

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2017

**SUMMARIZED MINUTES**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Tim Behrens  
Brian Bloom  
Jennifer Grogan  
Charles Hammersley  
Jim Stratton  
Thomas Ziegler

**STAFF PRESENT**

Sara Dechter  
Kathy Drummond  
Betsy Emery  
Gino Leoni  
Rebecca Sayers

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Rose Houk

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Adam Kaupisch

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Grogan called the meeting of October 18, 2017 to order at 4:00 p.m.

2. **ROLL CALL**

Chair Grogan, Co-Chair Bloom, Commissioners Behrens, Hammersley, Stratton, and Ziegler were present for roll call. Commissioner Kaupisch was absent.

3. **APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 20, 2017 MINUTES**

Motion made by Commissioner Hammersley to approve the September 20, 2017 minutes as written. Motion seconded by Commissioner Behrens. Motion passed unanimously with six yeas votes.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No public participation.

5. **DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

A. **High Occupancy Housing Plan discussion and direction to staff.** Sara Dechter, Comprehensive Planning Manager for the City of Flagstaff, presented this item. Planning staff is asking for a change to the two-acre minimum requirement for park spaces as recommended in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan due to the conflicting nature of this policy with policies in the Regional Plan and the proposed High Occupancy Housing Plan, as well as Zoning Code Requirements. There are two types of civic spaces identified in the current Zoning Code:

- Open space, common – the minimum amount of an open space area within a development intended or reserved for the use and enjoyment of all owners and occupants, including but not limited to areas set aside for resource protection, passive and active recreation, gardens, and landscape areas.
- Private areas – the minimum amount of private open area required with each unit provided as outdoor yard areas, patios, decks and balconies, but excluding stairs, entrance decks, and/or lands.

Civic space is an outdoor area dedicated for civic activities that is open to the public, unlike open space which may only be open to occupants/residents of a specific development. Planning staff is recommending that the two-acre minimum requirement remain the same for a civic space (public parks), but anything less (within the infill areas) may be accepted as part of an activity center if the project meets certain design requirements. Due to high occupancy developments in Flagstaff, the City needs green space within the city and this may be a way to meet that objective. The concern is that there might not be an equitable development of parks in specific areas as the city continues to be developed, and less green spaces are available, as well as opportunities for public donations.

## DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Cont'd.)

As there is a need for parks in high occupancy neighborhoods, these criteria may be a development tool to serve the citizens in those communities. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan doesn't accept parks less than two acres because they are costly to maintain. If the criteria would be changed, policy questions would need to be further defined and Parks staff would need further direction to implement.

The Commission discussed that the Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified a two-acre minimum for a reason and it should not be dismissed lightly. The concern is the increased burden on an already over-extended parks maintenance budget and staffing level. Some Commissioners expressed that they feel parks or civic spaces in these kinds of developments are the developer's responsibility to fund, develop and maintain. They do not view the Commission having a role in the review of such projects, nor do they see themselves participating in a funding solution – these are the developer's responsibilities.

A minority of Commissioners agreed that it should be the developer's responsibility to develop these civic spaces, but they were willing to continue the conversation with Planning staff, especially as related to potential funding models. All Commissioners agreed that there should be no additional burden to Parks Maintenance unless additional funding is made available for maintenance and staffing.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hammersley recommending that the City should not consider making changes to the current Parks and Recreation policy of a two-acre minimum for new parks within the city's park inventory. Commissioner Grogan seconded the motion. The motion passed with four yea votes and two nay votes. The Commissioners who voted against this item did so because they want the Parks and Recreation Commission to be able to participate in discussion and review of potential funding models to help pay for these smaller green areas (parks) so they wouldn't be an impact on the Parks budget. The final plan will be presented to City Council at a joint City Council/Planning and Zoning Commission meeting on November 8.

