

**Bend Metro Park & Recreation District
Board of Directors
Work Session & Executive Session
October 21, 2008**

BOARD PRESENT: Bob Woodward, Scott Wallace, Ruth Williamson and Ted Schoenborn.

STAFF PRESENT: Don Horton, Bruce Ronning, Jan Taylor, Ed Moore, Theresa Albert, Chris Zerger, Norm Ziesmer and Paula Lowery.

LEGAL COUNSEL: None.

MEDIA: Erin Golden, The Bulletin.

VISITORS: Larry Zakrajsek, Michael Graham, Mike Lovely and Sue Vordenberg.

WORK SESSION

Chair Bob Woodward convened the work session at 5:30 pm.

Park Accessibility Study Proposal

Bruce Ronning stated that Norm Ziesmer has attended two national accessibility training sessions over the past year and developed a wealth of knowledge regarding accessibility requirements and the process for compliance. He encouraged the board to visit some of the recent project work the district has undertaken to meet accessibility requirements. He cited the new river canyon development area off of Brookwood near Elk Meadow School. He stated staff has done a remarkable job of widening an accessible pathway through difficult terrain to provide access to the river. He noted that Norm would be reviewing other examples of the district's efforts to meet accessibility requirements. Norm Ziesmer reviewed the history of the ADA law that requires the district to remove barriers and ensure that we are not discriminating against anyone due to any type of disability. He stated he believes the district has been a leader in facilitating access to parks noting that a transition plan was developed in 1993 that identified a number of deficiencies which was followed by a number of upgrades to facilities and parking lots. Norm stated since then there have been a lot of changes in the guidelines and standards. He explained one problem with those changes is they address indoor facilities, although some outdoor facilities were added in 2004. Norm stated the proposed accessibility study would accomplish three things: 1. develop guidelines for the district to address best practices for park facilities; 2. inventory park facilities to identify deficiencies; and 3. provide guidance and an action plan to upgrade those facilities or include improved accessibility in future plans for the district. He explained that he has done some work with Steven Waff, a park aid with the district who serves as a GIS technician and surveyed the district's parks and facilities. Norm displayed a view of Blakely Park and identified areas such as cross slope that needs to be improved to meet accessibility requirements. He explained the survey also provides an inventory of the accessible amenities such as parking, paths, picnic tables, drinking fountains, etc. He stated once the guidelines are developed, we will be able to identify the things we are doing well and the things we need to improve. He also shared a view of Sylvan Park and identified some features that need to be accessible. Norm displayed a view of Sawyer Park and explained the trails that lead to the bridge need to be addressed as well as the parking lot. He stated that Steven put together a tremendous amount of information and now he needs to use the information to develop guidelines to determine what we need to fix and what we need to add to future projects. He added that he will be assisted by a staff committee and try to bring in a private consultant to address legal requirements. Bruce noted that all of this information plays into the district's Capital Improvement Plan. Ruth Williamson stated that she had attended the NRPA National Institute on Recreation Inclusion (NIRI) in September that covered all facets of accessibility and inclusiveness. She stated to the degree that we can weave this into everything that we do, it elevates our end product and it is an important value and position to take with regard to how we deliver our services.

She added this is something we want to bring to bear in our discussions of how we allocate funding. Bruce explained that staff is proposing to not wait for the ADA rulemaking process, rather take what we have learned both locally and nationally and develop a policy of our own that will guide outdoor facility design and development. He stated the policy would be presented to the board for discussion and adoption into the Comprehensive Plan.

Mike Lovely asked if it would be better to train an employee to address ADA needs vs. hiring a consultant. Norm Ziesmer stated there are so many facets to ADA such as employment, project management and inclusion, which involves different departments. He stated that has the potential for diluting the process whereas specialists are knowledgeable for each individual area. Bruce noted the in-house expertise of Wayne Smith, Amber Blanchard and Norm Ziesmer, but stated that with regard to building design or more sophisticated issues, it is valuable to have a consultant who is up to speed and well-versed in standards. Don Horton noted there is also a time consideration with in-house staff and other project commitments. He stated a consultant could achieve the work within two or three months. Bruce noted district staff can do the inventory piece of the study more efficiently in-house.

Riverbend Water Rights

Don Horton explained the district holds water rights that can be transferred to Riverbend Park. He noted that currently the district is purchasing water from Bill Smith to irrigate Riverbend and Farewell Bend parks which is cheaper than buying water from the city, however, not as economical as using the district's water rights. He explained water could be pulled directly from the river which we feel would be challenged. He stated another option is to drill for the water which would most likely not be challenged as this option allows the water rights to remain in the river. Don added construction of a pump house would be required with a well which would water both Riverbend and Farewell Bend parks. He stated it may take two years to complete the process and in the interim the district will continue to purchase water from Bill Smith.

Speakers Bureau

Jan Taylor explained the speakers bureau is another tool to address the district's efforts toward improved community outreach. She explained that Chris Zerger will be developing the speakers bureau and identifying groups and organizations for presentations. She added that one of the components of the program is staff training to ensure that staff is well prepared for presentations. Jan encouraged the board to participate in the speakers bureau. Chris Zerger stated she is looking forward to developing the program and targeting organizations that might not know about the district.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Bob Woodward convened an executive session pursuant to ORS 192.660 (2) (e) for the purpose of discussing real property transactions.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Kudos Award

Don Horton reported the district had been presented with the Kudos Award for Marketing at the recent NRPA Congress. He explained the award recognizes the district's excellence in marketing, similar to the Gold Medal Award. He cited the efforts of Andie Lindgren in leading the district's marketing efforts that resulted in this achievement.

Pumpkin Festival

Don Horton reported the 19th Annual Pumpkin Festival was a success in spite of the cold weather. He noted 80 volunteers participated in the event.

November 4 board meeting

Don Horton asked if there would be a quorum on November 4 due to the date also being Election Day. The board discussed and determined to meet beginning at 3:30 pm on November 4.

Contemporary Management Issues Think Tank for Parks and Recreation

Don Horton reported he has been invited to participate in a think tank gathering of leading parks and recreation professionals from around the nation to discuss contemporary management issues and best practices November 9 – 11 in Louisville, Colorado. He stated he will be representing the only community of our size. The board agreed it would be beneficial for Don to attend the event.

November 12 Work Session

Don Horton reminded the board of the special work session scheduled for November 12, from 12:00 noon to 2:00 pm.

Veteran's Memorial Ceremony

Don Horton reported the Veteran's Memorial ceremony will be conducted on November 8, at Brooks Park. He noted he will not be able to attend the event and asked for board representation.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Ruth Williamson stated that she had attended the recent NRPA Congress and thanked the district for its support in making it available for board members. She stated she always gains a lot of information from the conferences and they help to expand her thinking.

Don Horton thanked the board members for attending the NRPA Congress and recognized Ted Schoenborn's efforts on behalf of the district in serving on the NRPA Citizen's Board. He added that Ted has been a lot of help to him with the NRPA Pacific Northwest Regional Council.

Bob Woodward reported on a meeting with Senator Wyden regarding the Deschutes County Committee on Recreation Assets.

As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:50 pm.

Prepared by,

Paula Lowery
Executive Assistant

Bob Woodward, Chair

Scott Wallace, Vice-Chair

Ted Schoenborn

George Thayer

Ruth Williamson