

**STEAMBOAT SPRINGS PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES**

December 13, 2017

The regularly scheduled public meeting of the Steamboat Springs Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order at approximately 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, in the Citizens' Meeting Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Parks and Recreation Commission members in attendance were Chair Alan Koermer, Vice-Chair Doug Tumminello, Holly Weik, Craig Keith, Sarah Floyd, Frank Alfone and Cady Watson. Staff members present were Director of Parks, Open Space and Recreational Services John Overstreet and Staff Assistant Ally MacDougall.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

None.

Approval of Minutes: November 8

Commissioner Tumminello moved to approve the November 8, 2017 meeting minutes.

Commissioner Watson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously with abstentions.

Spring Creek Stage

Craig Robinson, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager:

We're here tonight to talk about a proposal for an outdoor amphitheater at Spring Creek Park. This is just beginning the public dialog about this proposal. The city has been working on a project in Spring Creek Park to deal with the upper pond. The request tonight is to talk about Stuart Handloff's proposal. Mr. Handloff is requesting that the city rename the Spring Creek Dam Modifications project to Spring Creek Amphitheater Phase I, which would be the project that the city is working on. Phase II would be the actual construction of the amphitheater with compostable toilets, roadway improvements, trail improvements and whatever else goes along with that improvement process. This is not on any plan or CIP that we have in our city at this time. The reason we're talking about this at this point in time is with the my project that's moving forward with Spring Creek, Mr. Handloff is hoping to springboard off our city funding to apply for grants.

Next Steps: This is just a discussion. Staff has a lot of information to acquire before we can talk full details about what this might look like.

Expenditure: \$257,000 in the CIP for the Spring Creek project I'm working on. That is planned for 2018. At this point in time, I am about 99.9% done. We are about to submit our plans to the Army Corps of Engineers to keep this project moving forward. Once we have Corps approval, we were hoping to put this out to bid in probably February with construction in probably August-September to be completed by the end of the year.

For Phase II funding, Stuart is looking at private funding and grants.

History: Spring Creek Park is a 40-acre parcel that housed the drinking water facilities for the town of Steamboat. The Spring Creek Mountain Park where the Spring Creek trail goes through up towards Buffalo Pass is the Spring Creek Mountain Preserve. We do have a management plan for that area. It's a recreational area that is supposed to be preserving the entire ecosystem up there for educational purposes and for future generations. With Spring Creek Park, we have managed that as an outdoor area. Volunteers helped improve that park in the early 1990's with trails, the structures you see there today and primmer trails. It was used primarily for educational purposes for the schools and to be a natural area for people to enjoy some quiet space. In 2000, the state notified the city that the Lower Pond dam needed to be breached, and it was. Today we're at that time for the Upper Pond. The state has been hinting that their regulations are changing. Our dam is old, and there were mounting safety concerns. As we went through the process with the city and state, we presented City Council with a couple options: One was to rebuild the dam and enhance and preserve the water rights that we have, which are pre-compact water rights at that Upper Pond site. That came up to \$1.2 million and counting. City Council then directed staff to take the other alternative, which was to essentially breach the dam like the lower dam. The plan is to lower the water level and the dam height and reconfiguring that flow of water to meet the states requirements for a non-jurisdictional dam. So it will be a very small pond just like the Lower Pond. In that process, we also have a lot of soils that we're going to be moving around – so it's not an easy project. The Upper Pond is definitely a natural area; it's encompassed by wetlands. When we see annual flows of Spring Creek from high water to low water, we go from full inundation of the channel where all the vegetation is saturated in the upper area to a trickle in the late summer like we had this year.

Challenges: Conflicts with recreation, lack of parking. Need to complete this in time to meet the state's requirements (end of 2018.) Lower Pond is now an off-leash dog park. Having that dog park on Spring Creek does not really adhere to water quality management best practices. In a lot of cities, that probably wouldn't be approved there, but that's where we have our dog park today. Fecal coliform is a concern for all water sources, whether it's the Yampa River or its tributaries.

Space and environmental constraints could be challenging at this location. If it is approved, there could be wetland impacts that will need to be addressed.

The proposed amphitheater has the potential to be a low-carbon footprint. Maintenance and construction costs for the proposed improvements have not been identified to date because we don't know how we're moving forward. City Council may require an endowment fund to be set up to build and maintain these new amenities similar to what we just did with the dog park process.

CR 34 is from Amethyst up to the ponds. That's a primitively-maintained county road, meaning the county basically doesn't do maintenance to it. The property owners who live on that road maintain it themselves. We're not sure at this point what the county's level of involvement would be in this process. I did reach out to County Planning; they would like to be in the referral process, so they could comment if this does move forward. Road and Bridge had expressed concerns. As you know, the road is challenging; we already have some challenges managing recreation there.

Spring Creek is one of our busiest natural areas. User conflicts exist on that road today with bicyclists, off-leash dogs, pedestrians and vehicles that all use the road. We're working to improve the soft-surface trail that's parallel to the road and widen that over time, but it's not a fully budgeted line item so we're working on it piecemeal as staff resources allow. If this project does move forward, Stuart mentioned that he may be able to acquire more funding to help with that.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife may have some concerns and will be getting comments back to me later this December.

One neighbor has reached out to say he does not support this, and Stuart has reached out to other neighbors in the area.

Legal Issues: None so far.

Funding: City Council will be discussing how we would pay for this and maintain it.

Robinson showed some photos of the concept of the project and where it would fit in the area, as well as what the Lower Pond looked like before the dam was breached. He showed how the spillway would be moved and widened.

