

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

**June 14, 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, June 14, 2017, in the Citizens' Meeting Room, Centennial Hall, 124 10th Street, Steamboat Springs, Colorado.

Parks and Recreation Commission members in attendance were Vice-Chair Doug Tumminello, Frank Alfone, Sarah Floyd, Craig Keith and Holly Weik.

Absent: Watson

Staff members present were Director of Parks, Open Space and Recreational Services John Overstreet and Front Desk, Marketing and Event Specialist Tara Cusack.

**PUBLIC COMMENT ON ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA**

None.

**Approval of Minutes: May 10, May 24**

Commissioner Weik moved to approve the May 10 and May 24, 2017 meeting minutes; Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously with Commissioner Keith abstaining.

**Steamboat Digs Dogs Request for Dog Park Improvements at Rita Valentine Park**

**STAFF PRESENTATION**

Craig Robinson, Parks, Open Space and Trails Manager:

We are here tonight to talk about the request for dog park improvements at Rita Valentine Park. We have some associated costs that have been submitted as well. You'll have several options for motions at the end of the discussion.

Robinson recapped the communication form.

Fiscal Impacts: Numbers from Steamboat Digs Dogs for a conceptual plan – not a fully designed plan. Does not include volunteer labor, but that is about \$590,000.

Hard to put a number on what maintenance might be because we're not sure what the facility is going to be. Based on what we're looking at today, we could see maybe 10-\$20,000 of maintenance tasks for both Public Works and Parks and Community Services staff.

If this is approved by City Council, Steamboat Digs Dogs would need to work with city staff to develop construction-level design and construction

estimates for a project like this to move forward; it would be a staff-led project.

Background: We've been talking to Steamboat Digs Dogs for close to nine months about various proposals for off-leash recreation and improvements at Rita Valentine. They've reached out to Parks and Wildlife, city staff and the neighbors in these areas. They've also spoken with Police Services about existing codes and revised some of those to allow Council the opportunity to allow off-leash recreation.

Legal: City code right now regarding off-leash recreation would apply at the proposed dog park. Animal Control staff is currently challenged to enforce existing laws.

Conflicts/Environmental Issues: As we talked about at our last meeting, Chris Middledorf, our CPW area wildlife manager, wrote his comments for all of the proposed off-leash areas in town and had some specific comments to Rita Valentine Park:

CPW has always maintained the position that dogs should remain leashed at all times. That being said, with Steamboat and other growing communities, there are opportunities for collaboration and ways to make things move forward while trying to address human, dog and wildlife safety. For Rita Valentine Park, wildlife frequents the area year-round. It is not an actual mapped wildlife corridor. We've had reports and closures there in the past. CPW's recommendation was to have a fence to help mitigate some of these impacts and that they should keep the perimeter of the fence within the sight line of the main entrance on the south side. This would allow pet owners to observe any wildlife present in the park before letting their dogs off leash.

There is a moderate chance of wildlife conflict in this area.

CPW staff (I think he meant Parks and Community Services staff) is challenged to take care of what we have. Adding anything new is not something we can squeeze into our existing list of responsibilities. So we will be looking for additional staff or funding for contractors to maintain anything new that's approved. There would also be maintenance supplies needed to take care of this park.

Dog waste is a concern here in the community; it's required by city code to be properly disposed of.

If this project is approved, we have lots of projects on our six-year CIP plan. This would be another one added to the list.

There were two public comments that came in today.

## **APPLICANT PRESENTATION**

Ulrich Salzgeber, Steamboat Digs Dogs:

We woke up yesterday morning to a newspaper article that had a lot of incorrect information and rumors. I'm fairly certain that's why we have many of our audience members here tonight. We have responded to that through a letter to the editor, and I believe that John will read that into the record so hopefully we can make our stance clear to everybody. In the meantime, I'd like to read a letter from Kathy Connell, who could not be here this evening.

Salzgeber read the letter in its entirety, which included:

Background of the proposal, noting of the open houses that were held, the request from commissioners for Steamboat Digs Dogs to come back with cost estimates, thanking John Lanterman and Josh for their volunteer time creating concept ideas and obtaining prices for these improvements, which would have cost the city 7-10% of the total project.

