

MINUTES
CARBONDALE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
January 11, 2023

Hollis Sutherland called the meeting of the Carbondale Parks & Recreation Commission to order at 7:01 p.m. at Carbondale Town Hall on January 11, 2023.

ROLL CALL

The following members were present for roll call:

Members: Hollis Sutherland, Chair
Rose Rossello, Vice-Chair
Susan Rhea, Member
Drew Sorenson, Member
Leslie Keery, Member
John Williams, Member
Brian Soby, Alternate
Misha Logan, Youth Member

Town Staff Present: Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director
Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Center and Programs Manager
Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Liaison
Kae McDonald, Boards & Commission Clerk

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion Passed: Drew Sorenson *moved* to approve the minutes from the December 14, 2022, meeting. Susan Rhea *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

ITEMS FROM CITIZENS PRESENT NOT ON THE AGENDA

Hollis asked that commission members please let her, or Eric, know as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a meeting, noting that at the December meeting there were several important decisions on the agenda, and they had only the minimum number of members present to constitute a quorum. She also asked that if commission members do miss a meeting, to please watch the You-Tube recording or contact Kae for the audio recording so they are aware of the discussions that occurred.

UPDATE ON DOG PARK SIGNAGE RULE CHANGE PROPOSAL FOR HENDRICKS, GLASSIER AND NATURE PARK OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

Hollis acknowledged the work Susan has put forth for this project.

Susan commented that although she has repeatedly visited the Hendrick Dog Park at various times and different days, she has yet to observe any conflicts.

Eric reminded the commission members that a review of the off-leash dog park rules was prompted by a citizen request. He noted that the request complicated rather than clarified not only what should be posted on the signs, but how that information was communicated to the public, but it also gave them the opportunity to add funding into the 2023 budget for “branding” signage not only at the off-leash dog parks, but at other the Town parks, as well. He asked that the Commission consider finalizing the language for the dog park rules, noting past discussions that examined the singled-out citizen request as well as consideration if the Town’s posted rules were comprehensive enough. He reminded the commission members that they ultimately decided that the rules are comprehensive enough, they do need to be posted, and it is worth the effort to make them visually pleasing. He added that the commission members also decided to link the ordinance language (in dual language) through a QR code, but the Police Chief needs to check with his officers to ensure they are comfortable with that. Eric shared that rules aren’t required to be posted to be enforced – but it is also nice to have that information posted to help educate the public. Eric asked that one additional statement be considered for the signage:

“As a user of this property, you understand your responsibility for yourself and your dog. You must abide by

all the following posted Rules and Regulations.”

John was comfortable with the addition of this statement.

Susan noted that her goal was to make the signage less directive and more positive and friendly. She preferred less verbiage regarding “don’t do” and you are “responsible.”

Hollis disagreed, commenting that it is important to reinforce responsibility. She suggested that the statement could go above “Violation of any rule or policy.”

Rose thought it was important to state concepts multiple times and agreed that the statement should be included. She suggested adding “any of these could possibly be subject to a fine or citation.”

Drew suggested rephrasing “keep an eye on your dog” to “maintain visual contact.” He also suggested changing “No dog food in park” to “No food in park” because some dogs’ behavior is triggered by food of any kind.

Hollis suggested striking “No dog food in park” because some people train their dogs via edible treats.

Drew suggested “Be vigilant” or “Be cautious” with food.

John thought that statement should be covered under “Maintain visual contact.”

Misha suggested “Maintain visual contact and voice control of your dog.”

Susan asked for confirmation that the ordinance passages can be eliminated from the sign.

Eric replied that if they can use a QR code to link to the ordinance passages, they don’t need to be posted.

John preferred including the ordinance passages on the sign, even if they are in smaller print.

Brian expressed his concern over using a QR code due to added expense of paying a web development team for the maintenance of a web page.

Eric replied that the QR code is directed to an existing passage on the Town’s website and because Town staff manages those links there is no added cost.

Hollis expressed her desire that these be big signs and since the Hendricks Dog Park has two entrances that signs be posted at both.

Susan added that they should be posted directly next to the entrance, and they need to be easily read from five feet away.

John asked if a sign will be posted at Glassier Park, as well, wondered if a full-size sign was needed since that park was so small.