Robinson said that the grade will change as they move soils around near Lower Pond, unless the dirt is trucked off site; funding would be an impediment to making that happen.

Robinson: The Upper Pond is going to be dropped two feet in elevation. It won't be a deep pond; people could wade in it; there will still be some fish in there. It's going to be like Lower Pond. There's a small water right attached to it.

This is more of a natural area than a park setting. I don't have any money to modify this plan at all. If the amphitheater is approved for the Lower Pond site, it's going to impact the dog park, and there may be some concerns from that community.

Stuart's proposal is for the Picnic Theatre; they're currently at the Botanic Park. If we build this, our concern is they will come. Steamboat is growing. These won't be the only people that request to use this venue. Managing the requests will be challenging. Saying no is challenging for the city. The impacts are something we'll all have to talk about and mitigate.

Tumminello confirmed that the expected cost of the dam-breaching project is \$257,000 for 2018.

Stuart Handloff, Artistic Director of The Picnic Theatre Festival: The Great American Laughing Stock Company, which is the producer of the festival, has been in operation since 1971. We began performing outdoors in 2008, and the first few summers we performed up there at Spring Creek. The only reason we moved is because it was also a dog park area, and when the weather got a little dicey folks weren't too excited about hauling their chairs and blankets and picnic goodies up there.

Overview:

200-300 seat outdoor facility; dawn to dusk operation; no water, sewer, electricity or parking; compostable toilets; solar power; shuttles from the High School (they are fine with us using their facilities for parking.) Accessible to walkers and bikers. There's a water amenity that flows year-round even though it's lower in the fall. The attractiveness of having water on the site is incredible. But most importantly, it's the sound – or in this case the lack thereof. We've been performing at the Botanic Park and the library for years, and you hear highway noise all the time. We have coal trains that come through from time to time also very close to the Botanic Park. None of those are good for outdoor performance that's not amplified. What I'm looking at is acoustic performance: Shakespeare, theatre, without amplification; the way it was for years before people invented electricity. That's what I'm seeking to recreate at this site.

There is no other site in the city that has the amenities I just described with the ambiance and the access and the quiet. Outdoor performance and gathering space is something that I think is essential to us as a community. It's part of what every community is. It's more than performance or theatre; it's a community space. Certainly that was one of the issues I think folks with the River Queen were talking about is having a gathering space. We had discussed performance there a month ago, and I said that it's a lousy space for performance. I don't like to say it's a lousy

space for performance and then not be able to come back and go: But here's a good one.

And this is not just a good one; it's a great one. Spring Creek is perfect for this. It's unique I'm sure among any outdoor spaces in the region, perhaps the country.

Steamboat has been designated as a creative district. Part of that process is to be able to incorporate art into our public spaces. This is an ideal way to do just that.

Why now? The contribution Craig talked about I believe can be leveraged with foundation money, with contributions from individuals both within and without the community. The total project cost is probably going to be around the 650-\$750,000 range with the city putting in 250,000. So we've already got 30% of the money up front; that carries a lot of weight with foundations.

Issues:

Sustainability: This is about a community interest in outdoor space and outdoor performance. That will sustain it well beyond my lifetime for sure. We have a track record as a theatre company since 1971; we're not going away.

Maintenance: The stone and concrete are not going to require tons of maintenance or reconstruction in case of a hundred-year flood.

Management and Operation: There are already models in place for city properties managed by nonprofits: The Depot, Rodeo Grounds, Tennis Bubble, Botanic Park. It's not reinventing the wheel.

What if it fails? People are always going to want to gather around there. I don't see a large risk to the city budget in case we're not here. Somebody is going to want to pay to be able to use this space, and those costs can I believe easily offset whatever maintenance is required.

When you have a space like Spring Creek for performance, the suspension of disbelief is so much easier with the water and the ambiance.

Koermer confirmed that the budget for the first phase is the same amount currently in the CIP, which Handloff would like to use as leverage to pursue grants and other private funding. He confirmed that renaming the project is designed to gin up more interest from potential donors.

Handloff said he believes the theatre could fit in either the Upper or Lower Pond; there would be some regrading required at the Upper Pond which he did not believe would cause a big impact. He showed the grade

changes that would be necessary and explained how they would affect the area. He explained how this would save money on moving the dirt through the Lower Pond.

Alfone asked Robinson whether the Dam project has been approved by the state; Robinson said it meets existing regulations as well as any new regulations they foresee being imposed.

Alfone: If this project were to be incorporated into that, is the timing such that you could still get this done in your August timeline if this moves forward?

Robinson: Modifying this plan as you see today will cost additional funding.

Alfone: But will it push the schedule out even further?

Robinson: It might.

Alfone: Which could lead your dam safety engineer to say that's not acceptable; this needs to happen potentially next summer. So there's a timing crunch here or a pinch point that you might run into.

Robinson: Yes. That's why we brought it to you tonight for discussion.

Robinson wasn't sure that Handloff's regrading plan would be compatible with hundred year flood requirements.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Clingman, Board Member, American Laughing Stock Company: This facility is a place where non-amplified music could be performed; public debate could take place; poetry readings could take place. It has a myriad number of uses. So if we have anybody here who doesn't like Shakespeare, open up your minds to all these other things. This is an area that will bring the community together in an outdoor setting with low maintenance and a very beautiful setting. There's nothing like this in this community. This is a very good time, considering what our growth is going to be to consider this. What Stuart is asking for, I believe, is a name change. What he's committing us to is finding the money to make the rest of it work.

