Elizabeth Park & Rec

Regular Meeting of the Board

August 16, 2022

I. Call to Order 7:00pm/Roll Call: Kurt Prinslow, Kelly Moffatt, Doug Severinsen Others staff - Ryan Staley and Mike Barney. Public - Quenton Dehaan, Bill Mott, Casey Westbrook, and approximately 20 local pickleball players / Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Approval of Minutes – Regular Meeting on July 19, 2022 – Kurt makes a motion to approve the minutes, Doug 2nds, all in favor.

III. Approval of Agenda – Doug makes a motion to approve the agenda, Kurt 2nds, all in favor.

IV. Communications to the Board

* Casey Westbrook, with the Department of Natural Resources, provided a summary of deer management program. Harvest was fairly low this past season in target area though population is staying consistent. The health of the herd has improved overall. Approximately 120lbs of meat were donated from the program to local food shelters with some meat going to Fort Carson soldiers. 5 hunters approved and certified for the program this upcoming season and activity will not begin before October 1st. The Board approved the District to work with Casey on the program again this season.
* Quenton Dehaan introduced himself as the coordinator for the Elbert County Marketplace and shared that he is moving out of state in the near future. He shared that he is unable to identify current vendors that are interested in coordinating the groups Saturday markets after he leaves and asked the Board if they are interested in taking over the coordination efforts. He shared that the group would likely disband next year without leadership. Kurt asked Quneton if he had approached the Elbert County Agricultural Alliance (ECAA) and he said he had not. Renee, a member of the ECAA Board was present at the meeting and expressed that she would discuss interest in taking over the Saturday farmer’s markets with the ECAA Board at their upcoming meeting.
* Lynn Watts, a local resident, spoke with the Board about Pickleball and expressed a need for additional resources to support the activity. She shared that there are over 75 local active players and that participation is growing. She requested that the Board allocate funding for additional courts and pursue pickleball specific programming and events. Some other members of the group also spoke to the need for additional resources to support growing participation / interest. Some attendees expressed concerns with the existing courts at Evans Park related to cracks in the concrete pad and potential trip hazards. Kelly asked the group if the courts were unsafe and need to be shut down until repairs can be made, and they responded that the courts did not need to be shut down, but that they hoped the conditions could be improved. Kelly then asked Mike his opinion on the safety of the courts. Mike stated that while there are some cracks and uneven surfaces, just as there are on sidewalks and within the skatepark, he did not feel the courts presented an unsafe condition. Kurt asked if the group had reached out to the Town of Elizabeth, Town of Kiowa, or any other entities about the need for additional pickleball resources. They responded that the Town of Elizabeth is trying to improve a court in a town park, and that they had not reached out to anyone else. The Board expressed general support for adding courts, and pursuing all proposed improvements for the park system, and directed Mike to work with an engineer to get a cost estimate for a facility that includes the courts, fencing, and other amenities needed for a pickleball facility. The Board will revisit the request once costs are identified.

VI. Continued Business

2022 Capital Improvement Project Updates

 -Campground Renovation – Mike shared that the County Planning Department is requiring the District to submit an application for the development of the campground as if the campground was never built, due to there being no record of its approval when built in 2010. This has significantly extended the review and permitting process once again. Mike stated that he has submitted a second request for a deadline extension to GOCO as the project will not be completed by the end of September, and will notify the Board once he receives a decision from them. Mike also shared that current County campground regulations only allow for someone to camp 30 consecutive days although there have been people living in the campground and permitting a site since before 2016. He reminded the Board that there are still 3 of the 13 long-term campers staying in the campground from when the Board eliminated long-term camping in 2016, and that it is very likely that the County will be requiring these individuals to leave unless some type of exemption or waiver can be approved through the application and review process. Mike shared that he feared such a move by the County could make one or more of these long-term campers homeless, and expressed concern about at least one of the camping units being structurally sound enough to be moved from the campground. He stated that if the County does require these individuals to move from the campground, he would expect that they are prepared to be the enforcer of the regulation and potentially work with social services to identify other housing opportunities as the campground has served as affordable housing for these individuals for at least the last 7 years without incident.

 - Evans Park Playground Expansion – Mike shared the playground pit in Evans Park has been expanded and that the swing set was installed. Over 60 tons of pea gravel was added, a new edge / curb was poured, and there is still room to add a few playground features. Staff will assess available funding closer to tend of the fiscal year and determine if additional features can be purchased and installed.

