



Minutes
Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting
Wednesday, October 11, 2023

Susan Rhea called the meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:01 PM at the Carbondale Town Hall Trustee Chambers.

The following members were present for Roll Call:

Members:

John Williams	Member
Susan Rhea	Member
Ashley Hejtmanek	Member
Eli Cohen	Youth Representative
Drew Sorenson	Member

Town Staff Present:

Eric Brendlinger	Parks and Recreation Director
Margaret Donnelly	Recreation Center Manager
Kae McDonald	Boards and Commissions Clerk

Guests:

Niki Delson	Age-Friendly Carbondale
Sue Zislis	Age-Friendly Carbondale

1. Roll Call

2. Consent Agenda

2.1 Parks and Recreation Commission, September 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the September 13, 2023, meeting minutes.

Moved by: Eli Cohen

Seconded by: John Williams

Carried

3. **Items from Citizens Present Not on the Agenda**

There was no one present, not on the agenda, to address the Commission.

4. **Action Items**

4.1 **Parks & Recreation Commission Election of Chair and Vice-Chair**

Motion to accept Hollis Sutherland as the Parks & Recreation Commission Chair.

Moved by: Ashley Hejtmanek

Seconded by: John Williams

Carried

Motion to accept Rose Rossello as the Parks & Recreation Commission Vice-Chair.

Moved by: Ashley Hejtmanek

Seconded by: John Williams

Carried

4.2 **Crystal River Restoration Project Update**

Eric reported that Redoubt Restoration completed all the in-river work prior to the September 30th deadline as required for whitefish spawning. He added that the property remains closed until handrails are in place and the concrete access is finished. Eric noted that a large stone is also being dropped on-site and will have the project proponents engraved on the surface. He pointed out that the remaining work will include planting and the installation of above-ground temporary irrigation in the spring -- Redoubt will sub this work out -- and over the winter the design and language of the interpretive signage will be developed. He explained that Audubon Roaring Fork will be portioned space on that signage. Susan asked if any work would take place around the picnic table area. She noted that, at last night's Board of Trustee meeting, the mayor had expressed his appreciation for how well the project has turned out thus far. She asked if an opening announcement would take place once the work is completed.

Eric replied that a fisherman access is the only work being done in the vicinity of the picnic tables. He explained that once the spring planting has been completed and is protected, a "grand opening" will take place. He noted that they are continuing manual extraction of noxious weeds, and expressed optimism that the planned planting paired with irrigation for the first few years will outcompete the weeds.

Susan suggested organizing community volunteer days for weed extraction.

Eric related that Leslie Keery is organizing "Rams Day" as a volunteer effort for manual extraction of noxious weeds on Town property. He reiterated how pleased he is with the process and results for the Crystal River Restoration Project. Eric reminded the commission members that the park will be closed December 1st through March 15th for the Bald Eagle closure but noted that if commission members want to organize a tour prior to that time to contact him.

4.3 Age-Friendly Carbondale OLAT Park Assessments

Niki Delson and Sue Zislis, both on the Age-Friendly Carbondale Steering Committee, presented their conclusions regarding the Age-Friendly group's OLAT park assessments. Niki began the presentation, noting that this project began by reviewing notes from the initial meeting that took place in June 2022. She noted that at that meeting, commission members agreed to revise and streamline the OLAT tool, test the revised version, and then forward that version to CAFCI (now Age-Friendly Carbondale) for their use in assessing Carbondale's parks. She explained that with those park assessments now complete, next steps should include the creation of a joint task force to compare the results from the Parks & Rec Commission and Age-Friendly Carbondale side-by-side for reliability and consistency.

Sue reported on observations and anecdotes from the Age-Friendly Carbondale users:

- This version of OLAT is much better than the original and the organization and space for comments was appreciated.
- Problems observed included the distinct nature of various parks with multiple items on each page potentially being irrelevant depending upon each park. They suggested developing a unique assessment tool for each park which would assist in tracking changes to the park from year to year. Another suggestion was to digitize the tool, thereby allowing the specific parameters of each park to be entered on the face page that might not be known by the user such as if/when port-a-potties will be delivered and where they might be located, the prescribed maintenance schedule, and the closest bus stop.
- Questions that should have been included with more detail should be revisited at a later time but are important to consider because they may be skewed based on the individual's own interpretation. Topics to consider include:
 - What is "Code Compliant"
 - What is "ADA Compliant"
 - What is "large enough"
 - Safety hazards may include sharp or rusty edges on equipment, tripping hazards, supportive surfaces, splinters, unstable surfaces that are meant to be stable, protruding hardware, unlit areas meant to be open after dark or may need motion detectors/security.
- Prompt needed to take pictures and measure distances and sizes.
- Face page – reviewer should be advised to read the website park description prior to assessing park. The website should also be updated to include a statement about features that may be absent at each park such as no benches, no bike racks, or no drinking fountain.
- Sue stated that accessibility as it is being discussed at this meeting does not equate to ADA accessibility for those using wheelchairs, etc., but rather accessibility for small children, visitors adjusting to altitude, or grandparents watching grandchildren, etc.