Jack Disard, Blue Spruce Court: I am on an advisory board for the Creative District and also the chairman and CEO of Opera Steamboat. A year and a half ago we performed an opera out at the Strawberry Park Hot Springs. It was a very unusual venue to produce an opera, but we happen to have a very ambitious artistic director who thinks out of the box. Next summer one of our productions,

The Proposal, is a short opera that is going to be staged in such a way that we could actually have several performances at different venues. It would fit something like this. Going forward we had the intent to do a little bit more creative types of performances. So there are other organizations in town that would take advantage of this. I think there would be a real use and demand for this, so I would support it.

Carolyn Berns, Violinist, Picnic Theatre, Steamboat Springs:

I think this would be an absolutely wonderful spot for everybody to come together with so many uses as everyone else has said. This is a very simple modified area. I've seen something like this where I went to school. Everybody uses it for something. Weddings could be held there; that could also pay for some of the maintenance. I'm a huge supporter of this and hope you are, too.

Robin Stone, 31560 Aspen Ridge Road:

I'm on the board of Picnic Theatre because I went to one of the first performances in 2008 up at Spring Creek. I come from California – San Francisco and Los Angeles. The performance had a higher caliber of actors than I'd seen in those larger cities, but there were only six families there. So I contacted Stuart and said what can we do to make it bigger. Since that time it has grown, and I think the one thing that everyone would agree about Steamboat is that the outdoors here is spectacular; that's probably why most of us live here and stay here. I think having an outdoor performance space is a fabulous idea. At this point, I don't think there's anything to lose; we're just looking for a name change to allow funding to happen. It will be a lot of work, but that's what the board is here to do. I think this will be something Steamboat will treasure in years to come.

Annabelle Stone:

I've been going to picnic theatre since it was held in Spring Creek. I think it would be super amazing to be able to bring it back to how it originally was but having grown so much. It's awesome that they can do it here in Steamboat still, but it's always so disrupted by the public spaces where it's held. So I think it would be really cool to be able to do it back at Spring Creek.

Joella West, 75 Copper Rose Court:

Free things to do in Steamboat. That's something that's essential for the community. If you look around and see where the people who work here have to go that's free, this is one of those things. It's also one of those things that you put in your Chamber ads when you're reaching out to people that you want to come and visit. They're going to come and spend money, but they also want free things to do in Steamboat besides hiking and biking; how about some free theatre!

Rhoddy Bell, 1350 Blue Spruce Court:

One of the closest houses to the edge. Looking down into Spring Creek from my house, people are always on that trail. Biking, walking, dogs. Looking through the Facebook comments that were posted about this meeting, there were a lot of people who said no, this can't happen; don't take away the dog park or our ability to ride our bikes. I don't think those concerns about losing those amenities are well founded. It seems to me that a durable structure like this is still completely usable. I see it as a place where people can still walk their dogs through there, just maybe not when there's a performance happening. So I know there were concerns in the community; I know the trail gets used a lot; but as far as the sounds from my house – Shakespeare, or a guitar, or families laughing in the valley below the house, I think it would be a joy and a beautiful thing for me in my backyard.

Johnny Walker, Spring Creek Road:

Stuart called me to talk about this project a few months ago. We've given it a lot of thought as a family. Stuart new that if anyone would oppose something like this, it would probably be me. So I've been looking at this with a critical eye. I told Stuart I would be the first to let him know when I have an objection, so I've been searching for that. Thank you, Rhoddy, for your comments; you made my comments here shorter. I'm a neighbor on the other side; we would probably hear the sounds and be affected by it. My family has no opposition to this at all. In fact, we feel it would be quite wonderful. I would ask you to be sure to look at the original document, the Spring Creek Management Plan, written by myself and a couple other people in 1992 to make sure we're in compliance with that. If we are not, we should admit that. It's all about education and being part of the environment. I see where this park fits with that. I think that if this was something proposed when we envisioned the park in 1988, this would have fit within our standards. It's a quiet, non-amplified source of entertainment – free or otherwise. The non-amplified part is what really drew us in – and the shuttle system so we don't have to increase parking up there. I would like to make sure that's all documented so we know in perpetuity this park is going to be for that kind of entertainment. I think it's going to be fabulous.

GG Walker:

My favorite part of it is that it's not amplified; there's no lights. This sounds like a beautiful place to do it, and we have always enjoyed their Shakespeare productions in the past. I think this is a perfect place for something like this that is low key.

Kim Keith, 42485 Deerfoot Lane, Executive Director, Steamboat Springs Arts Council/Creative District:

We applaud Stuart's efforts to bring more creativity to this beautiful community that we live in. He mentioned that we are now a creative district; that means that Steamboat Springs is now recognized as a hub for

creative activities in northwest Colorado. We are beaming with pride at the leadership and the community showing up to support these kinds of creative endeavors. We wholeheartedly support Stuart in his efforts. Although we can't bring direct funding to this project, we can certainly act as a partner in funding. Since we are a creative district, that opens up all kinds of opportunities for state and national grants.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION

Watson: Stuart, how many attendees do you get at a normal Picnic Theatre event?

Handloff: Right now in Botanic Park we'll go anywhere from 50-150 people I would say.

Weik: Craig, what's the worst-case scenario of this gets built and for some reason it doesn't get used?

Robinson: It remains as is.

Weik: So we end up with a potentially overgrown area that might be sort of entertaining to play in anyway, right?

Robinson: Possibly.

Weik: When the question came up of what if it fails, well then we have an amphitheater that people can still walk their dogs through and kids can play on, and maybe that makes it a little spooky, mysterious and cool.

Robinson: Sure. I just want to hit on the other side of the spectrum. What happens if it becomes so popular that we have a lot of people up there? As you know, I've been in front of you talking about our challenges with recreation with mountain bike trails and the user activity that's up there today. The increasing use is a discussion for the community.

