

**RIFLE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES
PARKS MAINTENANCE FACILITY
FEBRUARY 22, 2016**

<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		

Meeting called to order at 5:35 by Michael.

STAFF PRESENT: Tom Whitmore, Angie Wilkins, Steve Samson, Dave Hadley

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC : Editor from the Citizen Telegram, Emily Hisel, Chris Hisel, Zoe Hisel, Keshia Sheets, Kevin Sheets, a child with the Sheets, Jeremy O’Donnell, a child with O’Donnell, Damon Wells.

MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 8TH MEETING: Wilma made a motion to accept and approve the minutes from the February 8th meeting. Trudy 2nd the motion. Michael amended the minutes changing Little League numbers to 250 instead of 300. Motion passed with a voice vote.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC: Several members of the Little League community came forward to speak regarding their request to move the soccer goals off of Taughenbaugh field so that Little League can have it strictly used for their softball and baseball programs. Tom stated that the last PRAB meeting regarding this issue was continued to this meeting. Michael asked the board members if they had a chance to look over the memo regarding this issue. All of the board members had gone over the memo. Damon Wells stated that the wording stated it as a Little League request but said it is more than a request; it is soccer goals taken off of Taughenbaugh. It allows for the greatest number of kids to use the facility if the soccer goals are taken off. He said that Taughenbaugh is the finest facility out at Deerfield and it is not being allowed to be used. He doesn’t care the direction or where soccer goes; there are plenty of places for soccer to go. He stated that the City does not offer competitive baseball and Little League is competitive. The valley could be very competitive and when tournaments are hosted here people from Craig, Rangely, and Grand Junction come to Rifle. He has players from New Castle and Silt on his team that brings business to Rifle. He said that Little League works around adult softball, recreational baseball, softball, soccer and kickball. He said the City needs to support programs coming in to Rifle.

Michael corrected the statement and said that it was a request brought forward from Little League to move the goals off of Taughenbaugh.

Chris Hisel stated that the City needs to do what is the best for the greater number of kids. If the soccer goals are not moved then the City is eliminating softball because of soccer. He said the field needs to be used for its intended purpose.

Keshia Sheets stated that Little League needs more playing fields because they have a lot more kids and need more space.

Kevin Sheets said he agrees with what was just said.

Jeremy O’Donnell stated that he is a coach for Little League and has also coached for the Recreation department. He said that the Little League program is growing and last year didn’t have enough girls to have a softball team. This year there will be multiple teams. He said he was scared for his daughter to

not be able to play this year at a higher level. He doesn't want to have to use girls from other towns to make up a team.

Emily Hisel stated that the notion of not enough space is not the case. She said the City can find more creative ways to utilize them. She stated that there are two spaces big enough that are not being utilized. She stated that there are six fields at Deerfield, two of the fields are used for the High School and one field is used for adult softball, Taughenbaugh is used for soccer so that doesn't leave many fields left for Little League to use. She said that would leave 2 fields for Little League to use. She stated that the greater number of Little League participants are from the Rifle area. She stated that she is behind the Library incentive to shop local and wants people to come to Rifle to shop and spend their tax dollars. She also stated that Little League is a competitive League and compete against large towns like Grand Junction. Without enough practice they can't get any better. She said that there is no written policy stating that Centennial can't be used for organized sports. She said that is no longer the case, people can go elsewhere to play Frisbee. She said that soccer is no longer a recreation sponsored sport and that it is now called Rifle United. She said that organization does not get priority anymore. They are the same level as Little League now and that her daughter plays both. She said Little League needs to see the final decision made now. She said this has been going on since August and was told a decision would be made. She said she can't schedule any Little League events on Taughenbaugh because the recreation department is waiting on soccer numbers. She said that Graham Mesa is already reserved and can be used for soccer or Centennial Park can be used. These are Little League's solutions. She stated again that most kids in our town are on Little League teams. She stated that Council said a solution is close.

Tom stated that soccer did not change organizations until recently and it is still under the wing of the recreation department and staff is helping with that transition. He stated that when this discussion started there were no changes made, there was double use of the fields. This policy has been going on since he started working for the City. The soccer name started as RSA and there was never any conflict with Little League at that point. He understands the request but does not want to kick out an ongoing community program. Little League has established use and they aren't a new program. They are looking at longer terms of use. He hopes that communities grow and sports and populations grow but there is no facility growth. He said he understands the frustration of having to wait for a decision. He said he had a concern with a statement from Little League saying they are continuing to grow. That means they will want more facilities to use and there still will not be enough. He stated that the City has always doubled up on their facilities. He stated that there has always been support for Little League with multiple hours of use on our facilities. This issue is becoming to be your kid against my kid mentality and he doesn't want to have to start choosing programs. He stated that the Recreational programs have caps because of limited usage of facilities.

