



Minutes City Council's Neighborhood Parks Rehabilitation & Maintenance Committee December 17, 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the City Council's Neighborhood Parks Rehabilitation & Maintenance Committee held on Wednesday, December 17, 2008, 3:00 p.m., in the 3rd Floor Conference Room, Tempe City Hall, 31 E. 5th Street, Tempe, Arizona.

Committee Members Present:

Councilmember Joel Navarro, Chair
Councilmember Mark Mitchell

City Staff Present:

Jan Hort, City Clerk
Bob Pohlit, CIP Coordinator
Mark Richwine, Parks & Rec Mgr
Sam Thompson, Dep Mgr, Parks
Shauna Warner, Neighborhood Svcs Dir
Denise Rentschler, Community Outreach & Marketing

Guests Present:

Councilmember Navarro called the meeting to order at 3:07 p.m.

Agenda Item 1 – Public Appearances

None.

Agenda Item 2 – Update on Right-of-Ways

Sam Thompson provided an update on scheduled improvement projects for City right-of-ways. These are simply remedial upgrades until a master plan has been developed.

Councilmember Navarro asked if this is a priority list.

Mr. Thompson responded that these are things that Parks staff has recommended. Once a master plan is developed, then prioritization can occur. The master plan should be ready within 30 days.

Mark Richwine added that a recommendation with a request to award a contract should be ready for the February committee meeting.

Councilmember Mitchell asked what will replace the sour orange trees on Broadway.

Mr. Thompson responded that they will be replaced with larger species of sour orange trees.

Shauna Warner added that a Broadway Road corridor improvement study is being done and part of that will include looking at the median. That is a separate funding source than what this lists includes. The first public meeting has been held and consultants are on board. The money is available to begin construction in July of 2010.

Mr. Richwine added that the period of public process will be largely complete within the next three to six months, probably starting with a design contract in late summer or early fall, with the intention of going to construction in July of 2010.

Councilmember Navarro clarified that the public meetings will provide an idea of what the residents want. The City has guidelines, however, and the space is limited.

DIRECTION: As the process moves along, staff will return with a presentation on the landscape component.

Agenda Item 3 – Option for Fencing Needs

Sam Thompson summarized that the Committee's request was to provide options for some of the walls along the rights-of-way. Staff has been working with Neighborhood Services and has also contacted the Volunteer Coordinator, Dick Mickle, to look at volunteer efforts to see if groups can work in certain areas with donated paint, etc. Some walls have deteriorated, but they are not City property.

Councilmember Navarro clarified that, basically, the neighborhood grant funds are available.

Ms. Warner added that it is costing between \$50K to \$100K to make sure the walls are actually restructured.

Councilmember Navarro asked, for example, if a section of wall needs to be improved, has that been orchestrated by the City, or do volunteers or neighborhood leaders head up the project.

Ms. Warner responded that all of the projects have come from the neighborhoods. The City hasn't gone out and actively pushed for a wall repair, but Neighborhood Services could do outreach.

Councilmember Navarro clarified that the City could suggest how the grant money could be used.

Councilmember Mitchell clarified that the neighborhood grants range from \$10K to \$15K, and those fences cost a lot more than that. It could be more of a down payment for those who want to participate, but then a total repair isn't always done.

Ms. Warner added that her office communicates with the residents so it would be no problem to send out information about the different volunteer efforts and some ideas regarding the walls. They have always required 100% permission from the homeowners.

Councilmember Navarro clarified that he was simply trying to get the outreach going.

Agenda Item 4 – Benedict Sports Complex Scheduling/Programming

Sam Thompson provided a schedule of all the programs at the Benedict and Hardy Sports Complex. There are five fields at Benedict and the schedule shows the percentages of groups that utilize the sports fields. Contact hours can also be identified. He noted that there are also outside users that do not schedule a program.

Councilmember Mitchell asked about baseball.

Mr. Thompson responded that there is no baseball at Benedict. Some remedial work will be done in 2009 with a 3-month shutdown when the leagues are finished, but the major construction design will occur in 2011/12 and construction in 2012/13.

Councilmember Navarro asked about the usage.

Mr. Richwine responded that from a total contact hour standpoint per field, they absorb more usage than any other Valley community in terms of comparable facilities. It shows in wear and tear. A significant number of requests are also turned away.

Councilmember Navarro asked about Astroturf.

Mr. Richwine responded that it is a very expensive application with a high upfront cost, as opposed to the annual maintenance costs. Staff has not been able to find a manufacturer who has a product that doesn't see significant rise in temperatures during the summer months. Typically, a median temperature gain is 20 to 25 degrees over the outdoor temperature.

Bob Pohlit added that in Loveland, Colorado, they have an Astroturf field. On a 50 degree day with the sun out, the turf was 85 degrees.

Mr. Richwine added that when Phoenix built their fields, they actually put a sprinkler system in to lower the temperature during the summer. He didn't know what their experience has been. There are also health concerns with silicone. Other communities are doing this for the purposes of water conservation. The largest vendor has a Phoenix office in Mesa. Typically installation cost \$8 to \$10 per square foot. A soccer field would cost about \$1M compared to an expenditure of \$500K with natural grass.

