

October 11 and 12, 2017
Recreation Advisory Committee Project Proposal Meeting Notes
Billings Southside Senior Center
5:30 PM

Committee Members:

Brad Shoemaker
Kathy Aragon
John Moorhouse
Gary Connelley
Ken Olson
Jim Ronquillo
Ted Lovec

October 11, 2017

All committee members were present, with Ted Lovec on the phone.

Big Sky Economic Development – Coulson Park Master Plan, Infrastructure, Improvement

Presenters: Dianne Lehm and Michael Pigg, others. This is a joint request from Big Sky Economic Development and the City of Billings. Models for the riverfront development include Bismark, Great Falls. The master plan will be a conceptual development of what is the best use of Coulson Park and will cost about \$90,000. Big Sky Economic Development (EDA) is asking for between \$30,000 and \$45,000 for the master plan. Billings is asking for \$110,000 to construct top priorities such as the boat ramp and latrines. These are already included in the existing master plan and could be built without an additional master planning effort, but the City would like to coordinate them with any additional planning that occurs.

Questions

Brad: How far down the priority list does funding get? R: Funding for master plan would identify 1-10 priorities. Right now, boat, picnic, restrooms, parking, highest priority. Funding would provide enough money to get the park open and Big Sky EDA is going to match funding.

Q: Who owns the boat ramp? FWP? R: The City owns the boat ramp and property. They are providing O and M.

Ken Frazer, FWP: FWP was not involved.

John: Maybe we don't need a boat ramp? R: We believe there is a need for the ramp. We have letters of support for the ramp in this area, including emergency response. There is money allocated for a proper design.

Jim: FWP has one in the area.

Ken: One that is nearby is in poor shape.

John: Access improvements? What are they? R: Part of the enhancement, road work included not necessary, re: County.

Q: Timeline? R: Master plan – We'd start after the first of the year and take six to nine months to complete. The City would work on the ramp immediately. Other amenities after master plan.

John: What is the total being asked? R: City: \$110,000; Master plan.: \$30,000-45,000; Infrastructure: \$500,000.

Darryl Wilson, public: Master plan for Coulson Park – a few years ago looked at the power plant. This project should. R: It's difficult to plan on property we don't own. Funding would look at power plant, although right now Big Sky is not in the position to buy the power plant site.

Brennan's Wave – Recreational Stability and Enhancement Project

Presenter: Triel Culver. Beartooth Paddlers, part of Brennans Wave, a 501C company. Missoula Brennan's Wave is the most similar. Economic benefits. \$12,000 already spent on the feasibility study. The irrigation district supports the project. Feels it would increase attention to the river. A new fishing access is needed. Anticipates that an additional \$50,000 would be needed to update the feasibility study (not included in the cost estimate).

Questions

Jim: Rock weir to irrigation ditch? R: Yes.

Kathy: How much is the annual maintenance? R: We don't know. The weir is half a mile long.

Q: Can power boats get upstream? R: Jet boat access through feature.

Q: Discussions with Corp? R: We're not sure if they attended.

John: An active river is difficult to keep a structure on. What happens to the fish passage with all the flow variations? R: Atkins addresses these issues. These issues would need to be addressed. Other rivers have similar issues.

Billings Chamber of Commerce – William Clark Recreation Area

Presenters: John Brewer, others. Good for economic development, tourism, quality of life. Park easement is on DNRC and Sugar Company property. Would like to include an amphitheater and historic interpretation kiosks.

Questions

Q: Where is this? R: Garden Avenue.

Q: Who owns the irrigation ditch to Mystic Park? R: We're not sure who owns it, but this is our goal: 47 acres of Sugar Property.

LuAnne Engh – Buffalo Mirage Access

Presenter: Alicia Stickney on behalf of LuAnne Engh. Anticipate that this project will need to be rolled in with FWP.

Questions

Q: Why is this not covered by FWP? Ken Frazer, FWP, R: FAS program under-funded and this site is not high enough in the State's priority. They know the bridge is bad, but are looking for partners to help raise its priority.

Ken: Any consideration of higher use since Riverside use was reduced? R: Definitely would improve access and use of the river access.

Q: Is \$20,000 enough? Ken Frazer, FWP, R: We're not sure. On the school State section, Kurt helped put together and would help support river access and use with Riverside Park. You can't launch a jet boat at Buffalo Mirage.

Q: Concern that \$20,000 is not enough, not sure.