We cannot go any further raising moneys, which we would like to do, without knowing what City Council approves. We cannot utilize the professional services of the city's grant-writing department to help us. Please let this move forward to City Council for discussion, public hearing and eventual acceptance.

We have donations of trees, irrigation systems, digesters, labor, backhoes and moneys waiting to be involved.

John Lanterman, Steamboat Digs Dogs:

This is really a concept plan; there's a lot of work to be done to really get this to a point where it can be constructed. We have put together cost numbers as best we can. As we move forward and further work occurs, we'll really be able to dial in these numbers. We'll refine and modify and tweak everything.

Lanterman summarized the response to the newspaper article reiterating that this is just a concept that will change overtime; it's not something that's about to happen.

Lanterman summarized his background from being a planner in Steamboat Springs in 1980 and now returning as a permanent resident with his wife and two dogs. Worked on a number of parks, larger-scale downtown plans, urban design plans, master-planned communities.

Lanterman: This proposal was really to be for locals and visitors, a safe area for off-leash dog play and also a place for locals to connect. We were asked to mitigate wildlife dog contact. It's for year-round use. Mitigate neighborhood concerns. Minimize the maintenance.

I've designed parks on the front range, specifically Superior Dog Park, which has a small fenced-in area. We looked at Chatfield, close to 70 acres fenced; Evergreen, 170 acres; Durango, Cherry Creek – a whole variety of sizes. There are lessons to be learned from all of these, and I did my best to integrate what we learned there.

I really believe in a large context in setting things. Rita Valentine is very centrally located between the town and mountain developments. That provides lots of opportunities to really benefit all residents of Steamboat. Another important element when looking at any outdoor design is to understand the context. The southern half of this is about 30 acres; there's another parcel to the north that's also city owned that's about 38 acres. In doing some research, spending time out there, it quickly became apparent that the northern portion is very wildlife oriented with many moose. There's lots of vegetation. Given the program and elements we wanted to include here, we decided that the northern portion should really be maintained as a wildlife corridor with some circulation passing through it and really focus on the southern portion.

There are some great, unimpeded views there down to Emerald, looking west to Sleeping Giant, and if you turn the other way you have the ski area right there.

We have Anglers Drive on the east and Hilltop to the west. Hilltop gets a lot of traffic feeding through as a collector for that area, and Anglers serves the area up above.

Lanterman went through three of the possible options:

Option A:

Improving the parking area with 40 spaces and same entry location off of Anglers

Dog chorales with a gated staging area before entering the park proper.

Interior: Primary interior loop and two exterior loops.

Small drainage area to the south where you could walk and have some shade trees.

Upper small loop with some more defined trail loops.

Mutt Mountain in the top center has spectacular views in all directions and serves as an important destination.

Option B:

Adjusted the perimeter trail because Routt County Riders has expressed interest in a connection from Hilltop over to Anglers.

Loops coming in from the north; a small parking lot to allow different opportunities for access off Hilltop.

The perimeter of the dog park is well within the open space boundary owned by the city.

We have tree masses that wonder on both sides of the fence to further reduce the visual linear picture. It's also a very transparent fence.

Option C:

Allow the existing trails to continue; improving the parking area; a smaller, small-dog play area that would be fenced.

We surveyed everyone at the March 29 meeting to see which areas they preferred visually; it's called a visual preference survey.

Fencing:

The lower-right fence is a 48-inch fence; it's open wire. Those wooden posts are 16 feet apart in the ground; there's a midway point where they just used a brace, so it really does disappear nicely into the landscape. I actually contacted the contractor that build that fence at Chatfield State Park, and they provided cost estimates to come to Steamboat to build this fence.

Option B was really meeting a lot of the needs of the people we've talked with.

Lanterman showed conceptual drawings of the park.

Simple, clean parking design that prompts people to slow down upon entering.

Restrooms located outside the gated area.

