

Park Board Meeting Minutes

April 6, 2011

Board Present: Mike Zajac, Matt Tanis, Vicki Locke, Kathleen Hoyle, Susan Williams, Tucker Webb and Janet Luchies

Board Members Excused: Jim Novaria and Jason Koscinski

Absent: Bery Pannkuk

Staff Present: Bill Deming and John Milowe

Guests: Martha Dahlinger (Environmental Board) and Cody Hogard (Student)

Meeting was called to order by Mike Zajac at 6:30 at the Stuart Manor

CORRECTION TO MARCH MINUTES: Jason Koscinski was present at the March Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Park Reports: Should include visible activities going on at the park; conversations (comments/suggestions) from residents using the park; conditions of the trails and other amenities.

- Millennium Park (Vicki Locke) – Park looks in good condition, and volunteer group cleaned up branches and debris along path last week.
- Schrier Park/Bishops Bog (Tucker Webb) – Tucker and Bill provided history of parks:
 - i. Trail length ~1.8 miles with unique features such as pitcher plants, park picnic structures, and the site of the annual Haunted Forest.
 - ii. Park was named in honor of Mrs. Schrier who left funds in a trust that were used to purchase 46 acres for the Park from Elzinga & Hoeksema families.
 - iii. Schrier Park is 56 acres in size, for a total city park land of 724 acres.
 - iv. Improvements to the Bishops Bog include upgrades to the boardwalk this year.
- West Lake Preserve (Matt Tanis) – Park looks clean, and was quiet when he visited.
- Lexington-Green (Susan Williams) – No report
- Ramona Park (Mike Zajac) – Park looks in good condition.
- Lakeview (Jason Koscinski) – No report
- Oakland Drive (Jim Novaria) – No report
- Haverhill (Kathleen Hoyle) – Busy, clean and in good condition
- Westfield/Harbors West (Janet Luchies) – No report
- Bicentennial Park (Bery Pannkuk) – No report from Bery, but Martha mentioned there is a lot of garlic mustard that should be removed. John let the board know that the Master Gardeners and other volunteers will be working in April to remove these plants in several parks.

B. Paddle Fest/Get Active Portage/Children's Triathlon (Ramona Park):

Date is confirmed for Saturday, July 9. Board decided that official name of the event day is "Get Active Portage" encompassing three events – youth triathlon, Paddle Fest and health fair. An event group with Kiva as co-sponsor will offer the triathlon. Official name is the "Ramona Park Youth Triathlon" and will consist of one mile bike ride, half mile run, and 50-100 yard swim. The triathlon runs from 8:30-9:45 a.m., Paddle Fest registration starts at 10:00 a.m. with first group launching at 10:30 a.m. Health fair vendors will set up by 8:30 a.m. Five vendors confirmed so far including: Lees, Kids Gym, Gazelle, Tudor House Tea, a chiropractor and photographer. Bill reviewed the layout for the event. Vicki has begun contacting companies for prizes. Suggestion was made to provide a virtual "goody bag" with online items and coupons instead of supplying printed materials. Food is still pending but will be confirmed at the next meeting. Vicki has contacted the Youth Action Committee for volunteers. Prize tickets last year were one per person. It was suggested using a punch card system for door prizes. Mike will contact Gordon Water again for 8-10 water jugs and will contact Speedway again this year about chilling them prior to the event. Mike will also check with triathlon organizers to see if they will be providing water as well. Kathleen will send Mike a sample Vendor Information Sheet. Susan will develop the process for how the prize drawing will be conducted.

C. Park Goals & Objectives: Several ideas were discussed by the Board.

One thought is to create a brand for all of Portage City Events under one banner. Vicki suggested the Park Board might develop its own parks volunteer group to help organize and manage more events, including selecting one or two people from the Board to serve as a Volunteer Coordinator for events. This would include recruiting groups needing public service hours, seniors, stay-at-home parents to the volunteer pool. Susan suggested calling this volunteer pool “Friends of the Park.” This event could also be co-organized with the Environmental Board as an effort to promote cooperative efforts. The kayak race known as Paddle Fest (listed as Goal #2) will merge with the previous Board goal of “Coordinate a Health Day” (Goal #4). Susan made a motion, seconded by Kathleen, recommending a Park Board goal to develop the “Landmark Sculpture Contest.” Kathleen made a motion, seconded by Vicki, to add a goal “Investigate opportunities to expand the effectiveness and ability to increase Park events and activities through volunteer development.” Both motions passed unanimously.

D. Park Board Council Presentation:

Mike will present new Board goal recommendations for the next fiscal year at the Council meeting on April 12 at 7:30.

E. Green-A-Thon:

Event will be held from noon-4:00 at Celery Flats. Board volunteers are needed to man a Park’s booth with two volunteers each in the 12:00-2:00 (Mike, Tucker and potentially Matt), and 2:00-4:00 (Vicki, Tucker, and potentially Kathleen and Matt) time slots. One-sheet flyer for “Get Active Portage” event should be developed and handed out at this event. Mike will upload pictures from last year.

SUMMARY ACTIVITY

- Nature Camp: Held during school spring break.
- Softball: Leagues are being organized and season starts on April 25.
- Taste of Portage: Date set for June 25.
- Outdoor Meeting Schedule: Reminder that each Park Board member should select a park to present the history on this year as part of the agenda at the summer meeting rotations. This will be in addition to the Park Reports above. (Changes/additions from the last meeting are highlighted below)

Park Assignment	Board Member	Meeting Date
Millennium/Central/Liberty	Vicki	
Schrier/Bishop’s Bog	Tucker	April 6 (6:30)
West Lake/South Westnedge	Matt	May 4 (6:30)
Lexington-Green	Susan	June 1 (6:30)
Ramona	Mike	July 6 (6:30)
Lakeview	Jason	July 6 (7:15)
Oakland Drive	Jim	August 3 (6:30)
Haverhill	Kathleen	August 3 (7:15)
Westfield/Harbors West	Janet	September 7 (6:30)
Celery Flats/PCBP	Bery	October 5 (6:30)

COMMENTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

- Vicki has meeting set at Stryker on April 12 for a potential event for this year. Suggested that possibly Breakaway Bikes could conduct a bike maintenance workshop for “Get Active Portage.”
- Kathleen continues to follow-up with Pfizer on possible event sponsorship this year to align with one of their areas of focus.
- Mike commented that the Board Facebook page has increased visitors and members should search on “Portage Parks and Recreation” to find the page location.
- Tucker would like to pursue developing a disc golf course and investigate Air Zoo efforts.
- Martha (guest attendee) commended the Park Board for all they are doing and their enthusiasm.
- Mike commented on the good meeting and the support everyone has provided.

ADJOURNMENT

Susan made a motion for adjournment; Vicki seconded the motion; all other unanimous. Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:15 p.m.

Next meeting: Wednesday, May 4, 2011 at West Lake Nature Preserve. Matt Tanis will present history and information on the Park at the meeting.

Respectfully submitted

Kathleen Hoyle, Secretary, Park Board