

Rifle Parks & Recreation Advisory Board

Agenda

February 22nd, 2016

5:30 PM

Parks Maintenance Facility

3100 Doaks Lane

1. Call to Order
2. Minutes of February 8, 2016 meeting
3. Comments from Public
4. Continuing business:
Discuss Little League Requests--
 Petition to keep soccer uses off of
 Taughenbaugh Field
 Use of Centennial Bowl for organized
 sports--
5. Update on Parks and Rec. Survey.
6. Other
7. Next meeting—April 11, 2016.
 March 7—canceled per 2/8/16 meeting.
 (PRAB Strategic Planning Session March 1,
 2016)
 March 21 PRAB canceled.
8. Adjourn



Memo

To: PRAB Members

From: Tom Whitmore, Parks & Recreation Director

Date: February 20, 2016

Re: Detail of agenda items for 2.22.2016 meeting

Agenda Item 4.

Following the last meeting of PRAB, Colorado River Valley Little League (CRVLL) asked to attend the February 17th City Council meeting to make the same request to Council. I've attached their memo to Council in the packet. Several individuals spoke on behalf of Little League's request during the Citizen Comment Section of the City Council agenda. Emily Hisel mentioned the petition to council, but we have yet to receive a copy. You may view the recorded Channel 10 broadcast. Little League's comments were early on the agenda. Later, during Administrative Reports, I was asked to come forward to address the topic briefly. Individual council members commented regarding the request. You should view the comments and interpret them for yourselves. Council deferred to PRAB on a decision on CRVLL's request though, saying that these items are for the appointed board's deliberation.

PRAB's decision and recommendation to City Council should address a number of aspects of the request by Little League, both stated and implied, with a well considered rationale for the respective decision. Below are items I submit to be considered, addressed, or supported or not. Some require more immediately action than others:

1. Though staff has demonstrated, by action, a willingness to work with CRVLL, we have not given them the guarantee that they desire. We see a guarantee, such as the one they request at Taughenbaugh field, as giving a private entity priority and implied control over publicly-owned facilities and public recreational activities. We plan to continue to work to facilitate CRVLL in reasonable ways, but do not want to imply a guarantee that would restrict freedom of public uses at publicly-owned facilities. Proposed solutions and program numbers (forthcoming) may allow Taughenbaugh Field to be more available for CRVLL this spring.



CITY OF RIFLE

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2. Centennial Park was conceived and designed with the idea of being a premier passive recreation space in Rifle. “Passive recreation” is a term that was used by community representatives involved in master planning Centennial Park. The term is also used a number of times in the GOCO Grant Contract that was submitted prior to the construction of Centennial Park.
Though there is no specific language, that we are aware of, forbidding other uses, Parks and Recreation staff has honored the intent of keeping that space for passive recreation, and has refrained from programming the “Centennial Bowl” for organized competitive sports programs. Those kinds of uses tend to push passive uses out.
Technically, soccer, baseball, Frisbee, volleyball, badminton, etc. could all take place there, by drop-in users, on a first come-first served basis.
3. Staff is committed to continually working with CRVLL as well as other private groups, to facilitate their needs as long as their needs do not degrade the status or priority of ongoing public Parks and Recreation programs on publicly owned fields and facilities.
4. The City of Rifle and its Parks and Recreation Department has, and must retain, top priority use of publicly-owned fields and facilities for established public programs.
5. Do you, as a board, recommend to council that staff move youth soccer from the outfield of Taughenbaugh Field, a practice that has been in place many years prior to CRVLL desiring to use publicly owned fields, at the possible expense of future Parks and Recreation public use, to facilitate expanded CRVLL use?
If yes, why, and what is the plan for dealing with requests for more in the future? Explain the rationale. If no, explain the rationale.
6. Do you, as a board, recommend to Council that staff allows structured sports activities (U-10 soccer), if just for one summer, in the Centennial Park bowl, to facilitate expanded CRVLL use? If yes, what is the rationale? What are the conditions, if any? If no, what is the rationale?





Agenda Item 5.

Update on Parks and Recreation Survey: We ended up with 12 pages of survey. The survey company will allow 7, but prefers 6 pages. We are working to make that happen while still retaining elements of recreation, facilities, and aquatics.

If you have any questions or comments, please let me know.

