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Parks Action Plan Update Committee Minutes from the Wednesday, May 16, 2018 Meeting

I. Welcome to Committee Members and Opening Remarks

The meeting was called to order by Chair Garrett at 6:33 p.m.

II. Roll Call of Members

A roll call of members was taken, with the following results:

Committee Members Present: Broyles, Strand, Napoli, Coverdell, Commission Liaison Beattie, Council Liaison Bertolino, Council Liaison Gragnani, and Chair Garrett

Committee Members Absent: Committee Members Pickett, McCune, and Gillman

Other Officials

and Staff in Attendance: Council Member Woerther, Director of Planning and Parks Vujnich, Assistant Director of Planning and Parks Arnett, and Superintendent of Parks and Recreation Crews.

III. Review and Action on the Meeting Minutes from April 24, 2018

A motion was made by Committee Member Coverdell, seconded by Committee Member Broyles, to approve the April 24, 2018 minutes. A voice vote was taken on the minutes, with no opposition (Commission Liaison Beattie abstained), and the motion was declared approved by Chair Garrett.

IV. Review of Tonight's Agenda

The agenda was reviewed by Chair Garrett. There were no questions.

V. Belleview Farms – Conversation with Area Residents

Chair Garrett noted, per the Committee's request from its April meeting, representatives from the area around Belleview Farms had been invited to the meeting this evening to discuss their thoughts regarding any development of the Belleview Farms site. Director Vujnich then provided an overview of the request that led to the invitation to Sherman residents noting, in particular, notes from a previous on-site meeting with this group had been included in the packets. Chair Garrett welcomed the attendees and provided an overview of the Committee's role, which is that of a recommendation to the City Council, and then welcomed their comments.

Krista Taves, 1470 St. Paul Road, identified on a map where she resides, which is adjacent to Belleview Farms on the east. She is opposed to the Gateway Off-Road Cyclists (GORC) proposal, along with everyone in the Sherman Area. Their opposition is based upon the deed restrictions to preserve the land and Mr. Donnelly's intention, when he donated the property. The GORC proposal would be detrimental to the property and the wildlife that has its habitat there.

Donnie Heth, 384 Crest Drive, identified his property located adjacent to the Belleview Farms property on the west. He noted Mr. Donnelly, and the previous owner, both had strong beliefs regarding preserving the property. Mr. Donnelly, and current Sherman residents, wanted pedestrian trails only. The residents around it want pedestrian trails only and oppose the GORC proposal. Requested a museum to the area be developed on the property, as part of the park. When questioned, he noted the area residents would assist in populating the content of the museum, maintaining the property, assist in security, building trails, and help at the museum. He invited the Committee Members to visit the area.

Laurie Mecha, 1470 St. Paul Road, lives adjacent to Belleview Farms on the east. She noted there is significant history in the area, including a Veterans Memorial at the Baptist Church in Sherman. Lots of wildlife in the area, such as pileated woodpeckers, that require large habitat and the downed trees that are on the property. Concerned with increased traffic, lack of facilities, narrow roads leading to property, stormwater runoff issues, and conflicts of GORC's proposal with Mr. Donnelly's intention in his deed, including lighting of the facility for nighttime use. Supports studies for traffic and watershed impacts of development. Bicycle trails could be developed in other areas, such as Greensfelder County Park, Bluff View Park, or Rockwoods Reservation. She noted the Missouri Master Naturalists organization may be a good fit for this property and could potentially assist with pedestrian trail development. She also noted mountain bike parks in other areas of the country are not located in small residential neighborhoods.

Schuyler Hagglund, 1591 St. Paul Road, read a portion of the deed granting the property to St. Louis County, noting its intention as a wildlife preserve in perpetuity and Mr. Donnelly's role in founding the Missouri Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. His property shares a border with the Belleview Farms property and he is concerned with vandalism and trespass. He noted he is excited for the park to be open for public use, but believes the GORC proposal is in opposition to the deed's intentions. He is concerned about the proposal's level of development, traffic concerns, noise impacts on the quiet setting, and other negative impacts.

Susan Savory, 500 Larry Elliott Drive, noted Mr. Donnelly also used the property for a sanctuary for people, in addition to animals. She noted she was concerned with existing problems with area bicyclists in the Sherman Area. She supports the rules be followed and believes Mr. Donnelly's rules are for a wildlife preserve.

Jeff Powell, 11 Windjammer Court, encourages the Committee listen to all the facts. He is a local teacher and bicyclist. He teaches mountain biking to area kids. GORC builds and maintains the trails and believes the proposal would have a positive impact on the area.

Steve Friedman, 3220 Pine Cliff, GORC Member, stated his excitement about the potential of the proposal. Flow trails are designed for ease of riding on a mountain biking and doesn't require more trees be removed than any type of trail. Believes many people will access property from Al Foster Memorial Trail, which will limit traffic in the area.

Kelley Woerther, 539 Nantucket Pointe Drive, noted she is a Historic Preservation Commission Member and questioned if anyone has pursued the Nature Conservancy for assistance with funding.

Spencer Savory, 500 Larry Elliott Drive, noted anyone coming to the Belleview Farms property from the Al Foster Memorial Trail would have to cross federal railroad property and questioned if that has been researched. Director Vujnich noted the ownership of the access road to the property is being researched by the City.

Todd Holtmann, 17062 Cambury Lane, noted this type of development is a family-oriented activity and about building a community. He appealed to the Committee Members to make their decision based on facts.

Mark Cox, 3029 Lake Country Lane, noted he is a hiker and mountain biker. He questioned if anyone from the area had been on a GORC trail, which has lots of wildlife, and has very little impact on the environment and habitats in these areas. He also noted the majority of mountain biking trails do not have water and sewer, and the road would need to be improved no matter what the property is decided to be developed for and dedicated to in the future.

Council Liaison Bertolino thanked each speaker for their attendance and their thoughtful statements and conciliatory remarks.

Chair Garrett noted this Committee had invited the residents for fact-finding and they will determine if this is something that should be included in the revised Action Plan.

VI. Summary of Major Discussion Items on "Citizens Committee for Park Progress Action Plan 2007" Pages 1-46

Chair Garrett noted a summary of agreed upon changes was included in the packet and questioned if Committee Members had any comments.

VII. Next Meeting Date – June 26, 2018

No comments on meeting date.

VIII. Public Comments

No additional comments.

IX. Other Items of Interest

Director Vujnich noted the majority of the Action Plan has been reviewed and questioned what the Committee Members would like the next step to be relative to it. Consensus was reached among the Committee Members to have Chair Garrett meet with City Staff to determine next steps and set the remaining agenda.

Committee Member Broyles questioned staff on a date when they could reconvene to discuss the trail from the Pruitt Property to Rockwoods Reservation. It was determined that staff would send out several options for dates after Memorial Day.

X. Closing Remarks and Adjournment

A motion was made by Commission Member Beattie, seconded by Committee Member Napoli, to adjourn the meeting. A voice vote was taken, with unanimous approval, and Chair Garrett declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.