Tumminello: My biggest challenge at this point is whether or not this sort of change or refocus in direction causes us to have to go through a change in the engineering plans and the consequent delay and cost that Frank was alluding to in his questions. That to me is probably the biggest initial concern. I don't think we've heard enough to know whether that is a real issue. I think there's lots of challenges that you would face in ultimately realizing the vision, which probably could be met. I think some of the big questions are certainly going to be user conflicts that will happen up there. From the conversations we've had with various user groups, that is a very hot area with a lot of public interest. So maneuvering those things I think will be a challenge for you. I like the concept of the electric busses and all that, but that raises the very obvious question of fleet purchase and maintenance and ownership and the necessary contracts that go along

with that. I'm sure you recognize that. There are those types of issues; my biggest one, though, is that we're about to engage in a comprehensive park planning process. So the question is whether what you have propose really is identified as a community need that would fit in with the Parks and Open Space Master Plan which we're getting ready to create. My biggest issue, though, is the first one Frank identified: changing plans mid-stream as it were to mitigate the damages we have currently.

Handloff: I'm not an engineer, but I did work as an estimator and project manager for Native Excavating for nine years. We worked on projects like this. In fact, the lower dam breach was a job that I bid on and looked at very closely. From my experience with that company and working with engineers and excavators, I don't think it's insurmountable. Obviously, I don't know the information that Craig has; we'd have to look at that. But I don't think it's something – I wouldn't have brought it here if I didn't think it was something that would work. I did speak with Cathy Connell of Steamboat Digs Dogs and went to the board meeting. We've had some discussion, and we agreed to share. She said as long as we can share the space, I'm happy. I think the amphitheater would fit in either location. If it fits in the Upper Pond, there's no issue at all; the dog park stays as it is. I would imagine through the modifications we're talking about with moving fill it would be less disruptive. As Craig said, a lot of that material would go down if it's necessary to move material to the Lower Pond, that's going to disrupt the dog park for a while because it's going to require revegetation. So I think that would even be easier. But they agreed to share; that's the bottom line with that group. So I felt pretty good about that.

Watson: The primary ask as I understand it is you're requesting a name change.

Handloff: And for you to say yes, we think this is something good; let's allow staff to work with whoever I can come up with to make sure we don't have those problems that Doug and Frank were talking about.

Watson: So Craig, if we were to allow a name change or if we were to say we agree this name change is probably not a bad idea, are there any barriers or drawbacks to that as we continue to work through the current process?

Robinson: I would probably run that by a consultant first and maybe talk to the Army Corps of Engineers about that. By noting that this is Phase I of a project, they may be asking more about what Phase II is and what those impacts are. If there are requirements regarding wetlands, they may look at this now as one larger project and not a phased project. We want Phase I to be a complete project on its own, done and closed so we have no further restrictions moving forward. So it may impact how it's perceived at the governmental regulatory level. I can look into that, but I don't have the answer tonight.

Floyd: In your dream of this, how many performances in a day would you think would happen?

Handloff: It's really hard to say. Certainly that could be part of the approval process. When I said dawn to dusk, I didn't mean there was going to be activity dawn to dusk; I just wanted you to know that this is not going to be in my vision anything that's going to take place at night. How many people are going to use it? Maybe one, maybe two. As Craig pointed out, if we build it, we hope it gets used. We don't want it sitting around just getting weeds. If there's a wedding in the morning and a performance in the afternoon, that's what I would expect. Barring unforeseen climate change, this is going to be May-September maybe five months of the year.

Floyd: My thought would be moving forward that there would be some sort of contract that said there could be x number of events in a season starting on this date, ending on this date. There would be no more than x number per day. Just so there are some boundaries, because at some point we wouldn't all be here. Down the road it could get so big that it could be a problem. I don't see this as something that wouldn't get used; I think this is something that we'd have to look at the parameters to make sure it's used wisely so that everyone who's in support of it wouldn't regret it because it got out of control. So I think some of those boundaries would be my recommendation moving forward. Many of the things Doug said were on my list, so I don't need to repeat them. But we've had on my time on the Commission in a couple years:

Steamboat Digs Dogs talk about Spring Creek, and we sort of tabled it because we couldn't resolve traffic issues and how that all works. Then a couple months later the downhill bike proposal came up that would give us more downhill access off of the new trails on Buff Pass. We had a lot of conversation that night and sort of tabled that topic for further development through how we could resolve some of the traffic issues in the canyon at the base from where you're talking about down to Amethyst. So I would say for me, this is a great concept, but there are some topics out there related to Spring Creek that we have not resolved in any kind of a master plan. I'm not sure it would be prudent for us to go forward without solving some of those that have come before us. I think the shuttles are a great concept, but I still think there are some bike, running, dog issues with getting in and out of that canyon. That would be my biggest concern in addition to the permitting and all that would be that we don't put more people up there without a good plan.

Alfone wondered whether the Spring Creek Management Plan is incorporated into the overall master plan, and if not, whether it could be added.

Overstreet: We can forward the consultant that plan. The system planning is going to look at everything we do. We hope to complete that master plan by July, 2018.

Handloff: Timing-wise, I don't see this as being a 2018 project; I see it as a 2019 project with Phase I work done next August and September and then completing it in 2019.

Alfone: If you want to change something in Phase I that Craig is getting approval for, that needs to happen right away. I'm speaking from pretty first-hand experience with the Corps and the State Engineering Office.

Handloff: The reason that this has come up at the eleventh hour if you will is the opportunity to use the city's money as leverage. There's the opportunity to say: The city is investing this much; we've got the Gates Foundation investing the remainder.