Trails outside the fenced area allow unimpeded circulation for wildlife and people.

Organizations such as GOCO and other granting entities love to see multi-use parks. 38-acre multi-use park he designed in Superior was similar and got a lot of GOCO funding because of the emphasis on the multi-use aspect.

Three Dog Chorales: Upper serves the parking lot as well as residents from the north; two on the south for the main dog park as well as the area for small dogs.

There would be a fence between the small dog area and the interior of the park as well.

Mutt Mountain has good circulation where it's located. You can be up on the hill and toss your Frisbee down into the central play area. Other levels of thought that we've played with in there.

Fences are located to minimize user conflicts: cyclists going through, hikers going by.

Dashed areas will be a crusher-fine material.

Lanterman showed photos from today regarding fencing.

Reasons Why Proposed Fencing Is Appropriate:

Minimizes wildlife conflicts, CPW and Steamboat Parks concurs; minimizes user group conflicts, very simple design; tourists expect dog parks to be fenced, they may not understand if it's partially fenced; reduces neighbor conflicts; part of Western heritage.

Lanterman: Tonight's big ask is that you approve this dog park concept and allow us to move forward to a work session with City Council,

continue down this road and see where it takes us because there's a lot of decisions to make.

### **COMMISSIONER DISCUSSION**

Commissioner Alfone:

Your ask tonight talks about the concept, but you presented three options. Is the ask to approve one of the three options or just the concept of looking at all three of the options as presented?

Lanterman: I focused on that Option B; that concept of two different areas for access. We need to work out the size and phasing of all this. So the ask is more Option B primarily because of those access points. I think the other ask is to let us continue to pursue a viable solution to make sure this is safe for residents and visitors (fencing really,) to see what the best solution is there.

Alfone: The cost estimate you provided, which I appreciate, for the \$592,000, is that based on the components in Option B?

Lanterman: Yes. At this point regarding costs, you need to be conservative on the high end. That's what we did. We wanted to include everything in there we possibly could to give you as clear a frame of reference as possible.

Commissioner Tumminello:

The budget provided for a quantity of five dog chorales/entry gates. It seems to me that Option B only calls for three of them. The cost of those is \$6,000 per chorale or gate for a total cost of \$30,000. I wasn't understanding how that all related to Option B.

Lanterman: That's a really good question. My partner and I both questioned the \$6,000 per chorale. It seems high. But for now, we're not going to get into tweaking that.

Tumminello asked Lanterman to explain a dog chorale and what it does.

Lanterman: When you come into a dog park, you leave the cars, and the dogs are all wound up; there are dogs everywhere and people everywhere trying to get sorted out. So you get out of your car; you walk through the parking lot and come up; the chorale is basically a gate you walk in, and then you're in say a 10x12 area that's kind of the landing area where you can take the leash off the dogs and do whatever; then there's an enter gate that lets you into the dog park.

Lanterman showed where all five chorales would be and how they help disperse dogs and quickly get them into the park.

Two gates about 10-15 feet apart on the North side; two into the main dog park on the bottom; one into the small dog area.

Commissioner Floyd:

Has your group organized any phases? If you were allowed to get two things, what would your top two be? Have you looked at it that way in terms of priority of need up there to improve Rita Valentine for users and potentially new users?

Lanterman: Based on your direction this evening, we could begin to prioritize it. We haven't gone through that process yet. It's going to take a little more before I feel comfortable committing to an order.

Overstreet: The CIP's are due this month for the '18-'23 budget, so having a phasing plan instead of just lumping it in at \$592,000, you could say in 2018 we want to spend \$30,000 for x, spend \$50,000 in '19 for y.

Lanterman: If we can get approval from you tonight, what's the date for CIP?

Overstreet: It's actually this week, but we can talk with the Finance office to see if this can be pushed a little bit just because of the way it's coming in right now.

Lanterman said the applicant would be happy to work with the city to come up with priorities.