Eric answered in the affirmative and noted that it will be a full-size sign placed where the existing sign is currently located. He listed the proposed changes and additions:

- Under the section titled “Please Pay Attention”:
 - Rephrase “Keep and eye on your dog” to “Maintain visual contact and voice control”
 - Strike “No dog food in park”
- Add the phrase “As a user of this property, you understand your responsibility for yourself and your dog. You must abide by all the following posted Rules and Regulations.” And place it above “The violation of any rule or policy”
- Retain the ordinance passages

Motion Passed: Rose ***moved*** to accept the Off Leash Dog Park sign language as depicted in the packet and with the modifications as stated by Eric. Susan ***seconded*** the motion, and it was ***unanimously approved***.

Drew asked a follow-up question regarding the process for finding a graphic designer.

Eric related that it will be a competitive bid process and a Request for Proposals will be released as part of the process.

John asked if wayfinding signage will be included in this package.

Eric replied that it will be limited to rule signage.

AQUATICS FACILITY PROJECT UPDATE: OWNER'S REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEW RESULTS. NEXT STEPS AND TIMELINE REVIEW

Eric reminded the commission members about the selection process for the Owner's Representative, noting that the seven responses were reviewed by the Commission at the December meeting, and ultimately the three companies interviewed were Dynamic Program Management, Concept One Group, and WEMBER; he noted that a blank copy of the evaluation matrix used in making the decision was included in the meeting packet. Eric informed the commission members that WEMBER rose to the top and their experience with building pools in the mountain towns of Basalt, Aspen and Steamboat set them apart. He related that he and the Town Manager met with the senior program manager earlier in the week who has already provided good advice. Eric itemized topics covered in that meeting including:

- Although the Town had good success with a design/build team for the Recreation Center -- due in large part because of local talent and a straight-forward project -- because aquatic facility expertise is not local, a better option will be to release two RFP's to cover separate design and construction teams. Eric explained that although there is some added work in releasing two RFP's, it is likely to expand their choice of applicants and increase the competitive nature of the project.
- The WEMBER representative was comfortable with the proposed timeline to begin construction after a shortened 2023 pool season, noting that the process will continue to move forward until there is a roadblock that would prevent a successful project completion in time for a late opening in 2024. WEMBER committed to compiling the initial schedule and budget as soon as possible and will include a financial analysis of missing the 2024 season altogether. Eric noted that WEMBER has the expertise to parse out potential issues and financial obligations for a winter construction project versus a spring/summer construction project.
- Eric explained the importance of transparency and the desire to fold in a design review committee for project oversight. WEMBER agreed to help formulate the anticipated time commitment and applications will be accepted for that committee in the next few months. Eric underlined the desire to have applicants with construction experience. Eric noted that WEMBER's proposal was included in the meeting packet, and he encouraged the commission members to read through it again -- especially if they are interested in serving on the Design Review Committee.
- The project is getting underway quickly, and it is anticipated that WEMBER will sign their contract on January 24th.

Susan commented that typically an architect designs a project which is then followed by a construction estimate and there is then some parlay based on a project's budget. She asked if this process will be streamlined with WEMBER as part of the team. Susan also asked if a sufficient cushion was built into the budget to account for increasing costs.

Eric replied that WEMBER will build a preliminary budget which will be included in the design and construction RFP's to be released. He added that WEMBER spent time reviewing the Aquatic Facility Master Plan and they have shared where estimates approximate current costs and where the estimates are underfunded.

John asked if there has been a determination on whether the lap pool will be seasonal or have an extended season.

Eric replied that the Master Plan reviewed those options, and it will be up to the architect to design for that possibility.

Susan noted that during the construction phase WEMBER has committed to a monthly report. She asked how often their representatives would be on-site.

Eric explained that there will be three project members and the team leader has several projects in the Roaring Fork Valley, so he anticipates checking in on a weekly basis. He noted that one of the team members is based in Steamboat Springs, and the pool-specific team member will be on-site regularly during the construction phase.

