

# Parks and Recreation Board Meeting Minutes March 19, 2015

Robin Roberts - Chair  
Bill Bridges

Board Members Present  
Bryant Livingston - VChair  
Claralyn Hill

Ross Salmon  
Bruce Snow

Brent Edgington

Board Members Absent  
Marian Monnahan

Bill Fillmore

Gary Winterton

## Municipal Council Members Present

Roger Thomas  
Kari Van Wagner  
Tucker Lougee

Staff Present  
Scott Henderson  
Thomas McKenna  
Bryce Merrill

Doug Robins  
Penn Almoney

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**Welcome:** Bryant Livingston

### **Minutes**

Bill Bridges made a motion to approve the March 19, 2015 minutes, Ross Salmon seconded the motion. It was approved by all in attendance.

### **Provo Municipal Council, Parks and Recreation Board Meeting in April**

The Municipal Council would like to meet with each of the citizen boards this year. Gary Winterton commented that the Council wants to make sure that they are hearing what the citizens want and how they feel about issues in the community. The dates being looked at are April 7 or April 21. The next Board Meeting is scheduled for April 16. Dates were discussed and it was decided that April 21 would be best for those in attendance.

### **Park Project Updates**

Thomas McKenna gave an update on several current park projects. Lions Park had a staircase in the northwest corner that was washed away in a storm. A new staircase is currently being designed. It will be located in a more centralized north area of the park. The plan is to have the project completed this fall.

On the west side of the Recreation Center, a new pavilion is being added. This will be a feature within the Recreation Center grounds that will be available for group rentals. A new parking lot is also being added within North Park primarily for the Pioneer Museum and Village. Both of these projects should be completed by Memorial Day. These projects were funded by the Utah County Municipal Recreation Grant.

Thomas showed current photos of the Slate Canyon Trailhead project. These included grading and utility work, and the new pavilion. The Cemetery expansion project is about 50% completed. The mild winter helped this project move along quickly.

Franklin Park is about 65% completed. Photos were shown of the restroom construction and current views of the site. Roger Thomas commented that he received a call from Bill Hulterstrom who works with United Way. He would like to involve the neighbors with the Police Department in a service project to help with the landscaping at the park. It is believed that this would help the neighborhood have a sense of commitment to the park and could influence the elimination of future graffiti at the park. It is anticipated that the soccer fields will be available for play next spring.

### **Sports Teams Registration and How Teams Are Put Together**

Penn Almoney, Sports Supervisor, gave a history of youth sports team formation. In the past, all requests were taken for players and coaches. This caused a lot of difficulties because teams that only had eight players would get 15 children requesting the same coach. There were also problems in several leagues with team stacking. In trying to address these problems, the pendulum swung the other way and no requests were taken. This was much easier for staff to administer to, but had a lot of negatives of its own. Since this time, the policy has been to allow one matching request that can be guaranteed. This was a manageable policy for staff and prevented team stacking.

The trend in youth sports has been leaning towards more of a competitive league feel where teams could pick their team members and stay with them for years. The Sports Division has seen children leaving the recreation leagues and moving towards bantam and competition leagues. The Sports Division has implemented a pilot program this year with Jr. Baseball. This option will be more affordable than competition leagues, but will allow them to pick their own teams. There are concerns about blurring the lines between recreation and accelerated teams. The Sports Division is not sure if they will have enough participants to have team leagues and individual player leagues.

This fall a new program will be implemented for Fall Soccer. The Sports Division hopes this system will address some of the concerns with team registration. This new request program will allow teams to make three or more requests, as long as they provide a coach for the team. Individual registrations will be added to fill teams. Policies that other cities have used are being looked at as a model to this policy. There is still concern about ultra-competitive teams coming in and dominating the league. One of the goals with this new policy is to get more buy in from the parents and coaches, which are partnerships which can improve the leagues.

### **User Fees**

Gary Winterton gave a review of the Municipal Council's thoughts on user fees. It is important that they look at maintaining the facilities that the City currently has so that when repairs are needed, the money is there to make those repairs. The Council feels it is important that the people that are getting the benefit of the facility should be involved in the payment of the repairs and updates to the facility. Looking at the Recreation Center, the citizens are paying for the building with a bond. If replacement costs are also passed on to the citizens, they could end up paying for the facility twice.

During the current budget process, the Council picked fees they would like addressed. They specifically asked for the fees at the Recreation Center and Peaks Ice Arena to be looked at. Scott Henderson gave a review of the history of subsidy reduction of the Recreation Division facilities. The Covey Center for the Arts opened in 2007 with a \$600,000 subsidy which has been reduced to around \$350,000. The Peaks Ice Arena started with a subsidy of over \$600,000 and is now around \$174,000. The Recreation Center is less than two years old and has gone from a subsidy of \$634,000 and is now around \$400,000. Those amounts are only budgeted subsidies. The actual subsidy for the Recreation Center ended up being only around \$50,000 last year.

Scott commented that the Recreation Center and Peaks Ice Arena fees are currently at the high end in the region due to uniqueness and high quality programming. These facilities are a voluntary purchase which means that market needs to be a factor in fee pricing. Scott views success in revenue coming from high use, not restrictive fees. The expenses remain the same if you have 500 participants at \$20 or 250 people at \$40, but you have served a greater amount of people. The Recreation Center bond was sold and voted on as a subsidized facility. The Recreation Center in Herriman, which opened shortly before Provo's facility, recently increased their membership fees. They have seen about a 30% reduction in membership renewals. Scott passed around the model Recreation currently uses to set their fees, aiming for revenues to cover 150% of the costs.

Tucker Lougee, Peaks Ice Arena Manager, reviewed a market comparison of the Peaks Ice Arena's fee. Tucker commented that they are constantly working on increasing their program participation and reducing their subsidy. They are always evaluating their fees, but try to be responsible to their participants by not overpricing things.

Bryce Merrill, Recreation Center Operations Supervisor, reviewed the Recreation Center fees. This is one area where they do not follow the 150% cost model. These fees are set by market study and what people are willing to pay. A feasibility study was done during the construction process to set the current fees. The Recreation Center is currently 10-30% above other facilities in the area. They felt those fees were appropriate because of the product being offered at the facility. The Recreation Division does have some proposed ways that the subsidies could be further reduced. Sales tax could be passed along to the customer. Right now those fees are absorbed in the current prices. That change could generate around \$155,000. Point of sale items could also be increased to reflect sales tax. Non-Resident fees could be further increased.

The Recreation Division has also looked at operation enhancements to cut expenses. Staff costs have been reduced by changing training models. Senior transportation costs are now covered by a grant. Updates to the Peaks Ice Arena have reduced operation expenses. Scott commented that the initial formula suggested by the budget committee was arbitrary and does not work for things like senior and adaptive programs, which will never cover their costs. The budget committee suggestions were targeted to a few areas and Recreation feels like they are being punished for their successes.

The Recreation Division has a history of operating within their budgets. A new roof and cooling system at the Peaks Ice Arena was almost completely paid for by fund balance because they were allowed to hold back fund balances and use that towards capital improvements. Scott would like to see something similar happen with fund balances at the Recreation Center, but the Finance Department has said that they could not guarantee that the money would still be there when needed. It might have to go towards other City needs. This means that the Peaks Ice Arena and Recreation Center patrons could end up paying for other needs throughout the City, instead of updates at those facilities.

This discussion will be continued at the next meeting, and possibly at the meeting with the Municipal Council in April.

Meeting Adjourned