Steve stated that he wanted to correct some statements that were brought to Council. He stated that adult softball was quoted as being on Tuesday's and Thursdays. That is not the case; adult softball is only on Tuesdays with occasional practices on Saturdays and Sundays if the teams want them. He also stated that a comment was brought up that the Recreation department did not let Little League use Taughenbaugh at all last year because of soccer. Wayne did let Little League use the field during soccer, he just asked for no balls to be hit into the outfield while soccer was going on for safety issues. He said that he has had to put a cap on adult softball because of facility availability and that 12 is his number but he has 4 more teams wanting to play this year. He will have to tell some people no, they cannot play because the league is full.

Chris stated that he has been with Little League since it started and has coached Recreational ball as well. He sees now why things have happened the way they have. Little League is going to continue to get bigger and field usage will not increase. He gave an analogy of a backhoe owner. If he rents out his backhoe to be used, who is going to get the priority, the owner gets the priority. Recreational programs

get the priority for facility use, and we don't want to mix the levels. He said when he coached both teams he did see the need for both levels.

Wilma stated that we need both programs but have limited fields. We can't give everything to everybody and need to think about the long term.

Sara wanted to thank all of the parents for coming to speak.

Vanessa stated that it is great progress that there is such a growth. She taught and coached for many years and the schools were never allowed to grow programs without having the facility available. There currently is just not enough space.

Trudy stated that the Recreational department has had to give up programs when the numbers are too much, when does Little League stop taking numbers? How do kids pick between programs and if Taughenbaugh field is promised to Little League, they won't let Recreational ball use it anymore.

Damon stated that he does not like the phrases of taking away from a group that is not the case. He said that Taughenbaugh is the premier field out there.

Michael stated that Little League is set on getting a guarantee on sole use of Taughenbaugh field.

Damon stated that soccer can grow elsewhere.

Michael stated that the agenda items do state the items that Little League wants.

Damon stated that the City uses his football field for the Hershey Track Meet.

Emily stated that there will be future growth and there will be extra turf put at Wamsley elementary for extra use. If things stay the same as last year Graham Mesa could be used but Wamsley isn't ready yet.

Chris asked how many teams Little League has currently. Emily responded with 7 teams.

Michael stated that he was very hesitant to set a precedent for a demand of field usage.

Kesha asked what about basketball and the gym use and how the City gets to use the gyms whenever they wanted.

Tom stated that the school district and the City have an IGA. This is in exchange for the use of the 2 High School softball and baseball fields for use of the gyms for basketball. City events are 2nd priority and will get bumped for other school events.

Michael stated that PRAB will put together a letter for council on the recommendations they come up with for Little League's requests and went on to the agenda item of use of Centennial Park.

USE OF CENTENNIAL PARK: Wilma stated that in the GOCO grant it states that Centennial Park is to be used for Passive sport use only. Emily stated that it doesn't say that now for use. Steve stated that Re-2 soccer has used all the fields available at Davidson Park and Highland Elementary and will have to move to Graham mesa if it expands. He stated that Competitive soccer runs March-May. Vanessa stated that parking is a huge concern at Centennial Park. If Graham is unavailable she may be inclined to use Centennial as a backup but not more than one season because then organized sports would take over Centennial park. Trudy also thought that parking was an issue at Centennial Park and that a one year maximum for organized sports was not ideal. Sara stated that she was a bit overwhelmed and still processing all of the information. Chris stated that the grant use was a problem because another sport would end up wanting to use Centennial for organized team use. Steve stated that Little League does provide the more competitive level but there is also a need for recreational programs. He does not want to make grant money unavailable again for going against grant policies and that soccer requires anchored goals so they are not easily moved from location to location. Vanessa asked Little League what Little League's plan was if the facility isn't available. Emily stated that they need a place to put them. She was under the assumption that Little League could have Taughenbaugh. If the board decides not to allow usage it would take practices down to less days and they may have to practice elsewhere and take business elsewhere. Wilma said that Little League wanted Centennial as a plan B? Sara stated that Emily wants a policy on how parks are used; does this set a precedent for other organizations?

Sara made a motion to delete Centennial park from the equation and move the soccer goals from Taughenbaugh to Graham Mesa if soccer numbers for RE-2 don't expand. Emily protested the motion. Vanessa 2nd the motion. Motion did not pass

Chris stated that he is not comfortable with committing to promise of that field until we get all of the soccer numbers in.

Vanessa made a motion to wait on a decision until staff evaluates Graham Mesa size. She also stated again that she never scheduled programs without a facility. No one 2nd the motion, motion did not pass.

Wilma made a motion to charge staff with finding a location for goals to be moved from Taughenbaugh for one year, if the other location would be feasible. Chris 2nd the motion. Motion passed with a voice vote.

Trudy made a motion to take Centennial Park off the table as an option for organized sports and kept as a passive sport facility as directed by the GOCO grant. Vanessa 2nd the motion. Motion passed with a voice vote.

UPDATE ON PARKS AND RECREATION REC SURVEY: Tom let the board know that the survey needs taken down to 6 pages from the 12 that they currently have. Wilma asked when the survey will go out. Tom stated that it could possibly go out next week.

OTHER: Wilma stated that there would need to be another PRAB meeting if staff can't find an alternative option to moving the goals.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 1st which is strategic planning. The Regular March 7th meeting has been canceled as well as the March 21st meeting, making the next meeting April 11th.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:12 pm.