REVIEW OF TOWN OF CARBONDALE INTEGRATED WEED MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR 2023 FIRST DRAFT

Eric explained that this is the first draft of the 2023 Integrated Weed Management Plan, and he will also be presenting this to the Environmental Board and the Board of Trustees (who also functions as the Town's Weed Advisory Board). He noted that as part of the process to prepare for 2023 he summarized the 2022 efforts in the "challenging" parks:

- Baseball Field Infield: Definitely have a weed problem and their attempts to eliminate the bindweed only exacerbated their growth. Nothing they have tried to date seems to be working and there has not been any long-term eradication success.
- Gateway RV Park: Three techniques – the application of Avenger, manual extraction, and burning – have been utilized with some success.
- Eric commented that manual extraction is one of the best "natural" eradication methods and the Town has been able to engage with several groups to aid in that time-intensive process, including the Rotary Club at Nuche Park, and the Roaring Fork High School Environmental Club and Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers at the Red Hill trailhead. He noted that the Permaculture Garden at the Thompson House will require a large effort to reestablish the overgrown guilds and pathways after the location was neglected. Eric has met with the volunteer group in charge of this garden, and they decided that the Parks maintenance crew will mow the pathways and the volunteers will weed the guilds. Eric pointed out that the volunteer group needs to grow interest in this project to be successful.

Eric related that the proposed 2023 plan will continue their partnerships for manual weed extraction and that a portion of the 2023 budget can be utilized to hire temporary workers for this process when needed. He will also submit a request to RFOV for assistance with weed extraction, native seed broadcasting and planting of native plants during the Crystal River Restoration Project. Eric noted he is also planning for staff to be trained in proper application techniques of pesticides and herbicides.

Brian asked if the steam-based technique was successful in eliminating weeds.

Eric replied that they have used it with some success in various parks, but that the arborist uses it primarily for working on the bulb-outs and round-about gardens. He noted that they have also found that using the steamer after an application of Avenger has been quite effective in limiting weed growth. He added that he has been searching for a 100% natural systemic herbicide, but there is no such product on the market. Eric pointed out that their largest and most difficult weed management challenge is at the Nature Park, followed closely by the North Face Bike Park, and that weed growth along the Highway 133 corridor poses a visual hazard in proximity to turn lanes. Eric explained that while there has been some success in manually extracting "B" and "C" list plants, the Canada Thistle continues to grow unchecked at the Nature Park and there is also a small area of Toad Flax that needs attention. Eric noted that he has consulted with Steve Anthony and his assessment is that there is enough of an imbedded weed seed layer that weeds will continue to regenerate regardless of their efforts and will eventually overtake the park. Eric explained that Steve recommended the use of a chemical-based herbicide to spot-spray the Canadian Thistle and because the Toad Flax is in a localized area, it could be fenced off for treatment. He added that because the Canadian Thistle is so widespread, they will have to close the park during the treatment, which will most likely engender public outcry. Eric went on to note that they have tried many things and suggestions to use goats or cattle are unrealistic and would most likely eat the beneficial grasses they are trying to encourage.

Hollis asked how long the park might be closed.

Eric suggested the commission members take the time to digest Steve's statement that is included in the packet and noted that they would have to review the safety data sheets for any herbicide they might use because each one has a different timeline. Eric pointed out that two treatments per year were recommended for up to three years but

explained if it is done correctly there is a good possibility the weeds will be eradicated. Eric added that once that process is completed, they will need to hyperseed with something that will outcompete the thistle.

Rose suggested initiating a public relations campaign regarding the park closure and use of chemicals as soon as possible.

Susan thought the greatest pushback is likely to come from the birding community and wondered how the chemicals would affect pollinators.

Hollis commented that the pollinators would most likely be affected during flowering and the chemical application is likely to happen before that point. She thought the impact would be minimal if the timing of the chemical's use were followed properly.

Eric pointed out that they aren't giving up on their current techniques, but they must augment those with something else.

Hollis asked if there was a plan to enrich the soil and revegetate it to augment the whole cycle.

Eric replied that they have completed some hand-based seed spreading but thought more could be done.

Hollis suggested contacting the Colorado State University Extension Agency and looking for funding. She wondered if Evergreen Compost might be able to help, as well. She also suggested hosting a booth at Dandelion Day.

Susan asked if there was any photo documentation available for the Nature Park. She asked why rust fungus was used.

Eric explained that they had experimental plots of using various eradication techniques a few years ago and they did take photos during the process. Eric added that rust fungus was a biological addition designed to attack the root of Canadian Thistle but noted that it isn't currently available. Eric also noted that they will continue address the weeds at the North Face Bike Park by weed eating and utilizing a citizen group to deadhead but some herbicide application might be needed at this location, as well.