Commissioner Weik: We've been looking at this for a while, and your group has certainly put a lot of time and effort in. I think a phased approach would be good. What are the must-haves? What are the no-brainers? I'd say the dog waste digester and the bags for that is a no-brainer. It's going to be very little money out of the city budget, and it's an easy do. I think that should be the very first thing that goes in.

Lanterman said the digester is in all the options.

Weik: Personally, I'd like to see the trail surface improvements with the crusher fines because it just turns into a braded, muddy mess. Anytime it's wet, the trails just multiply. So that should be one of the early things that we do. I don't think this will be too controversial. Your fenced area with the blue I think should probably be the next thing to go in, but I would suggest that we consider splitting that into two areas initially – one for small dogs and one for larger dogs who don't necessarily play with others but their owner still wants to get them some off-leash time legally. The division could always be removed later as you expand to a larger fenced area. I think one of the things we're going to run into is whether or not to have a perimeter fence and how large that larger fenced area should be. So I think in terms of making a palatable staged approach, I think a small fenced area that's probably divided into two subsets would be the easiest sell. It would also be a starter option. I think that would be a vital step three in this process.

I think we should then look at what it would take to get a bathroom and water source in there for human and dog users and to get some sort of permanent or semi-permanent shade installation in there – which could just be four tall posts with concrete footers and a shade sail stretched between those, and expand it. I know you're very conceptual, but I think those are the types of concepts we could get through the Commission and get to Council and get starter versions. Later on they

could become more formalized or more solid structures, but just to get the process rolling without creating a ton of fuss.

I like your shade trees idea; I think that would come after doing bathrooms and water sources.

The trail reroutes would probably come after that.

I think it might be better to wait on the play areas, the boulders, the Mutt Mountain concept until a later phase.

I think the sidewalk to allow anybody who is in a wheelchair or has mobility issues to get from the parking area to a fenced-in off-leash area is reasonable but might not happen right away.

I'm still not sold on the perimeter fencing.

Weik said she could not stay for the motion/vote.

Tumminello: On the trail improvements, you have line items for crusher fines for the main loop at 8 feet and for the second loop at 5 feet. It looks like the totals for those are \$8,000 and roughly \$11,000. As I understand it, those are for the interior loops.

Lanterman: Yes. It does not include the exterior trail. Routt County Riders is very interested in that; there have been discussions about volunteer efforts.

Tumminello: This concept does provide for a water source, which you're estimating the cost at \$4,200.

Lanterman: That's the number for the fancy dog dish down low and the water fountain up above and some other costs. Part of that is the next level working with the city, see where the water line is, starting to refine all that.

Tumminello: What's the cost on the parking lots? Primary lot you have 42 designated spaces at \$55 apiece for a total cost of \$2,300.

Alfone: It's \$35,000 for the Hilltop lot and \$198,000 for the main lot.

Lanterman: Both numbers are from either this week or last week with the paving contractor. We basically used \$10 a square foot and did the take-offs on those areas.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Tumminello asked commenters to refrain from repeating points on which they agree with past commenters.

Comments received via email will be added to the record. One addresses the fencing issue; the other opposes the proposal on the basis of the cost, the expansion of the parking area and the fact that it is currently serving the needs intended for the purpose.

Gary Decoter, 805 Anglers Court:

Our street is a little dead-end cul-de-sac. During the time we've been here, I think we've seen all the options that have been thrown around for this piece of land, from school to police station to golf course. The current usage as it's happening is very much not conflicting with anything. The dogs are for the most part well behaved. I see up to 20 cars parked on the street.

The thing I would caution you on is the fence issue. When our grandchildren were younger, they would go across to the neighbors' yards and slide down the hill. There's a lot of sledding in the winter. You have a large development on the left that contains younger families. In the wintertime, they can go out to that park at the corner area, and there's a wonderful downhill slope there. From that corner, they can get well beyond the fence line.

As for conflicts with wildlife, when we see something, we call each other; we take pictures; we email back and forth. We have seen this year bear, elk, moose, deer, fox a lot. But they tend not to go out into that park area. They move from that area down to Fish Creek. In the time we have lived here, I can only recall one time when I received a picture of moose out in the park; never elk.

