

**Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission
Meeting Minutes – May 12, 2021**

DATE OF MEETING: May 12, 2021
MEMBERS PRESENT: Laci Harrison, Dan Witkowski, Shari Smith, Fiona Corner
OTHERS PRESENT: One member of the public, Council Liaison Engle, Parks & Recreation Director Case
LOCATION: Meeting was held via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER – Commission Chair Harrison called the meeting to order at 5:30pm.

MEETING MINUTES - The meeting minutes from the March 10, 2021 meeting were approved as written. *All in favor.*

OLD BUSINESS

Request from Ellensburg Youth Rugby Program– Bob Ford, Ellensburg Youth Rugby Program, provided the commission with a report on the success of the inaugural youth rugby program which consisted of over 100 kids ages 12-18. Mr. Ford requested support to continue with the development of rugby field at West Ellensburg Park by removing the existing baseball backstop fencing, dugouts, and turfing the infield dirt areas at the West Ellensburg Park baseball field. Follow up phases could include reconfiguring parking and new bathroom/concession/storage building. Repurposing existing park space into a higher better use was identified as a community priority in the park comprehensive plan update.

As previously mentioned, for the last five years all formal baseball activities have shifted to the two full sized baseball fields at Rotary Park, which are located immediately adjacent to West Ellensburg Park. Repurposing existing park space at West Ellensburg Park into a higher better use was identified as a community priority in the park comprehensive plan update. Staff will perform additional public outreach about the conversions of the baseball field into a multi-use space.

A motion was made and seconded to support removing the existing baseball backstop fencing, dugouts, and turfing the infield dirt areas if feedback from the public is supports the recommendation. *All in favor.*

Project Updates

- **Downtown Park** – The City received permission to demo the drive thru bank structure. This work will take place sometime after June 15th in order to avoid impacts to the downtown while CWU is still in session. Next steps from a planning prospective is to hire a landscape architect to complete the master planning process. Upon completion of the plan staff will be able to move forward with identifying funding sources.

A recommendation was made to make sure in the outreach effort to engage law enforcement on the impact the bank building, if left, would have on policing efforts. Another request was vetting the fiscal impact of building a new restroom versus renovating the existing space into public restrooms, storage and possible box office/ticket window. The cost to build new may be less than renovating existing and It's important that the community understand that if this is the decision the City makes moving forward.

- **Park Comprehensive Plan Update** – City staff will be looking at the feasibility of updating the park plan in house without the assistance of consultant. Many of the items identified in the current park plan are still true and staff believes the new plan can be built large upon the existing plan.
- **Community Center** – staff has been contacted by members of the public who are putting together an organized effort to develop an indoor recreation space at Rotary Park patterned after a field house design. This idea differs from a community recreation center in that it solely provides space for athletic courts, athletic activities, and indoor field space.
- **COVID & Recreation Programming and Facility Operations** – staff is putting together plans for summer recreation programming based on the most recent information from the Governors office, these plans include:
 - Stan Bassett Youth Center – summer camp/drop in program with local walk field trips planned. This program would be free to the community.
 - Kittitas Valley Memorial Pool & Fitness Center – implementing recreation swims back into the schedule, expanding the swim lesson program
 - Adult Activity Center – The Center is reopening the week of May 17th with minimally programming; no drop-in hours are planned, all participants must preregister for activities
 - Recreation Programming – events that are being planned include ‘Great American Campout’, expanded concerts in the park summer series, drive in movies, and the Gladiator Dash

COMMISSION MEMBER REPORTS

Commissioner Witkowski asked about some work that was done along the Irene Rinehart Riverfront Park levy, specifically why there was large rubber mats entangled in some of the root wads and the unevenness of the ground in that area as a result of the work that was performed.

STAFF REPORT – 1. Heidi Behrends Cerniwey, the new Ellensburg City Manager, will begin work Monday, May 17, 2021. 2. The summer operating status of the Ellensburg Racquet & Recreation Center is being reviewed. Hours will be contingent on community access to local tennis courts. The plan is to have the center open a few hours a week to accommodate racquetball play since there are no other racquetball options in the community. 3. At North Alder Street Park a bench was removed from the park but later recovered from the adjacent apartment complexes. Some turf at North Alder Street Park was damaged as a result of snow mold, hopefully the turf in time will recover. 4. To date McElroy Park has not been impacted by local flooding. 5. Two weeks ago staff participated virtually in the Washington Recreation and Park Association annual conference. Staff discussed a session on industry trends which included composting methods never seen before. 6. Ellensburg City Council officially named the downtown park ‘Unity Park’. Council liaison Engle complimented Commission Chair Harrison on her participation in the Council meeting and that her input was heavily weighted in their decision-making process.

ADJOURNMENT - The meeting was adjourned at 6:55pm.