

Harvey County Parks Advisory Board

Meeting – West Park

August 17, 2015

Members present: Cynda Conrade, Carolyn Schwab, Jim Lasiter, Pat Jackson, Carol Buller, Brandon Wills, Zack Phillips

Staff Present: Parks Director, Kass Miller & Operations Supervisor, Derrick Richling

Minutes: Carolyn moved, Cynda seconded that the minutes of the July meeting be approved as submitted. Motion carried.

Operations Report – Derrick Richling:

- **Camp Hawk** – Frisbee golf baskets have all been repaired. The emergency spillway at the dam had washed out – tried to repair it for farmer to cross, but equipment still too wide to successfully cross. Will bring in more recycled asphalt delivered and widen this passage way. It is the only access the farmer has to his ground.
- **West Park:** Been doing some weed eating around the shore line as much as they can. Security light is now working – found a breaker had flipped. The gophers have come back – this problem will need to be addressed.
- **East Park** – A gate near the Sunset Ridge area has become too cumbersome to operate. They took it out & have replaced with a cable access gate –easier to access area. They took the old gate; reworked it by making it shorter & have installed it at an area off 24th street to eliminate motorized vehicles from going into that area of the park. Also been weed eating around the jetties/shore line, generally working around the lake. This is a tedious process. Zack asked about a sickle bar mower. Kass/Derrick said they have one – it is very old & does not work very well. Derrick commented it hard to use a sickle mower as there is a lot of rip-rap where they are trimming & you don't always get an even cut. They do hope to get a new sickle mower in the future. The security lights at East Park (approximately 15) several of them not working. They had Butler Electric come out & replaced bulbs – all but one now working. Zack asked who owned the lights; Kass replied the Parks Department owns them. Zack asked about getting LED lighting. Derrick advised if we got this type of lighting – the parks department would have to turn over their rights of ownership. This would cost \$12.00 per month for each light – and would be too costly. Much less expensive to have them come & service when needed. They have been working on making more wood barricades to use as needed. During the recent flood, they did not have enough barricades to keep individuals out of certain areas. Also making new signage for different areas of the park.
- **Mowing continues at all the parks.** The contract calls for 12 cycles of mowing – about every 10 days. They are now on the 9/10 cycle. Zack asked what if mowing still needed when contract expires; Kass said either re-adjust the budget or rangers do it themselves – which takes them much more time to complete.

- Since last meeting – they have had two accidents at East Lake – one rollover around the Sunset Ridge area – taking curve too fast – minor injuries. Also, ATV accident – couple also rolled over in ATV - driver was not even supposed to be in the park. Injuries suffered in this accident would somewhat severe, but both are okay.

Directors Report – Kass Miller:

- They have had several incidents of vandalism/unusual happenings at the parks during the past couple of weeks. Storage campers, breaking in and taking cords – presumed for the copper. Sink in the restroom at Walnut Grover area in West Park torn off. A truck at West Park cutting across instead of following road, got high centered & had to be towed off (not by park staff). At East Park, during last big storm, someone stole 2 ice chests which were full of alcohol. At East Park, they also had an issue of a man & woman going into the women’s restroom to shower. At East Park, one water hydrant had been hit (accidentally or not) and broken off at elbow – been repaired. Another had a leak at elbow, but think this was caused by water pressure when water was turned back on after 1st hydrant was repaired.
- At West Park, Betty & Steve Ford (camp hosts) camper was destroyed when large tree limb fell on top of it. Betty was inside when it happened & luckily she was not injured.
- Blue Green algae at East Park is slowing down – now reduced to “Watch” warning. However, they are still keeping people out of the water. Hopefully some rain will eliminate this problem.
- Jasper Eilert would like an easement thru the park area that encompasses our brome field. They are working with him to come up with a viable solution to allow him access.
- Homeless issue: One person residing at Camp Hawk – Couple of brothers at East Park (one brother has went back to Wichita). They are really not breaking any laws – they buy \$125 season pass & can camp without any additional fees as long as no electricity. If known they are homeless, the parks department has a packet they give them disclosing entities that can help them (food bank, shelter, etc.). In this instance, there are no children involved. Kass commented if there were children involved, he would immediately contact social services. They can camp from April to November 15. After that charged daily rates if they camp at all. Zack asked if they bothered the other campers that come out on weekend. Kass replied that since the one brother has left, not as much of a problem. He had been known to knock on campers doors late at night.
- Kass has contacted Newton Community Theatre group to try and get a production at one of the parks. Possibly about doing it as a fall event. Has not heard back from them. He plans to contact the Orchestra group also - Carol Buller suggested a jazz concert might be interesting to try.
- Built Environment is holding another seminar October 13-15 in Overland Park. Kass attended this seminar in Wichita last year & hopes to attend this year. A lot of good ideas on trail development, etc.
- The season is slowing down which will give them a chance to review/look at possible grants as time is available.