Koermer: What we need to try and avoid here is not having a compromise in place for all the user groups that are out there. So our next steps are to get this onto our agenda at a future meeting; get any public comment that comes our way; and bring it to a motion on whether or not we're going to endorse this to City Council.

Overstreet: and I think there may need to be some questions on the cost of the re-engineering. This project has been accepted and approved as is, so if there's anything added to this, we may have to go back to Council to ask for a supplemental.

Tumminello: Frankly, I think that would be a nonstarter.

Koermer: Do you feel you can leverage the existing funding to potentially bring some more dollars for any costs that might be associated with the re-engineering?

Handloff: Oh, yeah. In the big scheme of the project, if it's \$750,000, to get some more engineering money I don't think is a big deal.

Tumminello: I just think with City Council...

Handloff: I'm not looking to the city for money. I just want you to be able to say: This 250 that's already been budgeted, let's endorse it so that we can go to someone and say the city is behind this, the community is behind it, we want to jump on board and go from there. If there's more money that's needed for re-engineering, we'll come up with it without a problem.

Overstreet: The project has been approved as a breach, and I think if we change any of the scope, we may have to go back to City Council just to

reintroduce it. That's what I need to find out next week at Council, and I'll have Gary ask that question. That's the most I can do right now.

Tumminello: I think topics for the next meeting would be re-engineering the project, costs for engineering and the knock-on consequences.

Overstreet said he would be back to the Commission with answers.

Weik thought the project and proposal certainly had merit and that the space was available.

Floyd agreed.

River Queen in West Lincoln Park

Koermer: The commission did receive about 70 comments total. We had about 50 that were pro-saving the Queen with another 20 for modifying the queen. Every person on the Commission has read through these. We've also read the newspaper articles. We're very aware of the need to try and collaborate between two groups on this. The existing structure has some safety concerns, but we do understand that it's an iconic part of Steamboat Springs and that it's valued by a lot of people of multiple generations.

Craig Robinson:

We have met several times over the past couple months talking about this. On November 8, the Commission made a motion to support the removal of the Queen and for a new structure to be constructed with a musical-themed playground and an active element that fit with that new proposal. The day after that, the Pilot had an article noting the removal of the Queen, and we had a groundswell of support from the community to Save The Queen, and the Facebook campaign began. They've gotten a petition with over a thousand signatures, and based on that we thought we'd bring it back to the Commission for more discussion and dialog. We're asking for a motion tonight; I've given you several choices in the back; if you have other options, obviously that's your prerogative.

Expenditure: \$149,355. The whole project needs to come in on budget unless there's outside funding, which is a different discussion.

Robinson reviewed the project timeline, including the new shade structure at Howelsen Park which is available for event reservations and explained that the ability for a family or group to reserve such a structure is very popular in Steamboat and beyond. Currently, Steamboat only has that one structure available.

Challenges maintaining the River Queen. The city has challenges maintaining amenities, and the River Queen is made out of wood, which is not a good material for a playground or structure due to the corrosive elements in West Lincoln Park with the minerals and particles in the soil and air.

Project started in October, 2016.

Community meeting in May, 2017 following a media release to announce the meeting; only two people attended.

City staff and the Creative District had their own visions.

Robinson: Staff's vision was to replace the Queen with a shade structure similar to Howelsen and a new playground similar cost-wise. That plus removal of the Queen brought us to our budget number of \$150,000.

After the Facebook campaign began, we worked with Meghan and Katie who initiated that groundswell as well as Kim Keith of the Creative District who presented their vision at that May meeting.

Many comments asked for the engineer's report talking about the structural concerns. We did have one done as well as the Save The River Queen group. We kind of new the basic elements of the structure were probably going to be fine; they're steel upright posts on concrete that were engineered and built properly back in the 80's, and there are glulams with the basic frame, and that is structurally intact. Our engineer says: "The existing paddlewheel structure is suitable for continued use provided that repairs or replacements of these items identified in their assessment are made. We recommend the city carefully consider the cost of replacement versus the cost of repairs and consider long-term maintenance costs in those decisions. We believe it is in the best interests of the city to remove, relocate or replace the playground equipment into another location."

That's hot off the presses today.

From our perspective, there's lots of challenges with that structure. Could you take the basic frame and build off of it, yes. The sand would need to be covered with concrete; the wood would need to be removed. We would look for durable materials as a replacement that will have no to low maintenance needs.

As Katie and Meghan continued to meet, we answered some questions, and Kim Keith and I were invited to a meeting last night. As I understand it, there may be some interest in collaborating and creating a design committee to formulate what the design might look like and what it might be constructed of. Meet the city requirements of being a shelter with a separate playground structure. If that design committee were approved and everybody was on the same page about moving forward, it would be made up of a diverse group of people not larger than maybe seven people: a couple from the creative district, a couple from Save The River Queen, perhaps an engineer, an architect, a member of the Commission, myself (not a voting member.) We would be looking to come up with design considerations and requirements that we would then craft and

modify into a Request for Proposals. We would craft that language, work with our City Contracting department and put this project out to bid as a design-build.

It would be the committee's responsibility to then choose the best design that they feel meets the group's intent. Otherwise, if we're going into next summer not having decisions made, we'll be doing next steps on the River Queen to make it – spending more money on that and having challenges financially on improvements.

Koermer confirmed that the dollars for this project are in the 2017 budget; Robinson said the Department could request a carryover to 2018, which is what he would do.

Floyd: Can it get carried over beyond '18? Because if the committee meets and makes a decision next summer, it probably wouldn't happen till '19. Would you run the risk of losing that money?

