

**JOINT MEETING OF FAIRBOARD
and
BOARD OF PARK COMMISSION
February 27, 2007
5:00PM
Fairgrounds Ag Center**

In attendance: Fair Board Members – Bob Brekke, Dennis Farnham, Charles Busta, Misty Radue, Chris Budeski, and Jim Oberhofer; Board of Park Commission Member – Debbie Deagen; Guests – Mrs. Farnham, and Sonya Berg; and Staff – Fair Manager Sue Shockley and Commission Assistant Glenda Howze.

The meeting was called to order at 5:05PM and introductions made.

Ms. Deagen explained to the Fair Board members that the Board of Park Commission (BOPC) wanted to meet to touch base on the current work of both entities, look for areas of possible duplication of efforts and identify potential areas where the two might work together. The BOPC is currently working on a master plan for the Regional Park and future master planning for Parks and Recreation for the whole County. Due to workloads and other priorities, there has been little staffing support from the County. Funding is a big issue. The County has contributed limited funds to the Commission for completion of their work products. Potential funding sources are cash-in-lieu funds, the Open Space Bond, and contributions from non-profit organizations and various Home Owner Associations. Currently the BOPC has a conceptual plan for the Regional Park developed by FORParks, which includes an amphitheatre, ball fields, Skate Park, and other amenities. Ms. Deagen stated that if the Fair Board is looking at including any of these items at the Fairgrounds, then the BOPC wouldn't want to duplicate them unless there is adequate demand for the duplication. They are also looking at possibly contracting for maintenance for the Park with someone.

Mr. Budeski asked if the Regional Park is City of County. Ms. Deagen confirmed that it is County and was purchased with the County Open Space Bond monies. Mr. Brekke asked who is developing the Park right now. Ms. Deagen explained that the current development is part of the initial buy-sell agreement with the seller/developer. They are required in that agreement to pay for the amphitheatre, parking lot (400 lots), trail system (6000 square feet), and two ponds. The buy-sell items are almost complete. FORParks, a non-profit organization, has been assisting as well. Ms. Deagen also explained that the

Regional Park is primarily to serve the lower valley and the BOPC wants to make sure that they aren't duplicating any of the services offered by the Fairgrounds.

Mr. Brekke stated that funding might be the only area of competition. The Fair Board has discussed utilizing Open Space money, but is concerned about regulations that might come along with that and impact or restricts the ability of the Fairgrounds to expand as they have planned. Mr. Oberhofer asked what the anticipated use of the amphitheatre is at this time. Ms. Deagen explained that they anticipate it used for outdoor concerts, plays and it has estimated seating for 300 people.

Mr. Busta inquired about the fundraising efforts and success of the BOPC. Ms. Deagen explained that the BOPC has not done any fundraising, only the FORParks group. Once the buy-sell agreement has been satisfied, the maintenance of the Park will most likely be handed over to the BOPC. The BOPC has considered going out for a maintenance levy in 2008, but with the Jail issue still pending, they have decided not to pursue the levy at this time. Cash-in-lieu is the only funding source other than non-profit contributions at this time.

Mr. Budeski asked if drainage issues have been addressed for the trail system. Ms. Deagen noted that the BOPC has worked with Ron Dingman from the City of Bozeman and Gary Vodehnal from GVLTA on this issue. They are trying to get a final survey on the grading now that the other work is complete on the property. Mr. Budeski encouraged the BOPC to make sure that the final grading and drainage issues are complete before putting in the trail system or it might mean the loss of a lot of money if things aren't taken care of properly.

Mr. Brekke noted that the Fairgrounds has limited Funds available. Mr. Oberhofer addressed the issue of duplication of efforts. He noted that the Fair Board is currently considering a 2nd ice rink that would be specifically for ice and a covered facility. There is also a proposal for an administration area at the north end of this facility. The other proposal on the table is for the previously mentioned Event Center for indoor games, bull riding, etc. This facility would have dirt floor that could be covered for other activities. The estimated seating is 6500. This facility could possibly be in "competition" with the amphitheatre for some types of events. He also explained the plan to put in new bathrooms that will connect the exhibit buildings and allow better facilities for use in emergency situations. Ms. Shockley also noted that soccer fields and a swimming pool have also been discussed but are

not on the current plan. A trail system with ponds has also been a note of discussion. Ms. Shockley reiterated that funding is most likely to be the biggest area of competition. She also noted that Mike Harris has borrowed the Fairgrounds equipment a few times for use at the Regional Park. The Fairgrounds is trying to become more parks like and has changed their logo to indicate they are now an "Events Park." Becoming more park-like requires more maintenance and equipment, which means more money needed as well. There may be some competition with the out-door arena which has some covered seating and significant amps to allow for concerts, etc.