Old Business:

- **Event ideas for 2016 Season:**

Zack commented that due to the planned variety of events during this season, he felt one of the best years for the parks department. Kass asked members to give suggestions for events for 2016 season. Some of the most successful events:

- Crappie Tournament – Easter Egg Hunt – Movie Night went well – mud volley ball tournament well received.

Derrick commented they had thought about having a “movie night in the water” around the swim beach – somehow work on this for something different. Kass also commented they might try & do movie night the same time Carol did her nature talks – show movie after she is done. This might generate more attendance.

- Some other suggestions:

Zack suggested star gazing – Kass commented they had a telescope donated to the parks department – said not a real good one – but would work for something like this.

Jim suggested chili – BBQ cook-off event or just a campfire cook-out – let people cook whatever they wanted – not just chili/BBQ.

Carol suggested a scavenger hunt – horseback or foot – she had researched it on internet & gave the information to Kass to review.

Brandon suggested an art fair event – music – arts – etc. Kass mentioned that the 2nd Saturday of every month, they have had a jam night even through the winter. If too cold, they hold it inside. This has been well received.

Kass said they have thought about a 3-D shoot – Archery.

Zack suggested a 3 gun shoot for law enforcement – lot of people like to watch this competition.

Cynda asked about the radio control planes – Kass commented he hoped to have an event planned around this activity for the public to attend.

Put on a car show.

Zack asked if the “think session” the members did last November – giving suggestions of ideas for the parks helped at all. Kass commented it was very helpful. It was determined that November was fairly late to get the calendar printed – it was decided we would have the session at our October meeting to allow ample time for printing of the calendar.

- **Park Board Application - Asked** that this be tabled for now. Kass had emailed John Waltner concerning this and has not heard back from him.

New Business:

- **ATV/4 Wheeler Consideration:**

Kass advised this issue is an on-going problem – accidents with the one at East Lake causing serious injury. They see ATV/4 wheelers running around with lot of kids – not driving responsibly – not obeying the rules, etc. John asked that he bring this issue before the advisory board for suggestions/ideas on how to handle this problem.

Pat commented if this is the problem – need to ban them from the parks. Kass commented he hates to ban them as there are a lot of “good” users of these vehicles & they would be penalized. Jim asked if they get complaints from campers – Kass replied they do. Kass commented that this activity is a problem every weekend.

What do State Parks do about these vehicles? Derrick said most do not allow, but in those that do the rangers can write tickets & levy fines for violations.

Kass commented he felt there were only 2 options at this time – (1) Ban ATV/4 wheelers from the parks (2) Rangers begin to write tickets & levy fines for violations.

Due to this on-going problem, **Carolyn Schwab moved that the board recommend ATV/4 wheelers be banned from Harvey County Parks. Jim Lasiter seconded.**

Discussion: Kass commented this could be reversed in the future if any other solution is obtained. He also commented they will receive a lot of negative feedback from park attendees that do follow the rules using these vehicles. Members felt for the safety of all concerned, this is the best solution at this time. No further discussion – **Motion carried.**

Board Member Comments:

Zack advised that prior to coming to the meeting, he encountered a gentlemen in the park that is staying here. He commented he wished the replacement dock was ADA compliant. Due to instability in his walking, he cannot go on the dock. Kass advised they have gotten the rest of the material to install the dock and that a grant to purchase railing is being applied for.

Carol asked if the bridge on the trails at East Park has been repaired. Kass advised they are still waiting on FEMA. Derrick said riders are still using the trails – just going thru the ditch & avoiding the bridge.

Zack stated he had read somewhere that park rangers were doing their own testing regarding the algae bloom at East Lake. Kass adamantly replied that was not the case – KDHE came out and did all the testing & drew the samples. The findings were inconclusive – thus the “watch” warning at this time. Zack also noted he observed an area on the north side of West Park that could be potential for algae problem. Kass commented he would have this tested – they do not allow swimming in the lake, but still want to avoid human/animal contact if that is the case.

No further discussion/comments. Carol Buller moved, Jim Lasiter second meeting adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 8:15.

Respectfully, Pat Jackson