My main comment is I hope you don't preclude other uses by saying this is for dogs and the rest of you please stay out. As it's being used today you have a lot of children over there. The sledding would be totally precluded by what's shown here.

Chris Young/Martha Drake, 2091 Anglers Drive:

When the park was initially accepted as a donation from the people who didn't develop it, it was our understanding that it was open space, and then it became a dog park. All other developments have been denied. I would propose that the options you have in front of you are a solution begging for a problem. I've used this area for years. My husband has reported one encounter with wildlife; I have never had any; I've never had a problem with other dogs or cyclists. I'm also a cyclist and a hiker. I appreciate that there are children who use that sledding hill, but they don't come into the dog park. There's possibly a parking issue, but I've not seen it.

So I encourage you to deny this because I don't think it's in the best interest of the intention, and I don't hear any groundswell saying let's get fences and water and so forth.

Shirley Zelke, 1203 Zephyr Trail:

This is a dog park, not a people park. I go with my dog there six days a week, and I have never had my dog bother the neighbors, and I have a border collie; he knows how to run.

This is a dog park; a lot of these amenities you're proposing are for people. I will grant you that one bench is very nice because there are

people who can't stand that long. We don't need gates; we don't need fences; we've gotten along fine. I've been five years with my dog here, and I have not been attacked by a moose or a bear or anything else. The trees there right now are dead because dogs wet on them all the time. I'd like to know how you're going to protect all these proposed trees. The trees collect wildlife; if you don't have trees there, they're not there. We are not making this park for visitors. When I go someplace and take my dog, I expect to go to the park, and whatever they've got is what I accept. We want to make this wonderful dog park for visitors, and I don't go for that.  
I'm going for no fence.

Candy Garrison, 1465 Mark Twain Lane, Steamboat Digs Dogs:  
I got on this because we finally found out about Rita Valentine and started taking our dog over there. There was a pathetic picnic table and up to dozen or more water jugs that were blowing around. That was Rita Valentine. No water; no trees. So we planted those three pathetic little trees kind of as a joke but not really. We wanted everybody to realize that we needed some shade; we needed something to happen. We asked Ernie if it would be okay, and he had us sign some paperwork taking responsibility for these trees.

We put a little sign up there that said "Water me today; tomorrow you'll have some shade."

About three weeks ago I walked in there, and I looked over at the trees, and I thought there was something wrong. Around each tree there are these round spaces where all the grass is dead. I don't want to believe that anybody purposely tried to kill these trees, but they are dead.

We need something for our dogs. We need things for children, and we built parks for our children. A lot of us think of our dogs as our children. All we're looking for is stages; water to me was one of the major points; some shade that people can sit in with either a bench or a park. Think of the people that live here that have their dogs that want to take their dogs to the park; they have one hour for lunch; they eat their lunch, they let their dogs play. If there's water under there, shade for them, shade for their dogs to get back under – let's go in stages. With what we're asking for and what I would like to see happen is that we get approved and then we work forward and try to raise money toward each one of those phases. I really appreciate what Holly had to say. We need to proceed – not to make this a glorious park but at least something that we can be proud of that our dogs can play in.

Katie Colby, Blackberry Lane:

I've been going to Rita Valentine Park for seven years now. I think the reason all this came about was when Animal Control started cracking down on places other than Rita Valentine. This whole concept is taking away from the dogs. They don't want a fence; all they want is water. They don't even want shade because most of them are running around all the time.

There's no need for any of this; leave it as it is.  
The fence is going to be a disaster in the winter when the snow piles up and dogs and wildlife are trying to climb over it.  
The only thing we need is water.

Patrick West, 108 Hillside Drive:

My problem with this whole thing is I don't think it was ever designated as a park. I don't think we ever went through the necessary steps to have everyone in the community come forward and tell us what they want to do with this space.

We had a great proposal that I think the city spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to produce a plan for Rita Valentine Park, and it was shot down. The Commission chair quit and left because of conflict with City Council over this park.

