

**CITY OF CONNELL  
PARK BOARD MEETING  
May 24, 2016  
Minutes**

**Call to Order:** 7:01 p.m.

**Attendance:**

Present: Chair Jaeniffer Kaiser, Board Members Helen Tobin, Manny Choi, Helen Tobin, Carol Lindner.

Excused: Vice Chair Dave Gribble.

Staff: Jed Crowther.

***Motion:*** Board Member Tobin moved to excuse Vice Chair Dave Gribble. Motion seconded by Chair Kaiser. Motion passed unanimously.

**Approval of Minutes:**

***Motion:*** Board Member Lindner moved to approve the March 29, 2016 minutes as written. Motion seconded by Board Member Tobin. Motion passed unanimously.

**ACTION & DISCUSSION**

**Parks & Recreation Update**

Parks & Recreation Director Manny Choi provided a list of tentative plans and a schedule of upcoming events. He had taken extra efforts to coordinate and not overlap scheduling of other activities happening in Connell. He advised that his shift schedule had recently changed which might open more time for daytime activities, and still maintain weekend scheduling.

Manny said the first activity is "Reptile Man", scheduled for Thursday, June 16th at 7 pm at Pioneer Park. This is a very popular event to kick-off the summer season. Promotional flyers will be distributed at schools. Helen encouraged Manny to promote the full summer events schedule, and volunteered help and supplies. Jaeniffer asked for Parks & Recreation materials to display at the CBHA bulletin board, including in Spanish.

Manny outlined many other activities, including a bike rodeo or helmet giveaway, to be sponsored by Kohl's. To obtain maximum exposure, this event might likely coincide with Connell Fall Festival. The primary aim was to add better safety for children, by utilizing bike helmets.

Helen advised that participating organizations could use the non-profit form on Connell Fall Festival website.

Manny presented ideas for a Water Play Day at the Park; with slip-n-slide, water balloon launcher, inflatable bounce house, and food vendors. Helen suggested that a regular weekly schedule be established.

Other events: 3 on 3 soccer tournament, 3 on 3 basketball tournament, Learn to draw, Tennis learn to serve, Mosaic Art, Archery, Estate Preparation, Master Gardeners clinic, Harvest Trot, Kimmy's Kloset, and Read Up.

Helen asked about program frequency. Manny said the Read Up event would be hosted on a weekly basis, and perhaps one more activity at that level of scheduling.

Manny had found that an open community center event was held in the past, with foosball and table tennis. His contact information is: Manny Choi, Parks & Recreation Director, [P&R@ConnellWA.org](mailto:P&R@ConnellWA.org), (509) 318-5312. He said that activities would look to wrap up by Fall Festival in September, as kids would be back in school.

## **Hiring Process**

Board members asked why they weren't involved or informed of applicants for the Park Director position.

Jed said the intent was to preserve the integrity of the application process. Helen said in the past, that Park Board had sat in on the interviews, and she felt shut out.

Jed noted that the position had been advertised last fall, then we waited for the budget process to play out, and after that, we didn't have to re-advertise, because we had a qualified applicant.

Helen asked what the qualifications were for Park and Recreation Director. Jed said that the qualifications were consistent with the job description that Park Board helped to develop. Helen expressed concerns that Park Board did not see the employment applications, and got shut out when they should have been included.

Manny said part of the reasoning was that it was questionable if it was going to happen; to hire the position.

Jaeniffer asked for less secrecy and more transparency. Carol asked, "Why weren't we involved?"

## **Pool**

Helen said that she was not sure how to proceed with pool; as we need another revenue source for the pool. She said that talking to people and trying to get them on board, they're really hesitant. She had a comment by somebody: "Why give the city more money that they can mismanage?" Helen said the perception is that the budget has not been addressed yet, on a thorough level.

Helen said that she had posted on Facebook that the pool is going to be closed, and it is going to be closed forever if someone from the community doesn't step up, especially younger families. Some of the return comments were that it's the city's job to run the pool, not the community. The sites she mentioned are: Save our Pool & Parks, and What's going on, Connell?

Helen said she didn't know if a tax increase was going to do it. She thinks it needs to be a pool district, because that way, there's no money in the city fund that the city can choose what to do with when the budget is tight. Specific money going to a specific cause that's only going to be used for a specific issue.

Helen said that creating a park district is a huge effort; to get everyone on board. She said that county people are on board for supporting the pool, for the most part; and it would take a community-wide group; to determine boundaries and taxation, and to select a governing board and provide proper oversight.

Carol said, "If the city would have cut 10% for each department, this wouldn't be happening, but the pool was the easy out."

Helen asked if there is any way to look at the budget again and ask for a 10% cut across the board.

Jed said that the budget is on a yearly cycle. He said that the community made their desires known, and Council selected priorities and a budget plan to follow. Pool funding could be addressed in a future budget.

Carol and Helen expressed frustration that Park Board wasn't given opportunity earlier to seek solutions.

Jaeniffer asked about participation in the budget process. Jed said the budget process starts in September, and included 18 public meetings last year, with opportunity for citizen input.

Helen insisted on allocation of levy lid lift dollars solely to the pool; that by \$59K from the levy lid lift plus \$18K from pool receipts might only leave a gap of about \$30K to operate the pool. She inquired if the Board could make recommendation to seek consensus by Council for the \$59K to go directly towards the pool.

Budgeting and fundraising strategies were discussed in order to achieve funding for the pool.

Jed said there was a good turnout from the community, and priorities were a big part of budget discussions.

Helen said that the community came to the meetings, and the city closed the pool anyway.

Jed said the city followed through with YMCA and different methods of trying to make constraints known.

Helen spoke of the need to attend budget meetings, and requested email notice.

Jed said the city recognized the need for efficiency, and the budget process allowed scrutiny by the public.

#### **City Administrator Position**

Park Board members inquired of Jed's continuing employment and potential future transition. Jed said that he was under contract with the city; and that his farm was for sale and it would depend on upcoming results.

#### **Park Board Comments**

Helen said she didn't appreciate cancelling the April Park Board meeting, not providing updates, and for making decisions without Park Board. She requested an update on facilities, and informed of shingles missing on the roof of the Clark Street bathrooms.

Carol gave concern for weeds in Striker and Pioneer Park, and unreported water leaks on the walking path.

#### **Grants**

Jed reported on Recreation Conservation Office (RCO) grant which required a 50% match and outdoor pools did not qualify.

#### **Next Meeting**

Tuesday, June 28, 2016 at 7 p.m.

#### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.