Hollis asked how other municipalities addressed the problem.

Eric replied that they spray a lot. He pointed out that there is a product that was used to solidify the jump line called soil tack that binds the soil together so nothing comes through; he thought that if it worked, they might try it on the entire track. Eric added that at the baseball diamond they are planning to rip up the weeds, clean out all the organics, lay down mag chloride and then top dress with fresh soil. He acknowledged the timing will be challenging because Little League wants to start practicing as soon as the weather allows. Eric also noted that the landscaping undertaken at the Red Hill trailhead installed soil, planted native plantings, and covered the bare areas with straw. He explained that this was experimental and if the plants thrive, they will endeavor to plant the remaining disturbed areas in the same manner.

INTERNAL OPERATIONS PROPOSED MUNICIPAL CODE LANGUAGE CHANGES FOR PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Hollis explained that in compiling the language for code changes she realized that the timing of the election of officers needed to shift to coincide with the timing of the term year.

Motion Passed: Susan *moved* to change the annual election of Commission Chair and Vice Chair from August 31st to May 1st to coincide with the term year beginning and ending on May 1st. Leslie *seconded* the motion, and it was *unanimously approved*.

REPORT & UPDATES: STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS

Eric Brendlinger, Parks and Recreation Director:

- The Red Hill landscaping project is complete, and he is closing out the grant.
- Crystal River Restoration Project RFP has been released.
- He has been receiving calls from the public with suggested ideas and techniques to maintain the Nature Park Loop Pathway trails, noting that the wood chips donated last year were full of concrete chunks. He is considering a test section which covers the muddy zones with pea gravel and overlays that with engineered wood chips.
 - Susan commented that CAFCI has provided photos that demonstrate the difficulty of pushing wheelchairs through wood chips. She noted that they continue to push for better access through the Nature Park and pointed out that AVL T is considering such a trail for Coffman Ranch.
 - Eric replied that a crusher-fines trail would satisfy that requirement, but that that is a large and expensive undertaking.
 - John noted that there is a new source of wood chips that will guarantee no concrete. He asked if a spigot for a dog wash could be added when the Hendrick Park water fountain is replaced. He also thought a water fountain and dog wash at the Nature Park would be an appreciated improvement.
- The Highway 133 South Irrigation Project will be re-released as soon as possible. He is hoping an earlier release will garner more responses.
- The Board of Trustees approved the request to rename the 4th Street Plaza Park to Chacos Park. There is funding in the 2023 budget for a Master Plan and in the 2024 budget for implementation.
- The Parks & Recreation Commission has been asked to meet with the Board of Trustees on February 21st for their annual update.

Margaret Donnelly, Recreation Programs and Facility Manager:

- Family Skate Night went well and impromptu changes to the event will be included for next year's event.
- The HVAC system maintenance at the Rec Center is underway – vents that somehow got closed were reopened and various probes and sensors will be replaced.
- Lights in the fitness area were replaced this week.
- Winter programming – including drop-in pickleball, pickleball ladder league, adult broomball, adult drop-in basketball, adult drop-in soccer, and youth basketball – is underway.
- The photo competition for the Puzzle & Pie night is also underway. The event is planned for Sunday, February 26th and 27 teams have registered already.
- A deposit for the first Quinceanera since Covid has been made.
- Green is the New Black is scheduled for March 9th through 11th.
- 5Point Film Festival is scheduled for April 20th through April 23rd.
- The ice rinks have been a maintenance challenge – Chris has been working hard on them, but the weather hasn't cooperated.
- Youth climbing classes will be offered in beginning in February.
- The Member Appreciation Sale is taking place January 31st – buy three months and get one free.
- All the pricing changes have been updated for memberships, rentals, and program fees.

Luis Yllanes, Board of Trustees Liaison:

- The Board of Trustees decided to forego Main Street closures for the January and February First Friday events because the attendance numbers don't seem to warrant it.

Rose Rossello, Parks & Recreation Commission Vice-Chair

- The Aspen National Public Radio station and the National Girl Scout Association have both picked up the story about her girl scout troop playing a big part in choosing the Hendrick Park playground equipment.

ADJOURNMENT

The January 11, 2023, meeting adjourned at 9:04 pm. The next regular meeting is scheduled for February 8, 2023, at 7:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kae McDonald