- B. Thorpe Park Annex concept discussion. A proposed design was presented by Rose Houk, representing the Friends of Thorpe Park (FTP), during September's Commission meeting, for the eight acres of park property which is currently being utilized as the Public Works Yard. On November 14, City Council will receive a presentation from staff about the future of the Mogollon property, including a status update on the new Core Services Facility and a discussion on the potential future of the existing park property.

The Commission asked if the FTP would consider:

- integrating new elements of the park with what already exists, so it doesn't appear to be a stand-alone park
- a mix of both active and passive recreation elements within the design, as there is a need for additional active recreation space
- identifying details of what some of the proposed features are for the wildlife viewing area, deciduous forest, community orchard, urban farming, community garden, and the urban farm incubator
- programming for the community building

Staff informed the Commission that there has been discussion about using the current Fleet building as an Indigenous Community Center or other cultural center.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hammersley that the Parks and Recreation Commission supports the draft concept with the option of making amendments to the plan in the future. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Stratton. The motion passed with six yea votes.

- C. West side park discussion and recommendation to City Council. The development of a west side park has been a priority of the Parks and Recreation Commission for the last five years. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan, adopted by City Council in 2013, has a recommendation of a 1/3-mile or 10-15-minute walk service area for neighborhood parks that are two to ten acres in size. The Plan notes a deficiency of neighborhood parks in the west and southwest areas of Flagstaff and recommends development of two neighborhood parks west of Milton Road.

## DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Cont'd.)

The City owns property near Staples which was recently rezoned as a park and there are approximately four acres for sale near Old Route 66 and Thompson Street. City staff has walked both of those areas and aerial views of both properties were reviewed by the Commission along with grade contours and FUTS trails currently connecting to the properties. New neighborhood parks in this area would serve the neighborhoods of Boulder Point, Woodlands Village, West Village, and the north section of the University Heights/Highlands neighborhood. Adjoining property off West Highland Ave., which is owned by the Boulder Point Homeowner's Association, would likely be needed for parking for the development of a park on the city-owned property near Staples.

The Commission expressed a sense of urgency needed to address land acquisition for future development of a west side park before all the available land in the area is acquired by a developer. Motion made by Commissioner Behrens to recommend to Council that the City purchase the Thompson property for park development and develop a park on the City-owned property near Staples. The motion failed for lack of a second. A motion was made by Commissioner Bloom to make a recommendation to the Flagstaff City Council that this land be acquired and dedicated for park purposes as soon as possible. Motion seconded by Commissioner Stratton. Motion passed with six yeas votes. A letter to the Mayor and Council regarding the urgency of this item and will be written by staff and submitted to Chair Grogan for her review and signature.

- D. Parks and Recreation unfunded capital list and priorities. Commissioners and staff reviewed the list that was amended during the September 20 meeting. It was the consensus of the Commission that a lap pool needed to be included while planning for the next decade. A motion was made by Commissioner Grogan to revise the priorities list to include a lap pool as item number seven. Commissioner Ziegler seconded the motion. The motion passed with six yeas votes. More information will be provided during next month's meeting regarding a racquet facility.
- E. Boards and Commission Member training – feedback from Commissioners. Two Parks and Recreation Commissioners attended the recent training and they felt the training was beneficial.

## 6. REPORTS

- A. Monthly highlights of Parks. A monthly report was included in the agenda packet and stands as presented.
- B. Monthly highlights of Recreation. A monthly report was included in the agenda packet and stands as presented. Staff is currently working on FY 18 budget priorities, the Winter Wonderland event, and the Halloween Harvest event, in partnership with the Downtown Business Alliance (DBA) on October 31.
- C. Monthly highlights of Open Space. A monthly report was included in the agenda packet and stands as presented. National Make a Difference Day is on October 28 and volunteers and staff will be working on a slope restoration project at Willow Bend.

## 7. INFORMATION ITEMS TO AND FROM COMMISSIONERS AND STAFF

## 8. AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE NOVEMBER 15, 2017 MEETING

- West side park discussion
- Parks and Recreation unfunded capital list and priorities and racquet facility discussion

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:34 p.m.