

SPECIAL CITY COUNCIL /
PARK BOARD
JOINT MEETING

October 30, 2012
6:00 P.M.

MINUTES



"Where Dreams Can Soar"

The City of Bonney Lake's Mission is to protect the community's livable identity and scenic beauty through responsible growth planning and by providing accountable, accessible and efficient local government services.

Website: www.ci.bonney-lake.wa.us

Location: Bonney Lake Justice Center, 9002 Main Street East, Bonney Lake, Washington.

I. CALL TO ORDER – Deputy Mayor Dan Swatman called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL:

Administrative Services Director/City Clerk Harwood Edvalson called the roll. In addition to Deputy Mayor Dan Swatman, elected officials attending were Councilmember Mark Hamilton, Councilmember Donn Lewis, Councilmember Randy McKibbin, Councilmember Katrina Minton-Davis, Councilmember Jim Rackley, and Councilmember Tom Watson. Councilmember Minton-Davis was absent. Mayor Johnson arrived at 6:05 p.m.

Park Board Members in attendance were Darren Proctor (Chair), Jaime Trejo, Randi Phelps, Chauntelle Hellner, Todd Haueter, and Terry Reid. Jim Bouchard arrived at 6:07 p.m.

Staff members in attendance were City Administrator Don Morrison, Facilities & Special Projects Manager Gary Leaf, Public Works Director Dan Grigsby, Chief Financial Officer Al Juarez, Administrative Services Director/City Clerk Harwood Edvalson, and Records & Information Specialist Susan Duis.

III. AGENDA ITEMS:

A. Discussion: Metropolitan Park District.

Facilities & Special Projects Manager Leaf provided a brief explanation of the Metropolitan Parks District (MPD) and its governing board. He said the MPD can be governed by the City Council, or by separately elected officials. He said, however, the MPD Board cannot be a mix of elected and appointed members.

Councilmembers and Park Board Members discussed whether the City Council should govern an MPD, or if separate elections should be held. Deputy Mayor Swatman said if the sitting City Council serves as the Board, they can still appoint an advisory or ad hoc group to provide recommendations. Manager Leaf said if the Board is made up of Councilmembers initially, it can be changed later to hold separate elections. Mayor Johnson said having the Council serve as the MPD Board will be less expensive, since Commissioners would receive salaries. He said sitting Councilmembers already have experience with budgeting and project planning. He added that after the MPD is created, it will take time before funds will be available through the new taxing district. He said the Council will likely need to loan funds to the MPD at first. He stressed, however, that any funds brought in by the MPD cannot be transferred for another use by the City.

Park Board Chair Proctor said some citizens are uncomfortable with the City Council running the MPD. He said they question the Council's ability to serve on both bodies due to the time commitment. Park Board Member Bouchard said some are also concerned about giving the Council control of MPD funds, although it helps to know that State law does not allow these funds to be redirected. He said another issue is whether the Councilmembers will have a conflict of interest when serving on both bodies.

Councilmembers Lewis and Watson spoke in favor of forming the MPD with the Council as the initial Board of Commissioners. Councilmember Lewis said City staff can support the Council for the MPD, whereas a newly-elected board would have to hire and manage its own staff. He also questioned how many people would run for MPD board positions, given how few people are interested in elected and appointed positions today.

Councilmember Rackley also spoke in favor of the Council serving as the MPD Board initially, with a promise to expand later and hold separate elections. Councilmember Hamilton said once the MPD is set up, the board will need to hire someone to run the district. He said if the MPD is later expanded beyond the City limits, it would require the formation of a separately elected Board.

Park Board Member Trejo spoke in favor of holding separate elections for the MPD Board. He said current Councilmembers could run for these positions.

Park Board Member Bouchard said if the MPD is approved in April 2013, new funds will not be available until about a year later. He said the MPD will have to request a loan of funds and/or staff support from the City. Then, as MPD funds come in, the loan would be repaid.

Park Board Member Hellner said she has concerns about the start-up costs, whether an MPD would be sustainable in the long term, and whether MPD funds will be optimized. She said citizens did not receive much background information when they were asked how they want an MPD to be structured. She said the Council and Park Board have already spent a lot of time on this question.

Mayor Johnson asked for the Park Board and Council's opinion on whether citizens would support an MPD in general, especially if they do not have a list of specific projects to consider. He noted that a Park Bond failed at the polls eight years ago; he said people need to understand how the MPD differs from a park bond for this election.

Park Board Member Bouchard said the commissioner positions should be on the ballot at the same time as the MPD issue. He said the City also needs to explain to voters what a Park District actually does. He said there is not a clear list of projects, and some people are concerned that the Council will change its mind about how to spend park funds. He said the City should give the voters an outline of park projects in phases, including trails, a recreation center, and a sports complex. Mayor Johnson said since the MPD Board will decide on projects, it is difficult to commit to a list of projects for the initial ballot issue.

Councilmembers and Park Board Members discussed the proposed timeline to put the formation of an MPD on the April 2013 ballot. Several Park Board and Councilmembers expressed concern that there is not enough time to prepare the ballot issue and educate the public for an April 2013 election. Councilmember Lewis said the ballot issue must be prepared by December, making it a very tight timeline.