Niki followed up, commenting that it was interesting to do the assessments and it has been a learning opportunity to see things in a different way. For example, she pointed out that although a bench when originally installed may have been ADA compliant, if it wasn't set on a solid surface it may sink into the ground over time, thereby making it difficult – if not impossible – for some people to get up. She also suggested that the Commission needs to consider the necessity of

making bathrooms ADA compliant when the park itself isn't ADA accessible. She also thought that the OLAT was a valuable tool to advertise the incredible parks that Carbondale has to offer and updating the various park's descriptions on the Town website benefits newcomers and visitors.

Susan followed up on the bathroom issue – “why make it accessible, if the park isn't accessible.”

Niki replied that she is in good shape for her age, but she has observed a gradual loss of strength in her arms and struggles to open the bathroom door at Gianinetti Park, and therefore wonders why assess the accessibility of the bathroom interior if people can't open the door. She encouraged commission members to view things from other people's perspectives when completing the assessments.

Eric thanked Age-Friendly Carbondale for the park assessments, noting that the information detailed was more in-depth than their CIRSA representative. He appreciated the revelations about the benches and committed to getting them fixed.

Niki announced that they have submitted several grant applications for that purpose, so it doesn't have to come out of the Town's budget.

Eric related that he understood the unique aspects of each park because a weed management plan also had to be crafted for each park.

Niki suggested that the next step would be to form a small committee to compare assessments. She thought it would be beneficial to get Eli's perspective, as well.

Susan indicated a willingness to participate.

Eli replied that he would be willing to help and thought he might be able to coordinate with the local elementary schools to gain their perspective.

Sue reiterated that while there isn't an expectation that all parks will be ADA compliant, she thought it was important to publicly document what is or isn't available at each park.

Niki announced that their group was awarded two grants to design an ADA compliant conversation area at Ramey-Harvey Park and it is being dedicated to a local woman who undertook a medical option to end her life. She explained that there will be a memorial dedication on October 21st and while it is closed to the public, she invited two members of the Commission to attend. She noted that the woman produced a video two days before her death that told her story, and that video will be played at the public library at 2:00 pm on the same day and is open to the public.

After Niki and Sue's presentation, Drew commented that he liked the OLAT tool in its entirety and what he got from using the tool is that it identified the park's use, especially if entire sections are listed as not applicable. He hesitated to create an individual tool for each park because small details might be missed.

Ashley noted that that is the difference between a hard copy and digital assessment, because if the tool was digitized a negative answer to a leading question would eliminate a series of questions.

Susan thought the tool was useful as a “ToDo” list and items can be checked off as they are completed.

Eric agreed that his interest in the tool was for budget prioritization, and he appreciated how the Age-Friendly coalition focused on benches. He thought Niki's suggested next step was appropriate.

Susan appreciated Drew's comment but suggested that for certain parks – Hendrick's Dog Park, for example – a short form might be appropriate.

Eli commented that digitizing the form would allow the universal form to be accurate.

John stated that he liked having the complete form because it made one think about whether there were missing elements in each park.

4.4 **Aquatics Facility Design and Construction Update -- Electrification Exercise, New Timeline and Budget**

Eric reported that the project team is currently doing a detailed review into the electrification of the aquatics facility building and pool heating systems, noting that design work has been halted until this issue has been resolved. He noted that he included a letter from Branch Patterns – an engineering and plumbing consultant -- that provides good information for the potential of using heat pumps and electric resistive heating. He added that they have also conferred with Group 14 – an energy efficiency consultant – and they will provide cost estimates for four systems tomorrow.

Susan noted Branch Patterns opening statement "...The difficulty of heating in the winter in the heart of the Rockies..." and questioned the premise that the pool will be operated in the winter. Eric replied that the long-term goal is to use the pool as long as possible each year and it will be designed for winter use. He added that because each of the systems being quoted requires different building envelopes and corresponding architectural designs, they will need to decide which system to go with as soon as possible. He noted that the process has affected the project timeline, and the estimated opening date is now September of 2025, but commented that that might provide a "soft opening" to test systems as part of the extended season.

Susan noted that the transition to electrification must be a community effort. She asked if there will be separate systems for the building and the pool.