Thanks,
Tom

Tom Whitmore
Parks & Recreation Director
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RIFLE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

February 8, 2016

PARKS MAINTENANCE FACILITY

<u>MEMBERS PRESENT:</u>	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
Sara Brainard	X	
Chris Bornholdt	X	
Michael Churchill	X	
Vanessa Ivy	X	
Trudy Lowery	X	
Wilma Paddock	X	
Milton Rodas	X	

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Whitmore, Wayne Edgeton, Steven Samson

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Michael Churchill at 6:34 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 27TH MEETING:

Wilma moved and Sara seconded to approve minutes of the 1/27/2016 meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: None

HEAR LITTLE LEAGUE REQUESTS:

Emily Hisel, representing Colorado River Valley Little League, presented CRV Little League's request. Emily stated their need to use Taughenbaugh field for Little League. They are a growing league and would like to expand and add softball. They expect to have three teams and need the field for practices and games. They had about 300 players in 2015 and expect to have 250 to 300 players this year. Little League is opposed to having youth soccer on softball/baseball outfields. They would like soccer to move to other possible locations to make this field available. Soccer is easier to move to other turf locations vs. no other softball/baseball fields. Also, to help insure this, they would like the City to use the "Bowl" area

at Centennial Park for U-10 soccer this season. They are requesting a guarantee to be able to use Taughenbaugh field this season. Emily mentioned that this has been an ongoing obstacle for a couple years and that she began talking to the Parks and Recreation Director this past August and options have been discussed, but no decision has been made. The City is scheduled to expand grass at Wamsley, with support of Re-2, but that will not help until fall and Little League needs a plan B. Tom explained to the board that use of available school fields of adequate size may alleviate the issue for summer of 2016, but still relied on program registrations which are not complete. Community Rec. programs have priority on community owned fields. Also the proposed solutions would only help for 2016, not future years. Little Leagues registration and numbers wouldn't be finalized until early March and registrations for City soccer programs would be complete a couple of weeks later. Though staff understands the reason for the request, staff doesn't have enough guarantees about facilities that they have to coordinate with others, to guarantee any use to Little League. Wilma Paddock asked Tom about uses of Centennial. Tom responded that, since Centennial Park was planned, they have not allowed organized sports uses there. The space was planned for passive uses. Citizen and PRAB members that were involved with master planning of Centennial had emphasized "passive uses". Prior to Centennial Park, almost all facilities were for organized sports and Rifle's emphasis at that time was for more passive recreation spaces. Parks and Rec.'s practices have been not to allow organized sports, especially when line painting and more formal commitments were needed, such as goals, etc. Staff has turned down a few requests of this nature. Trudy Lowery asked what would happen if Little League would not have been able to use City Fields. Emily said they'd have to cut back. Emily mentioned a petition that Little League had circulated. Michael Churchill asked how it was worded. Emily circulated a few pages of the original survey. PRAB members reacted to the way it was worded. Michael was uncomfortable with the wording of the petition. He stated he thought the language was harsh. "The City is doing a disservice" by having soccer on the outfield...? Michael felt like we all had similar goals in mind and that we are a team in sharing the facilities and providing services. Emily also mentioned that Rifle is the only town that charges for the use of fields. Emily stated that Little League really needs a lighted field and Taughenbaugh has lights. Michael suggested the petition be reworded. Trudy commented on the way petitions should be written vs. the way it was written. Tom had comments regarding fees that he wanted to offer in open session; -that we currently do a lump sum billing for little league, based on past averages. (\$3,500). It had been discussed and agreed with Little League representatives in the past, that we'd review fees/charges every couple of years. He said that, because Little League was expanding, if they end up using fields more, fees should reflect that. He didn't want this topic to be taken as an act of retaliation or anything as a spin over this current issue. Emily replied that that was reasonable.

Sara Brainard asked if there were any other alternatives. Emily said no. They would have to cut back practice times. They have more field availability in Meeker because they have dropped Rec. League there.

Michael asked if the board would suggest a direction to staff. Chris Bornholdt said he wasn't ready and felt we need more discussion. To clarify, Tom asked if PRAB agreed that this would be continued at the next meeting on February 22. The consensus of the Board was yes.

Michael had to leave and Wilma assumed the duties of the chair.

DISCUSS REVISED 2016 PARKS AND RECREATION SURVEY:

The board had received copies of the draft survey that would be sent to the survey company. Tom stated that The City Manager and Assistant City Manager may have some final revisions and that we felt the survey was too long at that we would be working with the survey company to get it pared down.

