

City of Milton-Freewater Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee of the City of Milton-Freewater met Tuesday, September 5, 2023 at 5:14 p.m. in the Albee Room of the Library, 8 SW 8th Avenue, Milton-Freewater, Oregon.

The following members were present: Chair Ryan Westman, Committee Members Susan Dohrmann, George Gillette, and John Mitchell.

Staff members present were: City Manager Linda Hall, Public Works Superintendent Brian Steadman, and Parks and Recreation Supervisor Matt Chesnut.

The only citizen/guest present was Kate Winters.

No press members were present.

Approval of Minutes

Committee Member Gillette motioned to approve the August 1, 2023 Committee minutes. Committee Member Dohrmann seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

Staff Reports and Updates

Public Works Superintendent Brian Steadman reported that Steven Patten, PW Technician had once again been successful in securing grant funding for one of our recreational goals and priorities. The Freewater Park project will result in new playground equipment for children, a walking trail around Freewater park, a multi-use court facility and upgrades to the restrooms. He reported the grant is for \$110,000 out of a \$185,000 project. The finalized grant award should be made around September 20th.

He and Parks Supervisor Chesnut also reported that the Yantis Park project was moving along, with nine ADA ramp construction being done by force account with the City's own labor, to save money. Also, the Freewater Park skate park should be getting some repairs to the lights as soon as the electrical contractor can schedule the work.

Committee Member Comments

No committee member had any reports or comments.

PRESENTATION

Milton Freewater Trails Group – Marie Dorian Trail Presentation

Chair Westman announced that the scheduled presentation would not be happening this evening due to the absence of Jean Ann Mitchell.

Mr. Westman reported that this project was a walking trail to be developed on the south upper end of Marie Dorian Park, near the monument. He stated volunteers and business folks such as Don Jackson Excavation have been contacted to donate materials and labor to build the 1/3 of a mile loop, with the trail being approximately four feet wide.

He stated that the volunteer group is working on a more solid, detailed plan and that they need to not only approach this committee for approval, but then the City Council.

Committee member Mitchell commented that a volunteer group had constructed a zig zag portion of the trail from the

Committee Member Mitchell commented that a volunteer group had accomplished a lot over a weekend of working recently and constructed a zig zag trail between the top of the steps of the pioneers and the monument itself.

Mr. Westman clarified that this volunteer group was the RDI group sponsored by Sherwood Trust.

City Manager Hall cautioned that the City Council should give their approval prior to work being done or projects being constructed. She also stated that consideration needed to be given to the on-going cost to maintain this proposed facility. She further stated this has a financial impact on the city's staff resources and materials. She added that she was concerned that the city crew was already struggling to keep up with the current facilities.

Committee Member Gillette commented that this concerned him and he was not certain that the city staff had the time and resources to take on this additional responsibility. He added that for every hour they spent on this trail, this was one less hour they were working on existing facilities in the city. He stated that perhaps a third outside private party could take this on.

Committee Member Dohrmann commented that she shared this concern and did not want to approve something that put the city crews at risk of not keeping up. She added the committee needed to be diligent about what they recommended to the Council.

Chair Westman asked Mr. Chesnut if he had an idea of how much maintenance and time this project may entail.

Mr. Chesnut stated it was hard to say with exact certainty, but this area is inaccessible to equipment, so anything used on it will have to be taken up the hill by foot, which probably means a lot of string trimming and hand mowing and backpack spraying. He stated he would guess spraying alone would be 1 ½ days of work, and it would need to be sprayed several times a year.

Mr. Mitchell asked if this could be done by a volunteer.

Mr. Chesnut stated that they would need public right of way credentials. He stated spraying of chemicals is highly regulated and strict.

Ms. Hall added they should also be bonded and insured for damages and liability.

A discussion ensued about this issue.

Chair Westman summarized the discussion by stating that if the M F Trails Group wants to move forward with this plan, they should bring it back to the Recreation Committee at their October meeting with more details, and then if approved by the Trails group in October, request to be on the City Council agenda in November.

Kate Winters, from the audience asked if the issue could be kept moving forward by tentatively scheduling it for the October City Council meeting.

Manager Hall said she believed the dates were too close together for staff to prepare fact sheets and informational packets for the Council's use for the meeting.

Committee Member Gillette motioned to table this item until the group could return to make their presentation and that the concerns with maintenance budgets and resource plans could be addressed. Committee member Dohrmann seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Kate Winters asked if the city could make better use of volunteers and organize a "Make a Difference Day". She added that the last one she knew about was canceled.

Chair Westman commented that the last one he was aware of was held last April and was very successful, in which several projects were tackled throughout the city.

A discussion ensued.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:49 p.m.



Ryan Westman, Chairman