Eric referred to Branch Patterns letter, noting that the heat pumps serving the pool will have to be isolated from the pool water, explaining that it isn't clear yet whether one or two systems will be necessary. He added that they must decide soon so the design team can move onto developing schematics. Eric also reported that they have been meeting with Cynthia Colbrook, the capital campaign manager, and that she has been developing a list of potential donors. He announced that the fundraising campaign slogan is "Let's make a splash," and tax-deductible donations will be accepted through the Town. He noted that they may also seek the services of a professional grant writer.

Eli asked if it would make a difference in applying for grants if the project is 80 or 100% electric. Eric wasn't sure but noted that the State of Colorado Energy Office offers grants specific to that purpose.

4.5 **8:35 PM - 8:45 PM: Carbondale Arts "Dia De Los Muertos" Fee Waiver Request for Town Stage Rental**

Eric related that Carbondale Arts had submitted a fee waiver request form for the mobile stage rental fee, reminding the commission members that neither the damage deposit fee or set up/take down costs are waived.

Motion to approve the Carbondale Arts "Dia de los Muertes" fee waiver request.

Moved by: Drew Sorenson

Seconded by: Eli Cohen

Carried

5. 8:45 PM - 9:00 PM: Information Only Items

Reports and Updates: Eric Brendlinger, Parks & Recreation Director:

Potato Days was very successful:

- The Contra Dance at the Rec Center was well received. 139 people attended the dance, and all profits will go to the Carbondale Historical Society because they are the recipients of the overall Potato Days fundraiser.
- Potato Day events included the Ross Montessori Fun Run, the Rotary Club Pancake Breakfast, the Potato Day Parade, Vendors, and lunch.
 - There were \$11,400.00 in sponsorships
 - 200 people attended the pancake breakfast
 - There were 15 entries in the Parade
 - There were 34 artists/vendors in Sopris Park
 - 725+ meals were served at lunch and all the potatoes were supplied by local farms including Gianinetti, Sustainable Settings (lessee), Highwater Farms, and Rock Bottom Ranch. Leftover potatoes and corn will be donated to Lift-Up and possibly the soup kitchen
- Final numbers for the event will be reported at the November Commission meeting and a Thank You advertisement will be in Thursday's Sopris Sun.
- A big Thank You to the Parks & Recreation Center staff for their hard work.
- Although Ride the Ranches and Party in the Pasture were not Town of Carbondale-sponsored events, they dovetailed nicely with the weekend.

John also complimented the staff for their great job.

Eli commented that it was the most Carbondale teens and kids involved, and he thought it was a great event to grow within the youth community.

Margaret added that they received a lot of positive comments about the parade.

Eric reported on a few other items:

- They are working on the final design for the Dog Park signage to be reviewed at the November Commission meeting, with the final product going out for bid after that.
- Met with RE: Land regarding the Chacos Park Master Plan to develop a public outreach survey. The consultants also plan to talk to stakeholders as well as the Chacos Family to gain their perspective on what they would like to see in the park.
- The 30/60/90-day calendar has also been updated for the Commission's review.

Reports and Updates: Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Center Manager

- Outdoor Pickleball Clinics are completed. The Sunday Night Pickleball Clinic will take a different format and is already full.
- The Senior Trip to Paonia took two full vans. The upcoming Senior Trip on October 28th will be to the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens.
- The Farmer's Market ended in September.
- There will be a Youth art class offered in December.
- The "End of an Era" Pool Party took place on Sunday, September 24th. Lia is currently sorting through what to keep for the new pool.
- Staff attended the Colorado Parks & Recreation Association Conference and enjoyed some bonding time with each other.
- The Blood Mobile is at the Rec Center on the first Wednesday of every month.
- Youth climbing and adult volleyball have started again.
- A Carbondale Users Survey is currently available on the website. Margaret prefers to observe for the first year and the survey is the first step in developing additional programming, as well as keeping those programs the public likes.
- Basketball registration has opened, and practice will begin in November. Spin class also returns in November, along with a new strength class. Pickleball will also return to indoor play in November.
- Hockey and Broomball registration will open soon.
- Registration for the Turkey Trot is open. They are partnering with "Shop with a Cop" for the t-shirts. Volunteers are needed for the event – anyone interested can contact Margaret.
- Light Up Carbondale will take place on December 1st.

Reports and Updates: Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Liaison:

- During the BOT budget discussion, Luis advised them not to forget the net zero goals and process for the pool project.
- Chris Hassig suggested eliminating the spa.
- Eliminating the spa wouldn't save a lot of money and it was a feature that is highly desired by the community and is also key to extending the pool season.

6. Adjournment

The October 11, 2023, meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission adjourned at 8:45 p.m. The next regular meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission is scheduled for Wednesday, November 8, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kae McDonald

Boards & Commissions Clerk, Town of Carbondale