

Chesterfield Parks, Recreation and Arts Advisory
Committee Meeting/Retreat
November 14, 2015

Minutes taken by Tricia Whelan

Attendees: Alan Politte, John Gruender, Tricia Whelan, Mike Whelan, Laura Schellenberg, Gary Stein, Cindy Lau, Darcy Capstick, Bill Dowdy, John Nations, Norm Handshear

Staff Liaison: Tom McCarthy, Kari Johnson, Jason Baucom, Steve Jarvis

Committee Chair: Michelle Keesal

Council Liaison: Barry Flachsbart

Guests: Guy Tilman, Bruce Degroot

Icebreaker

Michelle Keesal called the meeting to order. Michelle Keesal made introductions.

Department Overview

Tom McCarthy presented a video of the Parks Organization. It currently has 136 employees. The Parks Department is expanding and growing. Tom McCarthy discussed the budget numbers and recent grants. The Parks Department has 521 acres of Parks. The demand has increased for the garden plots at Eberwein as there are 53 and there is a waiting list.

Steve Jarvis made a presentation on the Parks Maintenance operations. This department works on weekdays and weekends and has 26 employees. Steve discussed the challenges with maintaining the ball fields in hot and cold weather. He discussed the various grass types being utilized and some test plots. There is new signage at the CVAC. The street crews have done some flat work. There was a grant for a playground with a new rubberized surface. They are using duro-edge which helps a lot with reducing rainouts. This helps save the department money on maintenance. They have stocked the Central Park Lake with fish for catch and release fishing activities. They have put up a fence at the playground at Central park. They have assisted with the slabs for the Artwork. They have worked on the spillway and updated the permit for the dam every two years. Due to the high usage of the parks the maintenance is very important to keep the parks in good condition. Most of the grass is irrigated. Clarkson and Olive is not irrigated and requires additional work. Eberwein is not irrigated. There is a lot of concern about the grass in the dog park. It requires lots of maintenance. The new sculpture, Wiley the Coyote has been installed at Eberwein. The trail at Eberwein requires a lot of maintenance. There are a lot of drainage issues with the trail. There is a lot of fixing of the trail after damage from usage and drainage issues. They have put in a dock and steps at the Boardwalk at the Rivers Edge. They will be doing a lot of tree trimming over the winter. They are planting in the medians to improve the appearance of the roadway. The new interchange at Ladue is requiring a lot of manual work.

Kari Johnson made a presentation on the CVAC. There are 110 plus events that have occurred this season. 29 events were new this year. The goal is to create opportunities for the residents. The senior programs have taken off. There were 28 tournaments in 40 weekends at the CVAC. IN 2015 the CVAC has 21,000 hours of use. March and June 2015 had heavy rains. There were only 6.5 rainouts as there was no way to get the fields ready quickly. No other complex in the St. Louis area was playable except for the CVAC during the heavy rains. There were 28 national tournaments. In October, 300 colleges with 156 teams were here. 124 teams were from out of State. This was in one weekend over 3 days.

Miracle Field is a real asset to the CVAC. Real Madrid was here over the summer. They had four coaches over three weeks to teach kids how to play "Real" soccer. There were camps and tournaments. The CVAC has six concessions. The prices are reasonable. Each concession is staffed with six people. Most of the employees are high school students. The concessions will net \$150,000 in profit this year which is remarkable. The Concessions offer variety to the patrons which helps sales. Hiring seniors who want something to do would be helpful. Background checks and Hepatitis A shots are required. The Aquatic Center suffered losses this year. It had revenues of \$243,927 and expenses of \$408,000. The K-9

Splash, the Yappy Hour and the "Howl-o-ween Party were big hits. The senior program includes Pickleball, Halloween Bingo and a river walk club. There were movies under the stars and there was a give back program that benefited local charities. The Rivers Edge had Kayaks and Stand Up Paddleboarding this year. In addition, Monarch Fire and the Police are at most of our events. The Tour De Wellness had 510 riders this year. The 4th of July party had 10,000 participants. We have the largest fireworks display in the area. The Pedal the Cause had over 3,000 riders. The Amphitheater had St. Louis Vintage Market Days which has 107 vendors and was held in April and October. There was \$82,000 in 2015 sponsorships. At F quad there will be an AB/Grey Eagle area with Direct TV for entertainment. This will draw a lot more interest at the CVAC as patrons can watch their favorite big sporting events while being outside. Lisa Bobrzynski has done an excellent job with our marketing and communications and will help market this new entertainment area.

Jason Baucom made a presentation on the Arts and Entertainment. He discussed the ongoing Art Exhibits at City Hall. They have installed a professional hanging system at City Hall. The focus is on local arts. There is an Art on Loan program. There is Art at Central Park and there is an Art Walk. Sukanya Mani has started Art tours. She will present and discuss the art from an Artists perspective. There is no charge for the art tours. The art tours will be published in the guide and also can be downloaded on the new app. The app will also include information on other art pieces in the parks. We are in process of promoting the arts programs. The following is what is on the schedule for the Arts:

Live Art Project

Art in the Park Workshops

Orchestra and Art Series

City Hall/Public Art Tours

Painted Guitar Competition

Art Invasion Concert in partnership with Art Unleashed. The first concert made an \$8,000.00 profit

Fall Film Series-Classics-Adult oriented

Continued expansion of public art on display through exhibits, purchases and the art on loan program