Ms. Warner asked about the Nike grind material.

Mr. Richwine responded that the crumb rubber portion of the infill material is the Nike grind product.

Mr. Pohlit added that it is basically a carpet with infill material of rubber and silica sand.

Mr. Richwine added that the major improvement with the new products is that the old Astroturf projects were largely installed over concrete or hard dirt, and under ASTM and other regulatory agencies, there needs to be a cushioning effect to reduce the amount of injuries. The old products could not meet the current standard. The new products have used the combination of the rubber infill mixed with sand.

Agenda Item 5 – Trees for Tempe Information/Adopt-a-Park

Denise Rentschler summarized:

- This is a revitalization program for the storm damage that occurred last fall resulting in \$1.2M damage to 400 community trees.
- Originally, a notice was released about free wood.
- Current programs are the Living Tree Memorial and the Leaves at the Lake, but they didn't meet the current need.
- Trees for Tempe Program was revitalized. It first began in 2005 and was launched by Dr. Bonham who donated \$40 for every new patient. This program provides opportunities to contribute. Contributions can be monetary, volunteer time and service, or donation of trees.

- First community project was at the Arts Park and the TCA. Partnered with GE Money who provided 25 volunteers. Nineteen 24" box trees were planted. The value was over \$1K
- Second project was at Mitchell Park on December 6th. Partnered with the residents of Mitchell Park East and West and Childsplay staff. There were 38 volunteers, 35 15-gallon trees were planted, with 60 shrubs, with a value was \$1.6K.
- Through press releases, requests were received.
 - Rebuilding Together Valley of the Sun – donated 100 15-gallon trees (\$5K value), which were planted in neighborhood parks and rights-of-way.
 - RISO – (environmentally friendly copier company, with their Phoenix office located in Tempe). They have a national goal of donating 100,000 trees to the Arbor Day Foundation. They donated the trees for Mitchell Park by a cash donation of \$2,350 which was used to purchase one 48" box tree, and 45 15-gallon trees.
- Press releases were sent to generate more awareness through television, newspapers and on-line.
- Results:
 - Volunteer services \$2,693
 - Contributions \$7,350
 - Media Coverage \$21,417
 - Impressions (the number who have seen the press releases, media coverage) over 300,000 people
- Next Steps
 - Continue one-time volunteer opportunities at neighborhood parks
 - Working with Tempe Cares to develop re-planting program at Tempe Beach Park, the marina and Jaycee Parks.
 - Working on Arbor Day celebration on April 24th to include a possible planting of trees at Escalante Park, with possible expansion to be a community-wide event, and an educational component to work with schools
 - Non-Profit Status
 - Create a Friends of Tempe Parks & Rec "umbrella" to include Trees for Tempe, as well as a placeholder for scholarships
 - Adopt-a-Park
 - Continue the one-time volunteer opportunities
 - A structured, on-going volunteer program to include neighborhoods, schools, organizations, businesses, etc.
 - Benefits include a way to get residents involved, provide satisfaction of contributing, and reduce Parks Department routine maintenance
 - Program overview
 - Adopt a park for 6 months to one year
 - Provide routine maintenance and upkeep
 - Multiple adopters for each park
 - Groups provide own tools and supplies
 - Recognition
 - Name plate on plaque after 60 hours of service (possibly at City Hall)
 - Volunteers receive T-shirts (brand project)
 - Recognized at annual City Council meeting

Councilmember Navarro asked which other cities do this program.

Ms. Rentschler responded that Phoenix has two types of programs (an adopt-a-park program and a ranger program), and Chandler has an adopt-a-park program. Staff studied the parameters and participation, but did not look at cost. Staff could study the cost for the next step.

Councilmember Mitchell clarified that this would not replace the City's grounds crews for park maintenance. He asked whether this had been done in the past.

Ms. Warner responded that park patrols for safety were done in the past, but no maintenance programs.

Councilmember Mitchell suggested working with the neighborhood organizations through Neighborhood Services and the Parks and Recreation Department to see what interest there might be in the neighborhoods and the businesses.

Councilmember Navarro suggested going after either the parks or the wall repair with a media blitz to start.

Mr. Richwine added that many of the neighborhood associations identify themselves by their neighborhood park. There should be a natural connection if there are enough neighbors to take on the responsibility.

Agenda Item 6 –Volunteer Update Information

Sam Thompson presented a list of park service volunteer services for FY 2008. These groups have done work in various parks and in the cemetery. The list also included a compilation of cost savings. The total value is \$86,902. This has been a tremendous resource to supplement City staff.

Mr. Richwine added that a lot of community service work through Maricopa County has been done, as well as work release programs. Staff is looking for additional areas for service.

DIRECTION: Submit the list to Mary Anna Bastin for recognition.

Agenda Item 5 – Future Agenda Items

No meeting in January. Next meeting is scheduled for February.

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

Prepared by: Connie Krosschell
Reviewed by: Sam Thompson

Jan Hort
City Clerk