Now we have another great plan with a huge fenced area, and no one has really conceptualized the entire parcel. I think it's time that we stop talking about tiny little Rita Valentine Park and the northern M&H Property, join them together into one parcel, get a management plan for the entire parcel that includes the dog park. I think it's a great idea, and I would love to see this here, but we need to think about the trails going north out of the property. When I lived on Mountain Vista Circle, there was a lot of traffic from the circle into M&H and down to Rita Valentine – so much that our HOA had to put our own dog poop bag station and we paid for our own trashcan at the entrance. Our HOA spent \$600 a month to maintain a poop station up there because the Parks Department is not managing that property because we don't have a plan for it.

We've got a trail that comes up from US40 behind the Sinclair station that leads up under a nice bridge and then turns into a mud hole and you can't go anywhere. We can't even say we need to improve it because it's a social trail. The trails that come down off Storm Mountain Court into that gulley are unsustainable.

We need to work out this entire property. The fenced-in area is a little bit too big for me, but I think it's a great idea. I'd love to see these improvements and have a discussion about the entire property, but I don't think we can do it piecemeal. We need a fence to protect dogs and protect the other users.

Eric Meyer, 2775 Riverside Drive:

I sympathize with the volunteers. I want to just stress that approval and funding should be totally different conversations in my opinion. One thing that I think has been missing in this discussion is that there is an Open Space and Trails Master Plan that is just about to get underway. It's funded; I believe it's with the same situation as the Orton property. The bigger picture is important, and I would say the bigger picture of the whole town. When I was on the board of Routt County Riders, we were stressing that the bigger picture is critical for these trails connections. The trails are in really bad shape.

One other comment would be the exterior trail: No matter what size the fence ends up, the exterior needs to have some all-weather surface in that area for the commuters that are going through this park. There's a whole lot of people that go through this park on bike or foot. That all-weather surface is important for not just inside the dog park but also outside. The M&H Property is probably going to be the better place with better terrain and better drainage to do the natural surface trail stuff. But you've got to fix the trails. The social trails have to be rerouted off of private property.

I would encourage you in the bigger master plan that's coming up to take care of that piece.

Overall, I'm supportive of the dog park. I think the fence is critical. Without the fence, you have wildlife concerns. We've had photos in our paper of dogs on the heels of elk right there in that park, which ended in the death of a calf and the transplanting of the mother elk.

So I would say to the people who don't want a fence but wanted a dog park: You're at risk of losing the dog park because of these types of incidents. So consider a compromise. It's nobody's land; everybody has to compromise.

#### **ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION**

Alfone confirmed with Overstreet that the master plan will include the entire department: Parks, open space, trails and recreation. The level of detail would be a broad overview of all open space and trail areas. It may recommend certain things to occur in certain areas. We hope to start that plan in July or August and wrap up by next May-June.

Tumminello confirmed that currently Rita Valentine is designated as a park but managed as open space.

Alfone: Is the \$20,000 in maintenance based on Option B including what you foresee as anticipated maintenance for all these new amenities?

Robinson: It was based off of Option B. We did not reach out to Public Works and see what their cost would be for parking lot striping, sweeping, snow removal. All that would be new. It depends what the volunteers decide they're going to do in house and what the city is going to do. Once we get to the design level, we're going to require that things are done correctly, so your maintenance costs should be low. The actual cost will be pinpointed as we get closer to the wire; I would say it's probably closer to 20 than \$10,000 based on if the city is doing 100% of the maintenance.

Alfone: Plowing of the existing lot is currently done in the winter. What other items are staff doing that you're aware of at that park?

Robinson: Public Works might fill a pothole, but generally they do snow removal in the wintertime and that's it.

Alfone: I appreciate everything that Steamboat Digs Dogs has done. My question is: There's a lot of talk about volunteer hours and maintenance done by volunteers and help down the road. In your experience, Craig, how does that work in the real world? Do volunteer hours really pan out? Or at the end of the day is the city doing the lion's share of the maintenance on previous projects?

Robinson: There are many more examples of promises made that have been broken where maintenance then falls back to city staff than there are existing agreements that are still in place.