The group discussed what needs to be done prior to the proposed April 2013 election. Park Board Chair Proctor said the City needs a plan to explain how MPD funds will be used. He said the City should hire a Parks Director to gather information and work with the public. Councilmember Lewis said citizens need to understand that MPD funds can't be used for anything besides parks and recreation, and also that parks projects take time and can't be completed all at once. He said it is also important for the Council and Park Board to agree and work together. Councilmember Rackley said the City needs to do more to inform citizens. He said it is very difficult to connect with residents and get them involved. Deputy Mayor Swatman said the issue needs a grassroots campaign to educate

the public. Park Board Chair Proctor said he works for the City of Federal Way, and one strategy that works is direct mailings to citizens that live nearby a project. He said educating citizens takes staff time and money but does help increase involvement. He said social media sites, like the Patch blog site, can reach a lot of people.

Park Board Member Trejo said the MPD issue may not be popular with voters in the current down economy. Councilmember Hamilton agreed and said voters will pay attention when they learn that the MPD is a tax district.

Park Board Member Bouchard spoke in favor of placing the MPD issue on the April 2013 ballot. He said this process has been going on for years and he does not want it to be delayed another year or more. Councilmember Rackley said if the ballot issue fails, the Council will be less willing to bring it up for a vote again quickly. Park Board Member Bouchard said interest rates remain very low and the City will get more out of MPD dollars if it acts now, rather than waiting. Councilmember Watson also spoke in favor of holding the election in April 2013. He said the issue still has momentum and it may be better to keep moving forward.

Mayor Johnson reminded the group that Pierce County tried to form a MPD in the early 2000's but failed. He said the City attempted a Park Bond issue in 2004 that narrowly failed. He said trying for a park bond is still an option to consider. Park Board Chair Proctor said he believes Pierce County may be reconsidering the MPD option as well.

Park Board Member Hellner said the Park Board has spent a lot of time discussing the makeup of the MPD Board and other options, but has not had communication from the Council on what needs to be done next. She said she is concerned that the City didn't make the most of the Parks Summit event. She said 70 people attended the first summit but few have participated since then. Park Board Member Reid said the Council needs to provide the Park Board with a better definition of its role and responsibilities. He said he is the newest Park Board Member and still is not clear on his role. Park Board Member Bouchard agreed, and said a lot of time has been spent on park issues without making any progress.

City Administrator Morrison noted that staff drafted a Council resolution for an MPD ballot issue over a year ago, but it was tabled as the Council wanted more time to do ground work. He added that the Council must approve a resolution for a special election no later than January 8, 2013 for it to be on the April ballot.

Mayor Johnson asked the Park Board to have a discussion at their next meeting on whether the MPD issue should be placed on the April 2013 ballot. If the Park Board feels this timeline is realistic, he asked them to draft a strategy and timeline to meet that goal.

B. Discussion: Park Board needs from the City Council.

Park Board Chair Proctor asked the Council to consider how much is set aside in the budget for parks. He said a lot of people get a benefit from parks and events, which is a very small share of the budget. He noted that the Council allocated \$1 million for a YMCA but recently passed an ordinance that uses half this amount for economic development incentives. Mayor Johnson said the Council hopes to spur economic development to increase the general fund revenues, and the YMCA funds were set aside but have not yet been used. Councilmember Hamilton said this is an important aspect of the MPD, as Park District funds cannot be re-allocated away from the MPD fund to the

City’s general fund. Park Board Chair Proctor noted the Federal Way Community Center is now operating in the black and will use revenues for future maintenance needs.

Several Park Board Members expressed a desire for better communication between the Council and the Park Board. Park Board Member Trejo asked if Council would have a representative to attend Park Board Meetings, and vice versa. Mayor Johnson said it is important to get feedback from the Park Board and it would be great if a member could attend Council meetings and workshops. He also encouraged Park Board Members to communicate with him via email or phone about issues that come up during the year. He said the joint meetings are helpful but members shouldn’t wait to communicate with the Council.

Councilmember Lewis said he reads the Park Board minutes every month and Councilmember Watson attends and reports back to the Council to keep them updated. Councilmember Watson said he also shares communications he receives and encouraged members to contact him. Councilmember McKibbin said three current Councilmembers served on the Planning Commission in the past and understand what it is like to serve on an advisory board.

Mayor Johnson said the Council will take time to discuss the expectations of the Park Board and provide feedback. He said if the Park Board has an issue they want to move forward to the Council, they should provide it to the Board’s staff representative, Gary Leaf, to bring forward.

Park Board Chair Proctor suggested the Park Board work on a list of projects for the coming year and get input from the Council on issues they want the Park Board to consider. He said currently the agendas are set month-by-month. Councilmember McKibbin said the Planning Commission had a similar issue and now has a ‘Work Plan’ that it follows and updates during the year.

Councilmembers encouraged Park Board Members to come forward and let the Council know about issues or ideas in the future. Councilmember Hamilton said he is glad the two groups could meet together for a joint meeting.

Mayor Johnson confirmed the next steps for each group. He said the Park Board will consider the April 2013 ballot timeline and strategy. The Council will discuss their expectations for the Park Board. Both groups should think of items to be added to a Park Board work plan. The Park Board’s next meeting is scheduled for November 19th, and the Council can get an update from the Chair at the November 20th Workshop.

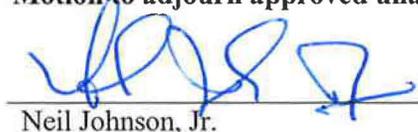
IV. ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:53 p.m., Councilmember Watson moved to adjourn the Special Joint Meeting. Councilmember Rackley seconded the motion.

Motion to adjourn approved unanimously.



Harwood Edvalson, MMC
City Clerk



Neil Johnson, Jr.
Mayor

Items presented to Council at the October 30, 2012 Special Joint Meeting: None.