Cox, and Darwin George.

Approximate attendance based on sign-up sheets: 30.

Meeting attendees were given two comment sheets upon arrival. One sheet for written comments and another showing a map of the park for sketched or map refer-

enced written comments. Some turned in comment sheets while others indicated they would be returning them later. Additional comment sheets are available for those who did not attend the meeting but would like to provide comments. Hard copies are available at the PRPL office or available at their website for download. Comment sheets are requested to be turned into the PRPL office by February 16th for consideration.

Public input is important to the design process (see January Newsletter). Please take the opportunity to provide your comments.

The final community survey report is made available to the public. Two hard copies are available for review at the City Parks, Recreation and Public Lands (PRPL) office and two hard copies are available for review at the public library. A PDF copy is available for download at the PRPL website.

The following items are posted on the Billings PRPL website <http://www.prpl.info/>:

- Power Point Slides used in Public Meeting 1.
- Community Survey Report
- Blank Public Comment Form (due by Feb. 16th).

Summary of Comments Received

The following is a summary of the verbal and written comments received at the January 28th Public Meeting. The comments are not listed in any order or priority.

Most of the comments focused around disc golf in the park. Most attendees, both disc golf players and non-players, realize disc golf has damaged the parkland, primarily the turf and trees. Additionally, several attendees felt disc golf use brings in an undesirable element. These concerns include behaviors associated with lack of restrooms on the west side of the park, offensive language, playing the course incorrectly, safety issues with course use with errantly thrown discs, and drug use. Many attendees supported designation of one or more parks in the community for disc golf course use for the following reasons: a) protect Pioneer Park resource values, b) reduce course wear, or c) move the use out of Pioneer Park entirely.

Disc golf users indicated a strong desire for the park course to be improved, modified, or reduced to eliminate resource damage and enhance quality of course play. There were several comments made about the importance of disc golf as an affordable and positive life-time activity, especially for community youth. Disc golf users desire to help fund course development and improvements, specifically mentioned was the creation of concrete/asphalt tee pads. Disc golfers and some non-disc golfers felt that both Pioneer Park and the course needs to be better managed and maintained to reduce resource damages and maintain park and recreation values. Some disc golfers indicated support to modify individual holes to make the course more sustainable. Airfairways Disc Golf Association indicated it would like to be more fully engaged by the City (Parks Department) in course maintenance and improvement. Airfairways indicated some capacity to raise funds for course improvements such as signs, tee boxes and targets. Disc golfers and some non-disc golfers are receptive to having other course alternatives provided in the community to reduce over-crowding. Some alternative parks for disc golf suggested by attendees were Optimist, Swords, Mystic, Riverfront, Cottonwood, High Sierra, Sharptail, Two Moon, and Earl Gus parks.

Comments during the Disc Golf breakout session suggest substantial common agreement on the need to repair eroded, damaged areas in the park. There also seems to be common support for improving the level of care for Pioneer Park's turf and trees and providing for more management of disc golf, should it be permitted to remain in the park. Some feel the need to provide educational opportunities to learn the proper game of disc golf including the inherent etiquette of the game.

Several mentioned need/support for a year round public restroom and additional restrooms on the west side of the park – public restroom at the Zimmerman center, was specifically mentioned multiple times. Some feel the Zimmerman Center may be underutilized and could be improved. Several people indicated strong opposition to substantial development of new parking spaces in the park. Some felt the perceived parking needs come from those who primarily attend the park for special events. Several comments suggested some additional parking (10-15 spaces) near Wendy's field in the area of the old maintenance building might be okay while others prefer looking at on street options to avoid loss of green space in the park.

Summary of Comments Continued...

Attendees did not express negative comments or views concerning major community events and their use of the park or area parking, rather some indicated the great benefits of these events. Most attendees were unaware of current park maintenance activities and funding constraints. Some indicated support of a Park Maintenance District to fund additional maintenance and management needs. Some suggested organized volunteer efforts for the park to help with maintenance needs.

Some expressed interest of allowing dogs in the park on leashes and others additionally desire a small dog park in the park. There was desire expressed to keep the playground and wading pool. There were desires for a longer wading pool season maybe weekends in May and September.

There were concerns expressed that the recently completed Statistical Community Survey does not really reflect the desires of the community. Several attendees questioned the need to spend the money to perform the community survey and the Master Plan Update, and questioned how much the proposed park improvements would cost the taxpayers. Others were in support of the Community Survey as that is the statistically valid means to reflect the desires of the community.

Design Phase Begins

Upon receipt of the community input through the stakeholder/user group interviews, the statistical community survey, and the first public meeting, and having completed a site inventory the design phase is positioned to begin.

PROJECT SCHEDULE:

Stakeholder Meeting: Design Review

Date: March 1, 2010

Time: To Be Announced

Place: To Be Announced

Public Meeting 2: Design Review

Date: March 2, 2010

Time: 6:30 pm

Place: Billings Community Center
390 N. 23rd Street

Special Park, Recreation, & Cemetery Board Meeting:

Date: March 24th

Time: 11:30 am

Place: Billings Community Center

City Council Work Session:

Date: April 5, 2010

The community input will provide a paradigm through which assessments will be made through the design process for the Master Plan of Pioneer Park. Three schematic design options will be presented to the public for input in Public Meeting 2.



For More Information:

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