

## **PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD**

City of Findlay  
November 21, 2022

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### **MINUTES**

#### **ATTENDANCE**

Members Present: Rob Martin, Chair, Matt Cordonnier, Jeremy Kalb, Greg Meyers, Josh Palmer, Gary Pruitt, Jim Seebald.

Staff Present: Mayor Christina Muryn, Matt Stoffel, Lisa Mansfield, Dave Honse, and Kathy Launder.

Guests: Grant Russel, City Council; Heather Clow, Marathon Center for the Performing Arts; Jill Wagner, Downtown Findlay Improvement District/The Sherman House; Jeff Wobser, City Council; Brian Bauman, City Council; Randy Greeno, City Council; Bill Bateson, Hancock County Commissioner.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Motion to accept minutes of the October 17, 2022, meeting, by Meyers, second by Kalb. Motion passed 7-0.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

Downtown Community Park: Mayor Muryn provided a recap that earlier we had Strand Associates and Human Nature to develop a preliminary master plan for the Downtown Recreation Area which is the footprint of the phase 2 benching from Cory Street east to railroad tracks and the river north to Clinton Court. Key objectives to keep focused on is this area's primary focus is flood mitigation so nothing that we do can negatively impact the flood benefit. Want to make sure it complements our existing infrastructure and parks system, establish it as a community living room where there is a little bit for everyone to do, has a wide variety of programming, events, spontaneous activity, celebrate linkage of the trail and Blanchard River. Want the Blanchard River to be seen as an asset and not a liability in our community. Celebrate the Findlay community and stimulate investment and revitalization in the area.

Refine various elements going into master plan. Wide range of cost estimates due to what is envisioned. Preliminary master plan was revealed that Strand Associates and Human Nature created based on feedback of initial concepts building on concept A. The park is being designed taking flooding into account. All amenities will need to be able to withstand flood waters, easily cleaned, will not impact flood waters. Lower level is designed to flood once a year, secondary level is designed for 5 year flood event. Along the river at various points allows for access points for fishing and kayaking. The paths are designed to draw people into the park. Other amenities include a couple playgrounds, restrooms, shelter house, amphitheater, relaxation area, park garden, swings, splash pad with lights to allow for evening play, parking lots with over 150 parking spaces, and iconic pedestrian bridge. The amphitheater concept shows steps on the edge of the river where you can have people sitting along the river dependent on water levels. On the west side of Main Street will be a skate park with picnic area; parking area which can also hold farmers market or food truck with electric capability. Allow pedestrian and bike path under the roadway to cross Main Street. Cherry trees will be planted thanks to the donation by the Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation. There is a concept of pillars to the community that will be along Main Street at the entrance of the park. The pillars will have LED lights that can utilize colored lights that will coordinate with the lights on Main Street. The top of the pillars will have a design of a flame as an ode to the gaslight era.

Anchor Park is planned to be developed into a dog park. With more people downtown with animals, want to create a safe environment for them to play and use facilities.

The Riverwalk on the south side of the river will be updated as part of this project. Significant clearing of both banks will occur with this project. This will be replaced with plantings that will not be difficult to maintain and that won't overgrow and limit visibility.

Clow stated that the amphitheater can be utilized by Marathon Center for the Performing Arts for different programs and a great opportunity for artists. Wagner likes the iconic bridge and the clearing of the banks. Cordonnier likes the addition of the dog park. Wagner agreed and stated that there are a lot of dog owners downtown. Cordonnier also likes the access to the river. Seebald likes the bike paths. Palmer likes the placement of the restrooms. Russel likes that it does not compete with existing parks. Russel wonders if there is a conflict with bicyclists going through the park.

Mayor stated Strand Associates gave an estimate of a range from \$10 million-\$40 million that factors in inflation and contingency costs on construction. The Mayor estimates that with the amenities that are most important factored in, the park would be around \$25 million. Mayor Muryn stated that she already spoke with a few donors to assist in covering the cost. Anticipating the City to pay for a portion and seek grants to pay for remainder.

Meyers inquired what will happen with the vacant land north of Clinton Court. Concerned that we have a new community park with an eyesore just to the north. Russel stated that this park could spark redevelopment of the area. Mayor stated that those properties are privately owned. The hope is that the development of the park will encourage the other properties to be redeveloped.

Russel inquired if Strand Associates gave an indication of how many staff it will take to properly maintain the park. Mayor Muryn stated that we are taking this into consideration when developing the plans for the park. She has talked with Stoffel and Honse and agreed that Elliott Tyzzer will become full-time dedication to the maintenance of the park along with his Downtown responsibilities. We would also bring in other team members as needed for mowing and trimming.

Wobser stated that he thinks Strand Associates did a really good job of putting this concept together and are getting a really good glimpse of what can be done in Findlay, Ohio. This an opportunity that we will only have once. We can develop this property for two good reasons: for flooding and entrance way into our community. Things that we have seen come back through the Strategic Planning process is that we need to find ways to attract and keep more people in the City. In the Census we lost population and we can't continue to let that happen. It's things like this park that make our city more attractive. Need to continue to push very hard to get as much out of this as we can. Wobser stated that he would be an advocate for the \$40 million. This is a once in a lifetime and we need to maximize all of our avenues to do that. This is a great first step to achieve the goals that we constantly hear in the Strategic Planning process.

Mayor Muryn stated the process moving forward will be to extend the contract with Strand Associates and Human Nature for engineering phase of the project. The first part of the contract was for planning and master plan. The engineering phase will help us nail down what components we want, what are the price points, and how can we get grants for the park. We will be approaching Council to get additional funding set up, and the potential contract extended for the additional work.

## **DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

Recreation Department Report: Mansfield reported end of summer activities, winterized Miracle Park, Marathon Diamonds, and Roethlisberger flag football field restrooms. Will take down batting cages when the wind dies down. Public Skate attendance is up over last year. Coordinating with Findlay-Hancock County Community Foundation for a free public skate for the community on February 25,

2023. On December 12, 2022, Live Barn will be installed in the ice rink which will allow users to watch games and activities virtually.

Parks Maintenance Department Report: Stoffel reported that leaf pickup has begun; Green Waste Site will close on December 3, 2022; water has been shut off in the restrooms in the parks; planting trees in parks and cemetery.

## **OTHER REPORTS**

Hancock Park District Report: Pruitt reported the Great Karg Well Historical Site project is in the design phase. The area is City of Findlay owned property and managed by Hancock Park District. Retaining wall is in such bad shape that it will take the entire budget to repair. Looking at adding rip rap to support the wall and make it safe. Will have decorative safety rail near the drop off with a guardrail at the road, add some picnic tables and benches for visitors to sit and enjoy the area, and identify it since it has been unidentified for decades. Eventually the Blanchard River Greenway Trail will possibly pass through this park which will make it become more important as a stopping place. It is already identified as a public access site for the Blanchard River water trail.

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Next Meeting: The next meeting of the Parks and Recreation Board is scheduled for December 19, 2022, at 4:00pm in the third floor conference room of the Municipal Building.

Being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Launder  
City Clerk