City of Laurel – Riverside Park Campground and Boat Ramp

Presenter: Kurt Markegard. The campground at Riverside Park was closed due to high flows in 2011. Has not been re-opened.

Questions

Ken: Fire hydrant – not. R: Fire hydrant would protect the park from fire.

Brad: What percent associated with fire hydrant? R: \$200,000 to purchase the pipe.

John: Shooting facility? R: Outdoor shooting stopped. Indoor facility damaged by the flood. They would have to restore building, but waiting on master plan.

Brad: Master plan. Bathrooms? R: Yes

Brad: Other funds Laurel has? R: Yes, but need approval from the city council.

Ken: What would support camping if full? R: Average. ~\$15,000/month before the flood; could charge \$25/night.

Kathy: Can you make upgrades without a new hydrant? R: Low pressure.

Darryl Wilson, public: Did the City of Laurel get damages from Exxon? \$200,000? R: There was a donation from Exxon for helping Riverside Park of \$225,000.

City of Laurel – Riverside Park Latrines

Presenter: Kurt Markegard. Current facilities are closed. Do not meet ADA.

Q: Will Laurel do the maintenance? R: Yes, but we would like a specific type of toilet.

Q: Cost? R: \$37,000.

Ken Frazer, FWP.: Price for installed latrine is \$17,000, should look at other vendors. R: \$37,000 includes two toilets.

Laurel and Lions Club - Lion's Family Park

Presenter: Kurt Markegard, Phyllis Bomgard. Would like to pave the trail for elderly citizens. City helps with maintenance. Using Great West Engineering for design. Pavement is now only 15% of the 1 mile trail. Events held there during spill were kids fishing derby, flyfishing classes. There is an opportunity for Lions International matching funds.

Questions: None.

City of Billings – Josephine Lake Fishing Habitat Improvement

Presenter: Steve McConnell. Josephine Lake is a priority in master plan, objective to improve fish habitat, remove invasive species such as Russian olive. Deepen lake and improve habitat around the lake and in the water. Provide access to the lake (\$30,000 of the budget). Costs will depend on who does the work. Use Yellowstone River water to improve the water quality.

Questions

Brad: Plans to fill potholes? R: General park maintenance is part of another project.

Q: Deepening pond? How? R: Dredging could help form an island.

City of Billings: Riverfront Park Hand Launch

Presenter: Mike Pigg. Majority of the funds would go to new parking and enhancement of parking.

Questions

Q: Hand launch – what kind? R: There's a steep drop to the river. This will reduce the slope into the river.

Q: Parking lot large? Clear trees? R: Yes.

Kathy: Why is parking needed? You put the boat in and park away? R: Human nature. People also want to use other amenities.

Q: Mike Ruggles, FWP: River changes a lot. Two ramps might not be a bad idea. R: We agree, but this is a hand launch.

City of Billings: Riverfront Park Multi-use Trail

Presenter: Mike Pigg. Josephine to Washington Street, allow for year round access, paving will enhance access.

Questions

Q: Where did the costs come from? R: Other projects in the area.

Q: Width? R: Eight feet.

Q: End at ditch? R: Yes.

Q: What would the cost be to rebuild with gravel? R: \$300,000.

Q: Distance? R: 2.4 miles.

Darryl Wilson, public: Trail – not resurfacing the trail with pavement? R: We are proposing asphalt.

Burton, public: At Audobon area, trails are in very good shape. Chamber survey wants to recreate on dirt paths. Josephine section is beautiful.

John Thompson, public: Long-range plan is to pave the Marathon Loop.

Discussion continued about maintaining the dirt trails within the City.

Yellowstone County Board of Park Commissioners: Two Moon Park Recreation Hiking and Access

Presenter: Cal Cumin. There is an emergency service aspect to this park. Improve parking, maintenance would be completed by volunteers. Timeframe would be 2 months.

Questions

Q: Asking \$25,000 or \$29,000? R: \$29,000.

Q: How wide is the trail? R: Twelve feet.

Darryl Wilson, public: Great project, the cost is reasonable, parking improvement is needed.

Pheasants Forever – Improvements to Acquisitions

Presenter: Chad Harvey. Looking at access for a project that will be funded for acquisition with other dollars. Requesting only \$20,000 for one property since the other property fell through. Only the Cathelyn property, access off of Old Mill Road.

Questions

John: Where do you come in from? R: Old Mill Road. FWP believes a gravel boat access and possible campground.

