

MINUTES
CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
July 12, 2023

Rose Rossello called the meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:00 p.m. at Carbondale Town Hall on July 12, 2023.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

Members: Rose Rossello, Vice-Chair
 Susan Rhea, Member
 Drew Sorenson, Member
 Ashley Hejtmanek, Member
 John Williams, Member
 Leslie Keery, Member
 Brian Soby, Alternate

Town Staff Present: Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director
 Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Center and Programs Manager
 Ben Bohmfalk, Town of Carbondale Mayor
 Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk

Guests: Andi Duroux, Land + Shelter
 Sarah Hoover, WEMBER
 Dave Detwiler, WEMBER

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Susan Rhea *moved* to approve the minutes from the July 12, 2023, meeting. Drew Sorenson *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

ITEMS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

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

AQUATICS FACILITY UPDATE

Eric introduced the Aquatics Facility design and project management team – Andi Duroux from Land + Shelter, Sarah Hoover from WEMBER, and Dave Detwiler from WEMBER.

Sarah explained that the presentation was designed to be a status update and she shared her screen to facilitate the discussion. She added that the current task is to work through design and pricing exercises with the goal to develop a basic design that conforms to the \$8,000,000.00 project budget.

Eric pointed out that there were two construction schedule options, and the most feasible option is to begin construction next spring, missing the 2024 season, with an anticipated opening of the new pool in May or June of 2025.

Rose wondered if it was possible to set up a temporary pool next to the Recreation Center for the 2024 summer.

Margaret replied that they are bringing back a program called “Friday Frenzy” that will include water features set up on the lawn and they may continue it next year.

Andi highlighted the anticipated public outreach for the design/pricing exercises, noting that it will consist of two efforts:

- A Design Advisory Group considers and decides on design elements for the pricing exercise.
- They will host a booth at Mountain Fair to inform community members of the choices being made and to make sure the design continues to remain in line with what the community wants.

Margaret added that the Design Advisory Group includes TOC staff (Eric, Margaret, and Lia), a Parks & Recreation Commission representative (Hollis), the architectural consultants, and three community members representing various pool user groups. She explained that it isn't feasible to make every design choice in a public forum and that is the role the Design Advisory Group is fulfilling.

Susan noted that in her experience when conceptual design elements aren't included in the built product, community members will often comment that they weren't listened to, or their idea wasn't used. She wondered if it was even necessary to pretend to listen.

Eric replied that the goals of the public outreach will be to inform the community about the budget restrictions and to engage in philosophical discussions that address matching the design to the community's desires for certain elements as well as energy efficiency.

Margaret added that the architects are developing a lot of plans and that is where the Design Advisory Committee makes decisions that facilitate choosing the optimal design for the established budget. She explained that there will be some circumstances where there are three possible options and that is where the community can be involved in deciding which option to incorporate.

Susan noted that during Covid, an online survey was utilized and wondered if that would be considered during this process.

Andi replied that the public outreach will progress as the design progresses and there is a lot more information to come.

Sarah commented that in terms of programming and budget, once a design is settled on that meets the budget criteria there may be "add-on" items that would be appropriate for a fundraising campaign.

Eric explained that given the budget constraints, hard decisions had to be made prioritizing the aquatic features and then designing a building that supported those features. He noted that those two items are the primary features of the costing exercise, and those missing features would comprise the fundraising effort. He added that the costing exercise will wrap up within the next month and that will inform the fundraising goal. He acknowledged that they need to begin considering the possibility of hiring a grant writer or capital campaign manager in the near term. Eric commented that they will be going after a Great Outdoors Colorado grant and was confident that, since they received a GOCO grant for the Aquatic Facility Master Plan, GOCO would award the project funding to complete the cycle. He noted that the second and third upcoming cycles would dovetail with the project timeline.

Susan asked what the range of the GOCO awards was.

Eric replied that a GOCO grant award could range between \$200,000 and \$1,000,000. He added that other funding sources could include appropriations from the Town's budget reserve along with a capital campaign that focuses on private foundations and other types of donations.