 - Casey Jones Ballfield Lights – Mike shared that work is set to begin in coming weeks on the replacement of the lights. He shared that the poles were tested and are in good shape for the foreseeable future, though there were 3 poles identified in the rodeo arena that are in need of replacement. Doug asked if we could approach Sun Valley about expanding our current project to include the replacement of the bad poles and lights around the rodeo arena and save money on some mobilization costs. Doug also asked if the insurance company could be approached about the need to replace the poles that failed the test to cover any of the replacement costs. Mike said he would contact them to ask. Mike then shared some concerns about the current lack of District “ownership” of the light poles around the arena as the Stampede group paid for the original system and its installation, as well as other elements for the rodeo arena complex such as the bleachers, stalls, and press boxes. He suggested that a work session be scheduled between the Board and the board of the Stampede group to negotiate the terms of an agreement to clarify ownership of assets in the park, maintenance responsibilities, plan for continued improvements, and other matters related to the facilities. The Board agreed this is needed, and directed Mike to reach out and schedule a meeting.

- Casey Jones Park Maintenance Yard – Mike shared that work has begun on the new maintenance yard to be located along the north entrance drive of the park off County Road 17. The area will be graded, fenced, and surfaced with recycled asphalt fines. It will be a secure storage area for supplies and materials and will be shielded from the public by privacy fencing. It will also allow for the clean-up of various material piles that can been throughout the park, improving park aesthetics. An electric pedestal will also be brought into the site from a light pole on the adjacent ballfield. The Board suggested that a security light and potentially a security camera also be installed.

VII. New Business

2023 Strategic Planning and Budget Priorities

- Mike stated that he is asking the Board to begin thinking about budget priorities and desired projects for 2023 and beyond as he will begin developing the Budge in September. He shared comments that he received from Dondi that included a desire to support the development of additional pickleball resources, and a desire to begin working with residents to organize a public campaign and raise support for recreation center funding and a future ballot initiative, potentially in 2023. He also shared a request from JC that the Board assess the benefits of paying off its debt related to the purchase of the Silver J Ranch property early. After some discussion, the Board directed Mike to conduct an analysis for early payback that includes not only savings from paying less interest, but also the interest rate that the District is currently earning on its reserve account. Mike will forward the report to the Board when completed for their review. Doug shared that he supports the development of additional pickleball courts and expressed a desire for the District to pursue programming opportunities to generate revenue. Mike asked that Board members be prepared to share any other desires or priorities for 2023 or future years at the September meeting of the Board for discussion. He stated that he has also sought a cost for the artificial turf field as described within the Casey Jones Master Plan and will have the project expense available for capital project planning this fall.

VIII. Legislative Matters - none

IV. Report of Administrator and Staff

 -Budget Report – still no concerns, budget tracking well overall though some individual line items are exceeding allocations. Enterprise Fund expenses are tracking a bit higher than budget and Mike will monitor and determine if a budget amendment may be needed later in the year. Anticipate near $850K in cash balance at end of 2022, based on current CIP scheduling.

 -Maintenance Report – Ryan gave the maintenance report and summarized the work done over the last month which included rebuilding picnic tables behind the park office, painting of garbage cans, spraying of cattails in Dragon Fly Pond, opened south soccer field at Evans Park after grass improved, removed old batting cage poles, and installed pay station at the disc-golf course.

 -Program and Special Events Report – Youth sports registration is now complete and we had 215 youth register for soccer. There will be 6 teams in each division except for 4 teams in the 10-12 division. Flag football participation is down from last year with 50 youth registered within the 4-6 and 7-9 divisions collectively, and the 10-12 age division only had 17 registrants, so that age division was cancelled. The tackle football program, now coordinated by a local non-profit group saw a big increase in participation this fall, so that may account for the drop we saw in participation. Yoga and Zumba in the park is going well and has many drop ins. Photography class for youth started this week with only 2 participants, though we hope this will grow in future offerings. Adult outdoor volleyball was cancelled due to lack of interest. Adult Flag Football tournament is scheduled for November 4th. End of Summer Bah is this coming Saturday and Board is encouraged to stop by if they are in Town and join in the fun.

X. Other Matters – None

XI. Adjournment – 8:43pm Kelly makes a motion to adjourn, Doug 2nds, all in favor.