Robinson: My timeline: If there were a committee, I would look at meeting early in January and kind of nailing this down in the month of January meeting once a week as necessary to formulate this plan; get this RFP out in February or March at the latest; and still shoot for construction in August-September. I can't answer whether it could be carried over to 2019.

Katelyn McNamara:

My sister and I are second-generation natives to Steamboat and co-founded the grassroots movement to save the River Queen. We're just your average local girls; I work at a local falafel shop and spa; my sister is with Horizons as a case manager.

McNamara thanked all involved in the project and apologized for coming into the process so late.

McNamara: My sister and I never anticipated the response that followed the creation of the Yampa River Queen Facebook page, which now has 1,948 members. After realizing how many people support the Queen, we started a petition on paper and online, which has 332 signatures from Steamboat residents, 84 from Routt County residents, and 835 signatures from other places for a total of 1,251 signatures.

It's clear to us that the Queen has made an impact on locals and tourists alike, with signatures coming from as far away as Australia and Tanzania. Almost immediately, people weighed in on social media with their visions for the Queen. Never having taken on anything like this before, we formed an open workgroup a few weeks ago to brainstorm ideas, clarify our vision and come up with a plan representative of the Save The Yampa River Queen group. We found some great resources and people who wanted to help, like Holly Williams who served on the first Parks and Rec

Commission and saved Perry Mansfield; Kerry Kaster who designed the Yampa River Queen, and Nancy Hummel who we can thank for the beautiful medians by the Old Town Hot Springs. We were also joined by Katie Moore, Tim Keenan and Robin David, passionate locals just like us.

Together we learned more about the city's requirements for this project, the process that has happened to date and the process going forward.

As a group, we like the idea of a new playground with the musical instruments. Based on the understanding that the city would like a separate shade structure and playground, we decided to focus our vision on the Queen remaining the shade structure. We knew going in that the Queen needs work, however we were not convinced that the structure is unsalvageable because no formal assessment was completed. John Littlehorn, a structural engineer, volunteered his time to come out and take a look at it. Of course, he wasn't able to complete a full assessment on the foundation, but he verified that everything structurally above ground seemed to be in good condition. He also is confident that any parts of the structure that may need to be replaced could be done very easily due to the open nature of the design. Utilizing the existing structure would certainly be more cost effective. Ron Goodrich also came to our meeting last night and stated his opinion that the Yampa River Queen was well engineered and well built. Ron also provided copies of the original plans, the inspection request and the certificate of occupancy.

Although we all respect the agricultural history of Steamboat, let's not forget how our town got its name from the infamous chugging sound that was once heard from the Steamboat spring catty-corner from West Lincoln Park. What better way to honor that history than to refurbish and enhance the Yampa River Queen. The Yampa River Queen represents our namesake along with along with Curtis Stables, Majestic Elk and the gazebo housing the Soda Spring as an eclectic and attractive welcome to the west side of town.

We do believe the Queen can be saved and updated to meet all the criteria you're looking for and to remain a fun, unique and iconic shade structure in West Lincoln Park.

Our Vision:

From the Core Trail you will access a new paved walkway taking you into a poured concrete hull. There you find ADA-accessible picnic tables, trash and recycling. There is a new grill near the ship for easy family barbequing. You look around to notice that the splintery wooden hull has been replaced with wood-stamped concrete. Built-in Trex benches dot the perimeter. You turn towards the stern and notice that the deck has been extended toward the freshly-painted paddlewheel. You venture toward the newly-built staircase, put your hand on the new railing and admire the low-maintenance materials chosen for the project. As you reach the top of the

stairs, you'll see the wheelhouse has also been extended for added shade and that all the wood has been replaced with Trex. You look over the paddle at the amazing view of Mount Werner and see a new flagpole with a security camera on top. As the sun begins to set, the lights of the Yampa River Queen illuminate, and you realize the solar panel on the roof of the wheelhouse is powering the lights. You imagine yourself as the captain of the ship and can almost hear the chugging sound. You call your children in from the new playground and smile knowing that this steamboat belongs in Steamboat Springs.

This is our group's hope and vision for the River Queen to return her to her former glory, but we acknowledge there is another group that put thought and care into a design. We believe cooperation can take place and that the end result can meet the basic criteria set by the city but also allow this community movement to have a voice. If the Commission wants to go in the direction of a design committee, we would be welcome partners. We would also ask for equal representation of our group and the Steamboat Arts Council and Creative District, along with city staff deemed appropriate to keep this riverboat-themed shade structure.

Kim Keith, Creative District/Arts Council:

I would like to advocate that the Parks and Rec Commission and staff continue to work with our local creative leadership on a community vision and plan for West Lincoln Park. I would hope that a plan would increase users of the park as well as create a unique guest space that will contain components that aren't found in other parks and open spaces, would enhance West Lincoln Park and the west entrance to our downtown area and would meet all the requirements of this city project (budget, low maintenance, durable, etc.) and would serve our community decades into the future. I'm sure there are many ideas and visions we can come up with to pursue, and I encourage the Commission to allow us to participate in the process of creating an RFP that addresses this wonderful community outcry and the new engagement of the community. We are willing partners. I've been working with both Craig Robinson and the McNamara sisters in a wonderful civil dialog. It's been a really interesting process for us since March or so. So it's really interesting to see how through the media and through different avenues our community can speak out and change the direction of things. We welcome that engagement and that community voice. We reiterate what Kaitlyn said about having representation on a design committee. We have wonderful consultants and professionals that work in architecture, landscape architecture, planning, community development available to us through the Creative District. We want the city to be able to access those. There is certainly an interest from the creative community to keep the meaningful elements that wouldn't be found in any of our other park areas that would really speak to the creative designation by the State of Colorado and may even sound like a chugging Steamboat again. It seems like everything is possible. It's wonderful to be part of a process that is emerging these wonderful young

leaders and community voices around this project. We are pleased to be part of it.