Ken Frazer, FWP.: Looks like a really good site, excellent spot for launch and camp sites.

Q: Raft or canoe access? R: Yes, we would open access for non-motorized.

Ken Olsen: \$40,000 request, \$20,000 only for access and the cost for acquisition? R: \$20,000 for access, yes. Acquisition would be from other aspects of NRD funding.

Darryl: YRPA – a nice property with a Lewis and Clark site.

Brad: Is the \$20,000 part of FWP's \$500,000? R: Ken: Asking for \$500,000 to partner with all the other applicants.

Ted had no questions.

October 12, 2017 – presentations continued

Montana Audubon Center

Presenter: Carolyn Sevier. Want to do training and provide opportunities to teach area people how to use the river. This presentation was split in two, and the discussion returned to it.

Questions

None.

Our Montana: Explore the Yellowstone River

Presenter: Dale Anderson. Application will inform people about how to use the Yellowstone River, ND to Gardiner. It will have pictures of sites along the river. This project will focus on Billings area since is in the urban reach.

Q: Will you have to pay for the App? R: Initially, no, they will look for sponsors.

Ken Frazer, FWP: FWP recommends Our Montana map for information.

Brad: Is the final product Windows based? R: Phone and tablet based.

Our Montana: Private Islands

Presenter: Dale Anderson. Looking at access to lands along the river. No area to actually unload rafts at parks.

Questions

Jim: Who owns the island if the river changes course? R: It's complicated.

Gary: What is the minimum size acreage are you looking at? R: Looking at islands with vegetation; would like to look at sizes that are usable.

Q: What is the timeline for research? R: Student work, typically summer plus one year.

Ken: What area are you looking at? R: Pompeys Pillar to Park City.

Kathy: Has this been done before? How did you come up with the cost? R: Not sure, that's a question for Mike Penfold.

Matt Sather: River Front Park Boat Ramp

Presenter: Matthew Sather. Not sure if the costs are correct. The City is presenting the same project.

Questions

Q: Problems with take outs? R: Don't use Coulson boat ramp because it's not easy to use.

Q: Can you coordinate with City Parks? R: Yes.

Gary: Wooden ramp or remove landscaping? R: Earl believes MDT puts the rocks in this place to protect bridges.

Q: How does this help canoe/kayak recreationists? R: If you can carry a raft, then there are different ways to address this issue.

Our Montana - South Billings FAS

Presenter: Dale Anderson. 15 acres, 13 of which are in the 100 year floodplain. There is a house on the property. YRPA is stepping in to buy the property, negotiations started with the owner, new cost \$225,000. Counter of \$190,000. Would stay in YRPA ownership, ramp would

be protected by the adjacent bridge. Project is not competing with the other access proposed across river, this one is best for the concrete ramp.

Questions

Q: How does this not compete with the previous presentation? R: It is on the other side of the river, would be a concrete boat ramp.

Jim: Could we get rid of Coulson and Riverfront ramps? This would maybe be a better option?

R: Ken: try to create a trail through town. Coulson is still an important ramp.

Q: Is \$65,000 the right amount? R: There is new information. We're working with others to put together this project.

Q: Relative cost to develop? R: There is a new slide with costs on the presentation.

Ken: Any partnerships? R: YRPA, Audubon, Rocky Mountain College, businesses, and there were several letters of support.

Q: Others for financial support? R: Darryl has some. We know projects costs are higher than the request in abstract. YRPA is already fundraising. Requesting acquisition funds, FWP will be requesting funds for developing.

Kathy: So, is this part of the \$300,000 that was set aside? R: No, set aside was suggested, but committee decides.

Q: Who will own the land? R: YRPA owns land around town. We could be a partner to own.

Woody Woods - Arrow Island

Presenter: Woody Woods. In 2010 there was a proposal here, but was turned down. Long term O & M might be shared with the county, FWP. There was oil spill cleanup on the property. Costs were developed with Ken Frazer. Goal #1: Fishing access. Goal #2, equestrian/hiking trail.

Questions

Brad: Low flow – distance between the bank and the water? R: Adjacent.

Gary: Ownership? R: Arrow Island is county property.

Brad: Fourteen feet width road? R: Standard road, I believe.

Q: Organization to work on this? NRDP reimbursement? R: Not sure who we (I) would be working with.