DISCUSS DATE TO REVIEW PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC PLAN:

After some discussion, March 1 was selected as the date for parks and recreation strategic planning. Tom mentioned that we could start at 5:30, have a meal and do the planning session. Tom thinks we may be able to complete the session in 4 hours or so. There will be more information forthcoming as we make arrangements for location and food.

This will be in preparation of the City's Strategic Planning, which the Board has been invited to on Saturday, April 30th. Key Parks and Recreation staff will attend as well.

OTHER:

Tom updated PRAB on some situations that Recreation staff is dealing with currently-- with Rec. League items with individuals, other towns in the league etc. Tom wanted PRAB to be informed and asked PRAB for input if they hear comments related to the items.

Milton Rodas said he was working on some ways to get funding from outside sources for Parks and Rec.

Next meeting is scheduled for February 22nd.

Vice Chairman Wilma Paddock declared the meeting adjourned at 7:38 pm

February 15, 2016



To the Honorable Members of City Council,

I am writing you today to ask your help in securing Taughenbaugh Field at Deerfield Park for use of softball and baseball starting this spring. This field is vital to the success of our Little League program.

The Colorado River Valley Little League is a completely volunteer run organization that serves the youth in New Castle, Silt, Rifle, Parachute, Meeker, and Rangely. Last year we had roughly 250 children, and this season we expect to have 250 to 300 children on about 25 different teams. This year we are focusing on expanding our softball program because we want to bring the game to more girls in our area. Because of this effort, we expect to have at least three more softball teams - and 95% of the girls who have already signed up live in Rifle.

But our greatest challenge surrounds the scarcity of baseball / softball fields in our area.

Each year, we partner with the RE-2 school district and cities and towns within our boundary to use baseball and softball fields for our teams. The City of Rifle is the only entity we pay for field use - and we pay a considerable sum of money. Rifle has the most fields, yes, but those fields are often used by other entities. Two of the fields are often being used by Rifle High School, there is adult softball, and then there is soccer.

For the past three baseball seasons, the City has used Taughenbaugh Field for practices and games for the U10 competitive soccer teams. The soccer goals have been placed in the outfield, and remain in place all season. This has meant that neither softball or baseball teams could use the field during our Little League season.

This problem is compounded by the fact that Taughenbaugh Field is one of the few in our boundary that has lights. The use of Taughenbaugh Field would open up night practices and games for our league. Night games would bring more people to Rifle, and bring tax dollars into our city and our county from families who travel from Rio Blanco, Moffat, Pitkin, and Mesa Counties.

Our league has requested the City move soccer from Taughenbaugh Field each year it's been there. We have been trying to work through the appropriate channels to make this happen, and even circulated a petition to both baseball and soccer families last summer. Everyone who was asked to sign the petition did so.

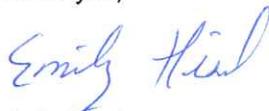
This past August, we began working with Tom Whitmore and Lori Hinkle (with RE-2) to analyze the problem and move soccer from Taughenbaugh Field. City personnel has looked at options around Rifle to try to identify green space that meets the needs of the soccer program. One of the ideas presented was to add grass to Wamsley Elementary. The great news is that it looks like the City and RE-2 are moving forward with this idea - which will not only benefit the soccer program long term, but will also benefit the children who attend that school! The bad news is, the turf won't be usable for this spring season.

There are two other places in Rifle that have been identified to meet the needs of the soccer program: Graham Mesa Elementary and Centennial Park. The school district has on their books that the soccer program will move from Taughenbaugh Field to Graham Mesa Elementary this spring. This should be enough to accommodate the soccer program this year.

While it seems our problems have been solved, the Rec Department will not yet allow us to use Taughenbaugh Field. They are saying they need to keep that field reserved for soccer "just in case" the soccer program grows by multiple teams this year (even though it is believed this won't be the case). We, however, believe the City should use Centennial Park IF that happens. I have asked the Parks and Rec Advisory Board to support this idea. They, however, have decided to wait to make a decision. We can wait no longer. We began this process in August, and our season starts the beginning of March. We need to reserve Taughenbaugh Field now, and this is where we need your help.

Please direct the Rec Department to allow us to use Taughenbaugh Field this season. Please also direct them to use Graham Mesa Elementary (and Centennial Park this one time if, and only if, need be) for soccer. This solution is a win for Little League, soccer, the City of Rifle, citizens of Rifle, coaches, parents, and the boys and girls who play these sports.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Emily Hisel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Hisel
President
Colorado River Valley Little League
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