Tumminello: Even if this does make it to the CIP, it's going to be a very low priority for the city when it comes to actual funding. So without some external funding source, the probability of these improvements being made at Rita Valentine is probably about 0 at this point, given the current funding structure. Having said that, I think that if there are external funds that are brought to source by way of GOCO grants, private grants, etc. The way the scoring goes on the CIP list, that can raise the project in priority on the CIP, so maybe it does bring it within the realm of possibility. My cautionary tale on this, though, is the second sheet of ice that we've dealt with for some amount of time over at Howelsen where there have been promises made of significant private donations to that, and that still wasn't sufficient enough to elevate the issue to a priority for City Council. I think there's lots of patience required and many roads to go down before this would ever be realized as a vision.

With respect to the ongoing maintenance issue: that's probably one of my biggest concerns because of I've read numerous examples of dog parks in the front range being shut down because of promises made but not kept with respect to the maintenance of the park and the degradation of the resources. The Evergreen Dog Park is a great example of that. There really is not room in the city budget currently for city staff to maintain the park. So my view is that if this is to come to fruition at the end of the day, there would need to be some form of agreement or public-private partnership between Steamboat Digs Dogs or some similar group and the city with respect to maintenance. So maybe it's less of an issue of volunteers not actually doing what they've committed to do but there's an actual contract in place requiring performance and that that performance would be guaranteed by some sort of performance bond. I would invite Steamboat Digs Dogs not to lose sight of that issue; I know Kathy Connell has not. But I think without something like that in place, I think there will always be skeptical people who believe the park won't be maintained as it ought.

With respect to amenities of the park: I'm not a fence fan. There's not a fence there currently, and it's an off-leash dog park currently. There's

always the possibility for issues. I respect the fact that CPW has suggested that in their view a fence is an integral part of this to protect wildlife. I just don't think that a fence is going to solve any sort of problem that people might actually think it's going to solve.

I would not fall on my sword over that for the approval, but I don't think it will work, and I don't like the visual presentation of the fence. I think there's other ways you can deal with making sure people put their dogs back on leash when they're leaving the park, for what it's worth.

I think that really, at the end of the day, any off-leash dog area does need to be subject to conditional-use permitting in the sense that City Council always needs to have the discretion to withdraw the use of the park as an off-leash area and should and could impose date and time restrictions for use of the park.

Floyd expressed her appreciation for the work of Steamboat Digs Dogs. Floyd: I think we've worked hard, and I think we've worked well together. Some of the intensity tonight I think was unwarranted. I think we've really tried to hear what you guys have to say on proposals for Rita Valentine and off-leash trails and things like that. So I think this has been a good working relationship that will continue. I really encourage you to think about the phases and what's really important. I do hear water. Dogs need water; people need water. I think water and shade are two really important aspects of this that would feel like we've made progress. I think maybe a bench here and there would be great. I think when we get to fencing and the chorales and all these things that I do believe make a lot of sense in dog parks, I think we need to be realistic. There just isn't any more that Craig and his staff can do, so it needs to be something that's manageable by the group, but I think it needs to really be what's going to make a difference for dogs and dog owners. I'm not sure that restrooms for the people are as critical as water and shade for the dogs. I'd encourage the group to really strategize as to what's important to be able to make some progress. When I first came on this commission a year or so ago, we were talking about Bear River Park. It was a wonderful, elaborate plan for a park that we had absolutely no funding for. So we spent a lot of months and a lot of time and developed a really great concept that has now been put on a shelf that someday maybe when there's money there will be another reenactment of that process. I'd say to this group: Figure out what we really, really need and see if you can get that to happen. The fence and all those kinds of things I think are going to be too controversial and too expensive, but water and shade might be what you get and might feel really good when all is said and done. So those are my thoughts about actually getting something to come out of this.

Keith: I would agree. I feel like a fence means you're never going to go there and use that place unless you have a dog, so it becomes a one-purpose park. So I think the master plan, understanding that there's a big question about these two parcels – I thought that was interesting. I think to

phase it in and try to get amenities that can be shared by everybody would be a great way to go.