Mr. Brekke noted that the Fairgrounds has a program to schedule use of various buildings and areas of the facility. It will take money and staff to provide this service for the Regional Park, as well as for equipment to maintain. If it were possible to combine these resources to benefit both the Regional Park and Fairgrounds, this might benefit both entities. If additional crew were hired to assist with the Regional Park, they could be put to use more at the Fairgrounds during key events.

Ms. Deagen stated that the BOPC anticipates that at some point the County will have the capacity to maintain parks. The BOPC is working with other cities to determine if it would be feasible to combine resources and efforts. The long-term goal is to visit with the other municipalities about their needs and eventually develop a regional concept with benefit for all. The details have to be ironed out.

Mr. Brekke encouraged the BOPC to make sure that the amphitheatre has enough electricity to suffice the desired activities. Ms. Deagen said that the power and emergency access had been looked into previously. Ms. Shockley noted that the group running the Legion Baseball Field at the Fairgrounds wants to start holding outdoor concerts too.

Discussion took place regarding skate parks. Ms. Shockley stated that the Fairgrounds had a version of one once and it was a nightmare from a maintenance and security standpoint. Ms. Deagen stated that the master plan is still conceptual and has not been approved. The preliminary plans and discussions have included soccer and baseball fields, YMCA, Dinosaur Playground, Skatepark, amphitheatre, ponds, trails, picnicking areas, and butterfly garden. The ball fields and outdoor arena may have some overlap, but there will probably always be call for more ball fields. Mr. Brekke noted that maintenance of ball fields is the biggest problem. Ms. Deagen stated that County residents

want different services and our two entities should strive to work together to supply and serve the residents. She noted that the Fair Board and Foundation have done excellent work and have a great track record of success. Maintenance should probably be the preliminary discussions – who will maintain the parks? The BOPC and Fair Board could possibly look at a levy that could be for both entities, but not until after the Jail issue is resolved.

Mr. Brekke said that the Fair Board would not be willing to take Fair monies and give it to the Park Commission, but the two could work together for maintenance and equipment. Ms. Deagen suggested that perhaps in the interim the BOPC might contract for maintenance services with the Fairgrounds? She stated that they'd like to explore all options. Ms. Deagen also reported that in May the BOPC will be hosting a kick-off process to create a template for what the Community wants to see at the Regional Park. The Fair Board is welcome to attend and participate as well.

Mr. Oberhofer suggested that the BOPC consider joining hands with the Bozeman Parks Department since the Regional Park is so close to other city parks. Ms. Deagen noted that Mike Harris is working with the City on some maintenance options at this time.

Mr. Busta asked if the BOPC has considered lighting of such a large park and the security issues it might have. Ms. Deagen said that this would be something desired but probably not possible for a long time into the future. Ms. Radue inquired about the parameters of the trails. Ms. Deagen stated that she hadn't seen any indication of equestrian use of the trails on the master plan. Mr. Brekke commented that it is important to remember that master plans tend to be working/dynamic documents. Ms. Shockley stated that it is great to talk about working together. Things happen and things don't happen because people don't work together and/or communicate.

The group discussed surveys. Ms. Shockley stated that the Fairgrounds has been involved in multiple surveys. A senior marketing group from the College of Ag at MSU completed a needs assessment for outdoor recreation a couple years ago. They participated in a Fish, Wildlife and Parks total outdoor recreation survey. They had a feasibility study completed for the event center outside of rodeos. They also had one done last year on perception and awareness of the Fairgrounds facility and an individual senior from MSU did a survey on Community Needs. Mr. Brekke encouraged BOPC to go through the university and make use of students that need projects such as this.

Ms. Shockley explained that the surveys have been completed multiple ways – county-wide, one on one, focus groups, mail in, and phone. Ms. Deagen noted that the BOPC is looking at getting into the Fish, Wildlife and Parks survey cycle and/or using MSU. She also suggested perhaps this is another area that the two entities might join forces and glean information that would be pertinent to both.

Mr. Busta asked if the BOPC plans to charge for use of the Regional Park facilities such as the amphitheatre. Ms. Deagen stated that she believes Mike Harris is looking at it as a revenue generator for operations and maintenance. This hasn't been determined yet. They are also hoping that a civic group might take the amphitheatre on as a project and put benches in, etc. Mr. Busta noted that he is from Great Falls and they have an amphitheatre by the river that is used for concerts and other community events. It is free and does not serve as a revenue generator. It is also a City park, though and is most likely maintained by tax dollars. Ms. Shockley stated that it is really hard to charge for outdoor activities.

Mr. Brekke stated that the Fair Board is willing to keep an open door to working with the BOPC on joint efforts.

Ms. Deagen stated that she would make sure that the Fair Board receives a copy of the conceptual plan by May and the master plan that is drafted from the Community planning session.