Our Montana - Two Bridges

Presenter: Dale Anderson. FWP provided the cost estimate for purchase and development. This location is between 2 other fishing access sites that are 10 miles apart.

Questions

Q: How big is the parcel? R: 13.5 acres.

Q: What is the asking price? R: \$59,900. The owner approached FWP, as it's a high priority site for FWP. We're looking for development costs from NRDP.

Q: Is \$200,000 request for development? We won't need all of the \$200,000 for development, more in the range of \$160,000 for development. The acquisition may come from other funds.

Q: If someone offers owner a higher price, access could be lost? R: Yes.

MT Audubon

Presenter: Carolyn Sevier.

Questions

None from the committee or the public.

YRPA - Washington Street Bridge

Presenter: Darryl Wilson. Propose to purchase 6.5 acres from the Driscoll Family. This property connects the City of Billings parks trail paving project. Thinks the family would sell it for \$25,000 to \$30,000.

Questions

Q: What would you do with the property? R: We could build a trail that would extend the existing trail. The trail would access D.S.

Ken: Is Washington Creek Bridge an actual bridge? R: No, a reference point.

Q: Does this actually increase the trail's length? R: Could.

Ken: The drawing in the application, is this the 6.5 acres? R: Yes. Acquisition would improve the trail connectivity from Riverfront Park to Clark's Crossing. As the river moves north, this helps more.

YRPA - Norm's Island

Presenter: Darryl Wilson. Would like to install vault latrines at Norm's Island.

Questions

Ken: How much? R: \$96,500.

Kathy: Toilet seems high? R: Darryl used the price from Dover actuals. Audubon: there will be about 7,000 visits per year to this area.

YRPA - Joel's Pond

Presenter: Darryl Wilson. The work is to be done in October this year, i.e. hydroseeding. Handicap work to cost about \$30,000.

Questions

Q: \$13,900 are not the total costs? R: We will be working with matching funds.

Q: Can we award the grant for work that's already been done? R: Alicia: No. Darryl: YRPA will likely do this regardless.

Sindelar Ranch

Presenter: Darryl Wilson. 2.5 miles of river bottom, valued ranch at \$1.3 million, worried about State requirements if NRDP funded all of the park. New by-pass is going through this area. Funds from Montana Department of Transportation are going to a trust for long-term park operations and maintenance.

Questions

Kathy: Consider purchasing the property with YRPA and using other NRDP funds for restoration. R: Yes, we're talking about that.

Gary: When this is all done, will YRPA transfer the property? R: We believe agencies don't want these properties. We see YRPA as becoming a land trust.

John: What will the use be? R: Leave in agriculture for the time being until YRPA gets other things done. Also, this property is in a Nature Conservancy easement, 250 acres. There is no vehicle access. Stormwater management is a possible use of another part of the property in the future.

MFWP Yellowstone River FAS

Presenter: Ken Frazer. Most of the comments on the restoration plan were about access. This is FWP's goal. FWP wants to partner with all other applicants as well as leverage other FWP funding. \$500,000 is request with match of up to 50%. With all partners, now is a good time.

Columbus to Park City is the highest priority reach. We are looking at two potential fishing access sites in that reach.

Questions

Gary: Could prioritize money and sites further in the future. R: Sure, part of the prioritization is opportunity-driven.

John: If you had money available, it would help you compete for other funds? R: Yes.

Q: Since funding from DOJ, how would you be able to move forward? R: Yes, we could move forward with or without matching. Recently Legislature gave us some funding compared to recent years.

Brad: All these sites would have the title be with FWP? R: Not necessarily. It depends on partnerships.

Ken: Would you consider FWP in competition with previous presenters or a partner? R: Partner.

Ken: You can leverage this money better? R: Yes, we can coordinate with other NRDP funds and FWP sources.

Conclusion

Alicia proposes to:

- Work with project applicants and pair them up with partners who can implement projects
- Work with applicants for better budgets
- Prepare criteria evaluations for Committee
- Put together a package including criteria evaluations and funding recommendation for each project
- Each committee member will rank each project
- Alicia will compile rankings as starting point for the Committee to discuss rankings

Brad asked for a motion to approve Alicia's process to start.

Ken made the motion and Kathy seconded it. The vote to approve the process was unanimous.

Public Comment

None.

Q: How about a field trip? R: Alicia asked the Committee to provide a list of the sites they want to see.

Alicia also asked members to send her any questions they have.

The meeting was adjourned.