Alfone wondered if there could be a motion to recommend basic amenities such as water and shade along with a recommendation that city staff work with Steamboat Digs Dogs to incorporate their proposal or something like it into the Parks, Open Space, Trails and Recreation Master Plan.

Overstreet said that the GOCO grant was for a department master plan rather than a specific park plan. It needs to stay in that scope. He did not think you could do a specific park plan as part of this overarching plan. It could be separate as a 2018 funding option.

He said he would be all for working with Steamboat Digs Dogs on a phased plan focusing on the smaller components first and starting to get those numbers more solid. Work to incorporate that into the 2018 CIP to add water, shade and some benches as a possible first phase.

Alfone added facilities for dog waste.

Alfone: My opinion is that the park is being used by dogs now. Let's continue to support that and move forward with that concept. But let's take a few steps back and just start with the smaller things that have been identified tonight but allow the opportunity for Steamboat Digs Dogs to work with the city on a master plan moving forward.

Tumminello asked Overstreet about checking with Finance to see if such a request could make it into the 2018 CIP under the department.

Lanterman clarified that even if one year's expenses on a capital project are less than \$50,000, the whole thing needs to be included in the CIP.

Tumminello didn't think the purpose of Rita Valentine Park was going to change in the new master plan and said he would hate to kick the can down the road two years just to reach the same conclusion as exists now. He expressed his hope that the Commission could approve this with some sort of phasing process so that Steamboat Digs Dogs can continue the work they started.

Robinson confirmed that Council is going over the CIP requests in July; Overstreet said there would need to be some quick meetings to determine the phase plan.

Floyd confirmed with Robinson that it would be a project for the city to tap the existing water line; it would be fairly easy to do, but there is a price and maintenance that goes with it because it needs to be blown out for the winter.

Floyd wanted to know if it was possible to come up with a figure for the cost of bringing water to the park with a disbursement device and maintenance costs within the next two weeks. Overstreet and Robinson thought so.

Floyd also referred to a shade structure that might be temporary but would be affordable and attractive enough and said that if those two things could be put together, is it possible to get that pricing and find out that maybe this one improvement could be \$30,000. Then SDD could figure out how much money they could contribute and would need to work with the city to figure out how the rest of the money could be raised. That would feel like progress has been made and provide an amenity that would not be negative for the neighborhood or any other users.

Alfone wondered when this would get on City Council's agenda; Overstreet said it would be part of the budget process for 2018. Alfone: So we're talking about the summer of next year.

Tumminello: But what if there is private funding?

Overstreet: Sure, if it's fully privately funded.

Tumminello: If it's approved by City Council it can be built on cycle.

Alfone: If Steamboat Digs Dogs could raise those funds, the momentum could keep going and you could have some of those initial amenities this summer as opposed to next summer.

Salzgeber: For this specific project we already have \$50,000 set aside/allocated. So that should go a little ways to putting shade and a little water and some park benches up I think.

West reiterated that he cycles through the park regularly and has been chased across the park by dogs off leash and said that fences are the only way to prevent such user conflict in cases where dogs do not respond to owner commands.

## **MOTION**

Commissioner Tumminello moved to endorse the proposed conceptual plan for a dog park and estimated costs at Rita Valentine Park with amendments as to the amenities which have been discussed here today and with a phasing concept with a specific budget and specific amenities attached to each of those phases; and that that amended plan then be forwarded on to City Council for further discussion and approval. Commissioner Alfone seconded the motion.

**DISCUSSION ON MOTION**

Alfone offered a friendly amendment to clarify what the first phase would be in Option B from Steamboat Digs Dogs, which would be water, benches, shade and Feces control and that Steamboat Diggs Dogs come back to the Commission for further action with respect to the remainder of the implementation of Option B.

**VOTE**

The motion carried unanimously.

Tumminello thanked everyone for their hard work on this topic.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Alfone moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:40 p.m.  
Commissioner Floyd seconded the motion.  
The motion carried unanimously.