Robinson: If there were some collaboration moving forward, it sounds like what we're talking about is basing the design criteria off of a steamboat theme. So a picture of the existing River Queen would go out with the proposal. We're looking to have something built out of sustainable materials. It's main purpose would be serving as a shelter. It would have to meet all of today's applicable codes for safety and accessibility, and be low maintenance for the city moving forward.

Alfone thanked the McNamara sisters for acknowledging that they came in late in the process and said that goes a long way toward helping the Commission formulate a decision moving forward.

Floyd agreed and thanked the Creative District for their professionalism for saying after months and months of work that they're willing to be flexible and try to figure out the right thing for our community. She expressed her support for blending the two visions and collaborating to create something the community wants.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David McGee, Columbine Drive:

I'm a long-time resident of Steamboat Springs and family friends of the McNamaras. I happen to have a degree in history from Boston University, which is most certainly a city that has preserved its roots and anything of historic significance. When I look at West Lincoln Park, I don't just look at the River Queen; I actually look at it as the roots of Steamboat Springs. We're looking at the steamboat that is in fact The Steamboat. We have the hot springs across the river which no longer chugs because of the weight of the railroad tracks, and we have a playground that was beautifully designed to honor the name of this town. As a former real estate broker, I can tell you that there are very few people I ever spoke with who didn't want to know how a town in the Rocky Mountains with no navigable water was named Steamboat Springs. In my mind, I could not imagine doing anything but restoring the one symbol of the steamboat that never existed on the water but certainly does in West Lincoln Park.

I applaud the fact that the McNamara ladies have done such a good job. Most certainly the Creative District has joined. If we're looking at this from the proper perspective, this is the way that we would love to think that things are done in Steamboat Springs. I envision a time that we create a walking tour starting with the hot springs going over to the depot, coming across the Stockbridge, looking at the Steamboat. We've got the Bud Werner Memorial Library right there. This is the historic part of this town, and in my opinion, which I'm sure a lot of people present this evening share, this is what this town is all about on every level: the cooperation, the historic significance, honoring our past and preserving our past. It has

been stated that structurally, the steamboat is in good shape and could be easily enhanced with updated materials. As far as the ADA goes, I'm a former international insurance broker, so I'm intimately familiar with the needs. Certainly that is something that could be easily done there, and I think we could bring that park back to life.

Lisa Popovich, Executive Director, Main Street Steamboat, Member, Creative District Steering Committee:

I'm here to speak on behalf of Main Street. With this park being the gateway to our Main Street district, it is important to us that it represents our community. So we really very strongly support the idea of forming a committee that includes both groups to come to a decision and come up with something that's a compromise on this. We hope Main Street would have a seat at that table since it is the gateway to our district in the city.

Wendy Covina, 6 Spruce Street, Steamboat Springs Arts Council:

I think our community has spoken loud and clear that cultural heritage is probably the most important element in our community. Coming this close to taking something away I think reminds us of what we might be losing. So I'm very proud of the Creative District and our city to have the patience to really flesh out this last-minute thing. I can't imagine not based on the outcry. I'm here to remind everyone that the Creative District is about cultural heritage; we care very deeply about it. For Steamboat, this is a cultural asset along with Howelsen Hill. Who knew that people really care so much about the Steamboat. But if they do, it's right down our alley to work further toward it, and I think establishing a committee is going to be a win-win.

Katie Moore, 3020 Village Drive:

I was born and raised in Steamboat, so I played on the River Queen. So I jumped onboard right away when these girls wanted to support keeping it. It's really one of the last things I can remember from my childhood. I'm also a member of the Arts Council, and I adore Kim Keith, so I think these two groups coming together is ideal. I think they can come up with something really awesome. Also, I think it's bizarre that this park is called West Lincoln Park. I've always known it as the fart park, so I think for me when it came up first in the paper maybe that's why you didn't get some response.

Holly Williams:

I was chair of the Parks and Rec Commission from '83-'88, the first five years we had it and also when the ship was built. Then I went from there to working on the recreational bond issue for the Core Trail, and I chaired the Core Trail development. I can't tell you how many times we got everything worked out and easements and agreements and arrangements, and then after the fact we were inundated with things and public meetings and so on. So I thought I'd be the last person to be part of a group to come in at the eleventh hour, and it really wasn't my intention. I

was just sitting back watching all this stuff happening on social media, and I couldn't believe it. 100 people, then 400, then a thousand. Anyways, I want to thank you. I realize that your time and you're volunteering. There's a lot of new voices right now in the community speaking out, and I just want to say thank you for listening.

Josh Anzulewicz:

I don't want the playground aspect to be forgotten here. I think we need to go further than musical instruments. Let's create a cool structure with some active features for kids to play on. There's \$150,000 for a shelter and a playground. Let's have some active play elements so a family could come out, enjoy the shelter, have a good meal, but also let their kids run around and have fun. There's some creative things we can do; it doesn't have to be cookie-cutter slides or whatever. But there's different GFRC pieces that we can come up with that can be unique to Steamboat.

I spoke with Lisa Lorens, director of the Yampa Valley Autism Program. They do use this park for their transition program. They use the teeter-totters there not just for children but for adults. So it really is important to have some active play features incorporated with this plan.

MOTION

Commissioner Alfone moved to revisit the November 8, 2017 decision to support the proposed improvements at West Lincoln Park and form a design committee to include city staff to report back to the Commission with new design recommendations.