Susan related that based on a recent conversation with Judy Haynes, who works at both the Carbondale and Glenwood Springs Rec Center pools, the Team Sopris coach has commented that if a swim team program was part of the vision for the Carbondale pool, there were a lot of parents with deep pockets that would prefer to not drive all the way to Glenwood for swim team practice. She pointed out that if additional lap lanes were incorporated into the design, those parents might be a source of quick funding. Susan also wondered if they should reach out to local environmental groups that might be willing to provide expertise in exchange for using the aquatic facility as an energy efficient test location.

Rose commented that she was willing to do some footwork in reaching out to donor groups, but wondered if there was appropriate verbiage to use for the initial contact.

Ashley noted that fundraising has been a frequent topic recently and suggested that it is important to get that process underway.

Andi reminded the commission members that regarding site design there is only so much square footage and if lap lanes are added other features will be taken away. She reiterated that the costing exercises aren't complete yet and thought that by the August meeting there will be a better sense of the overall funding needs.

Drew asked if approvals were needed to approach a possible capital campaign manager.

Eric replied that an initial conversation would be okay to get it on their radar.

Dave commented that beginning a fundraising effort sooner in the process is better and allows the best use of funding while early in the design process.

Ashley urged approval from BOT as soon as possible, so the fundraising process could begin.

Eric replied that he will need to talk with the Town Manager and mayor about the process.

TOWN OF CARBONDALE ARBORIST UPDATES

Eric referred to a Town of Carbondale press release included in the packet attachment regarding the discovery of the Emerald Ash Borer in local trees by the TOC arborist. He noted that this is the first reported discovery of the EAB on the western slope and there are 470 ash trees in Carbondale's urban canopy. Eric added that the Tree Board will be hosting an informational session at their July 20th meeting to inform the community members about how to detect the bug, treatment options and an action plan for mitigation and replanting in the public rights-of-way.

Rose related that based upon her experience, it is important to treat the infestation hard and fast and if chemicals are needed to save trees they should be used.

Eric acknowledged that that will be part of the conversation, explaining that chemical treatment consists of an injection rather than spraying.

Susan wondered if homeowners would be notified.

Eric noted that Carl's memo is his response to the Bee Friendly Carbondale request to convert public spaces to pollinator-friendly gardens as well as the use of herbicides on invasive weeds.

Susan asked about the status of invasive weeds at the Nature Park after the Dandelion Days workshop.

Eric replied that there have been some volunteer efforts and some staff efforts, but he doesn't currently have time to coordinate a big volunteer effort.

Susan suggested contacting the Nature Park dog group and the local Audubon Society to coordinate volunteer efforts.

Eric replied that while some assessment is being done, it is difficult to know if the treatments are working because every year is different. He acknowledged that he feels this effort is appropriate and thought there was an opportunity to leverage the public effort.

Rose volunteered to create a poster to ask park users to pull thistle when they see it.

REVIEW OF COMMISSIONER TERMS AND UPDATE ON TOWN'S BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS RESTRUCTURING

Rose explained that Hollis had included an attachment to the packet that provides an update on the restructuring of Town boards and commissions, as well as the date when each P & R commission member's term expires. Rose related that the Board of Trustees will approve the Town Managers recommendations, possibly at their July 25th meeting. She added that the commission members whose terms are expiring should plan to submit a new application in August, and if anyone is interested in serving as Chair or Vice-Chair, they should state their intention at tonight's meeting.

Ashley stated that she is interested in re-applying for a regular member position.

Rose stated that Hollis is interested in re-applying for a regular member position and she is also interested in continuing to serve a Chair. Rose also stated that she loves participating on the Commission and is also interested in re-applying for a regular member position and to continue to serve as Vice-Chair.

Eric updated the commission members regarding the status of the Youth Commission Member and having two applicants for the upcoming term. He explained that the Town Manager suggested talking to the applicants because one will be a senior and the other will be a junior and it might be possible that the soon-to-be junior could participate in some way this year and reapply next year.

Ashley thought that, to keep that applicant's interest, it needed to be stated unofficially that she would be considered for next year's position.

REVIEW DOG PARK SIGNAGE RFP AND DOG RULES MAP SUBMISSIONS

Eric updated the commission members regarding the Dog Park Signage RFP, explaining that they received seven proposals reflecting a wide range of styles. He noted that the timing of the RFP didn't allow for a review by the full Commission but asked for volunteers to assist in the review. He added that the project budget is \$5,000.00 and he received quotes ranging from \$2,000.00 to \$12,000.00.