The amphitheater has been a great success. It does take a lot of work to market it. The Parks Committee was helpful in the beginning of the Amphitheater with providing ideas for use of it. The wine and Jazz Festival had 7,500 in attendance. The Blues Festival and the Strings Festival are being added. There was a Hard Rock Festival called Mock of Ages this year. The Budweiser Taste of St. Louis was very successful and had over 175,000 in attendance. The Taste of Trucktober was a good event. The Summer concert series was a success with three national touring acts and tribute bands. There was a video production on the roof of the amphitheater that was a big hit. The cost is 4,000 to 5,000 per concert to utilize the roof. Getting the national acts here is a big production as you are dealing with several people including the booking agent, the label agent, the manager, the tour people, the production staff, the underwriter, and the technical writers. The logistics involve 40-50 emails a day leading up to the event. This year we had Frankie Ballard and Chris Janson. Our venue is unique. Our goal is to build relationships with other venues/people so that we get bigger shows and more name recognition. We are thinking of doing a Friday night country music series at the Amphitheater.

Break – 10 minutes

Discuss and Review Mission Statement

Michelle Keesal discussed adding the Arts to our Mission Statement. Our new title will be: The Parks and Recreation and Arts Citizen Advisory Committee (PRACAC) is a recommending body to the Parks and Recreation and Arts Committee of City Council.

Tom McCarthy discussed the Art that is owned and on loan with the City. We have bought one piece and received four pieces. We cleared the title on three. All the pieces in Central Park are owned by the City. The awakening is moved back to Sachs Properties. The Mustangs belong to THF. We own the Aspire in Central park. The Art on Loan program was discussed. We cover the insurance and maintenance. The contracts are two plus year contracts. If the art piece sells, we don't take a commission. There is a budgeting process that is well defined and goes to council. It is a good system. There is a budget review meeting next Monday at 5:30 p.m. and all are welcome to attend. The Public Hearing

is at the December meeting. If there are budgeting concerns, you are the voice of the community so please come to the meeting.

Tom McCarthy discussed the Parks and Recreation budget. We have the ½ cent sales tax which provides 7 million to 8 million annually. Our big expense is our maintenance. We have a nice budget to work with for new parks and trails. Guy Tilman suggested that it would be helpful and informative on how to build the Arts program into the mission statement. Tom McCarthy stated that they will be bringing a master plan. We are going out and doing a new parks master plan. There will be a community survey. Visual Art is a lot different than Parks so we do need citizen and community input. The master plan is for the council. The council will direct the parks on the big picture. The Parks master plan will be referred to at the next committee meeting. Tom McCarthy will make revisions on the mission statement and objectives and send out to everyone to review. We discussed the SCORP standards in 2013. This stands for Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. It discusses all the land available and what part is parks, schools, green areas, open areas, etc. It also evaluates trails, gardens, soccer fields, multi use fields, playgrounds, and football fields. What we are looking at right now is as follows:

Community Garden expansion we currently have 53 plots and 48 people on a waiting list
Chesterfield Challenge – health and wellness
Shoeman Water Project
CVAC Field Expansion F5 and F6
Volunteers
Monarch Levee Trail

The volunteers were discussed and it was agreed that having friends and neighbors volunteer at some of the events as an extension of the committee is accepted.

The Monarch Levee trail was discussed. Working on Hardees East under the Highway. We are working with the owner to get an easement. Goal is in June 2016 when the bridge opens there will be a bike trail across the river. The trail expansion is going well.

Michelle Keesal discussed the previous five priorities

1. Recommend land acquisition and available land
2. Evaluate new ideas for Park Development
3. Explore Water Recreation/fishing/canoeing, etc.
4. Events for Rivers Edge
5. Ambassador Program

We plan to review the process, see what has been accomplished, see what is still relevant and list additional priorities

1. Recommend Land. Several people came up with land recommendations and doing some trail development. This should continue to be a valuable priority. We should let the City do the negotiating and not advertise what we know so negotiations go well.
2. Evaluating new ideas for park development. The Rivers Edge – keep this as one of our objectives. There is potential for more water recreation. There will be a design process
3. Advocate for improvements

Open Discussion

Norm Handshear stated that we have a lot going on. Maybe we should take a breath. Let's maximize what we have before we add new items. We do a pretty good job of maintaining what we have. We are now adding the Arts.

We need to do a better job of cross marketing. We need to talk to the condo associations, the Homeowners associations, trustees and communicate by various means all that we have to offer the citizens. We have hired a

marketing person and built the parks app which is very useful to our citizens. We are getting the word out about our City. There are lots of people who have not seen our Amphitheater and when we have new events it brings new people to the City. Other ideas for the city include a family shelter, and plans to develop Railroad Park in the future. It would be great to open that up to the public as a picnic area. Tom McCarthy stated that Railroad Park has challenges with access but that's the next thing is to try to get a grant for Railroad Park. A sheltered picnic area would be nice. We need more picnic areas in the City.

Michelle Keesal requested ideas from the committee. The committee members suggested the following:

1. Railroad Park Development
2. Family Shelters
3. Habitat Restoration
4. Enhanced Parks
5. Arts Ideas
6. Fitness Activities
7. Person to person marketing efforts
8. Multi cultural arts
9. State of recycling throughout the parks systems
10. Staycations
11. Farmers Markets
12. Chesterfield Challenge
13. Homeowner Association Days (Give Central Park to HOA for a day-have their families get together for a day)
14. Ask Trustees to come to the meetings and get involved and sign them up as volunteers

Michelle Keesal stated that the meeting time had ended and that we will continue this brainstorming at our next meeting on December 12, 2015. We will take these ideas and bring our flipchart and do more brainstorming.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.