Commissioner Weik seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION ON MOTION

Robinson: As we were talking about this last project, we were estimating about \$50,000 for the active element that we talked about that was going to mesh with the site and the musical instruments. So that left about \$100,000 for the structure. If you want to go more active heavy, the Howelsen Park playground cost about \$90,000.

Tumminello said he would rather the design committee come up with the design they want, taking into account the values the Commission has expressed, which includes the shade structure with a unique historical and community-focused design, but also with the artistic/musical components and the active play elements all designed around the Creative District's concept of creative place making.

Alfone added to the motion that the project falls within the budget as appropriated.

Koermer wondered if given the community's support there may be donors out there who may be willing to increase the funds to make sure that this vision is realized.

McGee: I've actually approached a number of businesses and a bank in town who were completely enthusiastic about supporting this. Having seen the back page notice about the Arnold Barn, I can't imagine that the people of this town wouldn't wholeheartedly endorse keeping a steamboat in Steamboat.

Tumminello: If there are private funds donated to the project, does it have to be reconsidered through the CIP process?

Overstreet: I would have to ask the Finance Department about it.

Robinson: We have a process that we'd have to adhere to. We would certainly work with the Finance department about it. Where it gets challenging is what are we putting this RFP out for. We have to have a biddable project, and we have to know the dollar amount before it goes out to bid.

Weik: I think it could happen where if there's a design committee, they try to work within the current city budget. If it turns out that all the elements that everybody wants in the design comes out to 210, then we go to the community and say we need donors for the other 60 grand. Otherwise, this is what it's going to be scaled back to. The RFP will go to either one depending whether the funding is available for the additional ask.

Watson: All we're prescribing is that we want certain elements to be included. If you guys meet, bring it back to us, and if it's gone over budget, we can discuss at that point.

Keith: One of the functions of a design committee as it relates to community place making and this project as I see it is: The design committee comes up with a document that really specifies the criteria. It says very clearly we want this kind of theme; we want this kind of materials; we want this kind of re-imagining or repurposing of the current structure. You want this committee, in my opinion, to create an RFP with specific criteria that we all agree upon and then put that RFP out to the public and allow other members of the community to submit their ideas. Those ideas come back to the committee and then a recommendation is brought to you from all those various designs.

Overstreet asked the Commission to specify the makeup of the committee.

Koermer asked if positions on the committee need to be publicly advertised.

Commissioner Tumminello offered an amendment:
To form a design committee consisting of no more than nine members representing the city, the arts district, the Save The River Queen group, and the Commission that will propose a new design for West Lincoln Park taking into account the Creative District's concept of placemaking and will incorporate active play elements, musical elements, and a steamboat-themed shade structure and propose an appropriate RFP for consideration by the Parks and Recreation Commission.
Commissioner Watson seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Weik volunteered to represent the Commission on the design committee.

Other Business

Howelsen Hill Vision 2040

Tumminello: We do have a questionnaire from Kyrill, so if folks can start reaching out to their constituent organizations and trying to set up meetings to ask them the questions so we can try to get the additional Howelsen Hill input.

Overstreet: There is a website: engagesteamboat.net. The questionnaire is on there as well.

Koermer: Doug and I are both on the subcommittee. We've been meeting every Thursday. So we'd like each commissioner to reach out to your designated group to get as many people as possible to fill those out. We're sitting at almost 200 completed surveys; we'd like to get that to 250-300. He's done some outreach at the local schools. We had an event down at Townies where we invited folks from the community to fill out that survey. If you've got other groups that you're involved with if you can spread that survey out, we'd like to get as many responses as possible. Note: You can't really do it on a personal device. You've got to save it to a computer and then send it back.

Next Steps: Gather all the information, put it all together and figure out what the vision is going to be.

Master Plan Update

Overstreet: We had the Master Plan open house last Thursday night. We had over 75 people there from various groups; it was a great turnout. We had about 15 stations where people saw maps and boards and they can make a comment. They hope to come back in February with the user fee

piece. The consultant wants to come back to City Council to update them on what they've found during this process. They're getting some data from the Finance Department right now; they hope to get that by the middle of January and have a presentation in mid-February.

Spring Creek Alternate Trail

Commissioners asked for clarification as to the final decision.

Robinson: There was talk about trying to minimize the bridge crossings and bridge sharing, which we have done. It's mostly on one side of the creek all the way down. We will have that stack loop system so you can bail at any point in time. The upper trail is the only thing that was approved; there is nothing on the lower trail on the county road portion on the two-track all the way out. There is no solution at this point in time other than staff trying to mitigate the heavy use and conflicts occurring up there.

Weik: It seems to me that part of the problem is we're treating this county road as a trail, and that's how it's functioning. But it's a county road, and maybe we just need to figure out how we get everybody back into the mindset of it's a road. Maybe we can find some way to re-emphasize the fact that it is a road.

Director's Update

Overstreet: The Continental Cup is this weekend at Howelsen Hill. The teams are already in town training. We have 14 countries.

Floyd: The official event starts at noon tomorrow.

Overstreet: We got some kudos from the WSC and Jeff Nelson on the way the hill is looking, so thank you.

Floyd: I can't say enough about the snowmaking efforts that have happened over at Howelsen to pull this off. This is our third event of the year with this kind of snow, so it's tricky. We've got another big one that starts on Wednesday. Those guys have put in a lot of hours and we appreciate it.

Next Meeting: January 10

Future:
Steamboat Digs Dogs Update

Adjournment

Commissioner Alfone moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Commissioner Tumminello seconded the motion.

The motion carried unanimously.