Rose, Ashley, and Susan volunteered to assist in the RFP reviews.

UPDATE ON CRYSTAL RIVER RESTORATION PROJECT

Eric reminded the commission members that because of concerns on the part of the local Audubon group regarding migratory birds, the project team met with them and shared the letter of recommendation detailing construction timing and regulations written by the US Fish and Wildlife biologist after completing a field review. He noted that the upland component won't begin until after July 30th and the contractor, operator and staff will be trained in how to spot nests and other signs of migratory bird presence. Eric explained that the water levels on the Crystal are still high, but the contractor has mobilized and has completed preliminary work including a classroom circle and moving boulders to the opposite side of the river. He added that there will be a public outreach component which includes display boards at Town Hall and on the project site, informing neighbors and River Valley Ranch residents on the project status, a press release, and a White Paper prepared by River Restoration that is available via a QR code. Eric pointed out that this was a complicated grant process because so many funding sources were utilized, but he added that he is very excited to see the project underway.

REPORTS AND UPDATES: STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director:

- The Dark Star Orchestra concert will take place Saturday at the RVR driving range. He noted that while the event isn't on Town property, the town is still affected, and staff helps with crowd control and signage. He added that they are not utilizing the Town's stage this year because the orchestra is too big to fit.
- The second Mexican Rodeo will be Sunday. Eric related that after the first rodeo, the organizers realized how limited the rodeo grounds are in terms of capacity, so the last two rodeos will be held at the Garfield County Fairgrounds in Rifle. Eric confirmed with the organizers that they are moving because Rifle is a better venue and not because of the neighbor complaints. Eric urged everyone to go if they haven't yet because it is a fun event.
- The RFP for the Chacos Park Master Plan is due July 26th. Eric explained like the dog park signage RFP he will need a couple commission members to help review the proposals with the screening planned for August 2nd and possible interviews on August 9th. He would like to have the BOT approve the contract at their August 22nd meeting with the final product due on November 1st to enable a budget placeholder for 2024.

Susan asked if the Mexican Rodeo will be utilizing shuttles.

Eric replied that they were able to accommodate 600 or 700 people with the existing on-site parking.

Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Programs and Facility Manager:

- The Friday Field Trip to Bananas took place last week. The July field trip will be to “Get Air” and the August field trip will be the raft trip.
- Two of the hiking trips were cancelled because they didn’t fill; the one hike that did fill took place today.
- The 4th of July Parade and Pool Party was a success.
- The Senior Trip to Georgetown was well received; it was their most expensive trip yet. They have been experimenting with alternating between lower and higher-cost field trips to promote variety. August’s Senior Trip will be to the Aspen Art Museum and Powers Art Center.
- The Pickleball Clinics are all filling.
- Lia completed her first lifeguard training at this pool and hired one lifeguard out of that effort.
- Swimming lessons are underway.
- T-Ball will wrap up tomorrow.
- All the Rec Center regular programming continues, and the RV Park is operational.
- The Rec Center is bringing back “Friday Frenzy,” which will be water-based activities on the lawn outside the Rec Center; it is currently geared for five years and younger.
- The pool will host the Oasis during Mountain Fair again this year; pool admittance will be five dollars during Mountain Fair. Lia has also proposed for First Friday to give free admittance to everyone with a Carbondale divers license.
- Our Town, One Table has 40 tables registered so far.

Ashley asked what the lifeguard situation was at the pool.

Margaret explained that they had to close the last two Sundays because they were short-staffed. She added that they are reviewing two more applications, but August and September will be challenging once the kids are back in school. She noted that they will utilize modified hours for that time and the pool will only be open five days each week. She also noted that because of the late opening, Carbondale Community School couldn’t use the pool for their spring physical education classes; she is planning to reach out to them to see if they would like to offer that programming in September. Margaret also added that there will be a pool party on October 1st to close out the last season of the pool.

Commissioner Comments:

Rose announced that the NPR interview took place last month; it ran twice on KDNK. Rose offered to play it for those interested after the meeting adjourns.

ADJOURNMENT

The July 12, 2023, meeting adjourned at 8:35 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald