

MINUTES
CITY OF WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, MONTANA
PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
JUNE 24, 2025

ACTION ITEMS

All:

Help Jordan and Emma with the grand-reopening celebration as called upon.

Not sure who:

- Explore the costs to repair/replace the sign at Joanna's Park.
- Adopt a Spot: Finish getting agreements signed for next year. Get binder & agreements with the City, place recognition signs.

Tressa Blair –

Cost estimate per linear foot for fence (and wiggle gate) at Spike's

Jen Frazer

Community Garden Estimated Cost

Jordan Kibbee

Plans for Springs Park grand re-opening celebration.

Emma Hensley

Help Jordan Kibbee with Grand Re-Opening Celebration plans.

Pattie Berg

- Follow up with City as described below
- Speak with the Golf Board about formalizing cross country skiing on the Golf Course.
- Get cost estimates as described below.
- Follow up with Girl Scouts on Adopt a Spot Site.
- Review City Attorney's email regarding Committee Ethics rules; update Handbook as necessary.

Call to Order, Roll Call, Additional Agenda items

Chair Tressa Blair called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Roll Call: Chair Blair, Members Jen Frazer, Emma Hensley, and Jordan Kibbee

Also Present: Pattie Berg, City Council Liaison to the Parks Advisory Committee

Chair Blair asked that any additional agenda items be placed on hold until the next meeting.

Approval of Minutes

Liaison Berg asked that the May 20, 2025 meeting Minutes be amended to reflect that Maddie Adams' last name is Adams. With this change, on a motion made by Chair Blair and seconded by Emma Hensley, the Minutes of the May 20, 2025 Committee Meeting were approved as amended, and the Minutes of the June 6, 2025 meeting were approved as submitted

Update on Grand Reopening Celebrations

Emma Hensley provided a flyer, showing an event date of July 10th 2025. Discussion was held regarding when to hold this event. Liaison Berg noted that Shane Sereday had offered to provide volunteer labor, and sod at his cost, to sod rather than seed the area disrupted by the construction. He is not available to, and does not recommend installing, the sod before the 4th of July. He said he had to do some irrigation work first, so the sod could be installed by July 10th. Once the sod is installed, it needs to be left wet for 2 weeks, and not walked on.

Liaison Berg asked the Committee whether it wanted to continue to plan to have the event on July 10th, with the understanding that the grass could not be walked on, or to schedule it for a later date. Berg expressed a concern about another delay, both as it relates to the Thrivent grant, and the T-Mobile Grant. While the delays have been at no fault of the city, she is worried that another delay may create a negative perception with T-Mobile. Discussion:

- It would be nice to have this project done, but if T-Mobile wants to see a complete project, the event should probably be delayed.
- The Thrivent card doesn't expire for 2 years, but Berg has sent an inquiry to Thrivent about how long the card will be active.
- The preparations for Red Ants Pants begins shortly after the 4th of July, making the rest of July a bad time for additional events.
- August is a slow time of the year, and people seem to be looking for things to do.

On a motion made by Jen Frazer and seconded by Jordan Kibbee, the Committee decided to hold the grand reopening on Thursday, August 7, 2025.

Year in Review

Review of Goals and Budgets

The committee reviewed its 2025 action plan, the two-year strategic plan, the "projects" plan versus actual figures, and funds remaining by funding source. With the exception of the completion of work at Bair Park and getting a handrail at Joanna's Park installed, all of the goals are either accomplished, or are on the track to be completed by the fall. All the projects are being completed at or under budget.

Liaison Berg explained she and the Mayor will meet after July 4th to discuss what will happen with Bair Park. She has asked the Mayor to make sure that the funding that was set aside for Bair Park in FY24-25 not lost at the end of the fiscal year, which is June 30. She will be getting cost estimates for the installation of the Los Arboles, and addressing the playground footprint and ground covering. She indicated that it may be necessary to forgo recycling the monkey bars by installing them at Bair Park, but this will still be a very nice neighborhood park.

Other accomplishments =

Parks Master Plan - In FY24-25:

- The Parks Master Plan was on 13 Committee agendas;
- The Committee devoted 37 hours (55 'person hours') of its time meeting with Great West staff, and reviewing, editing and updating the draft plans submitted by Great West.
- The Committee held two open houses soliciting public comment of the draft plan.

Committee members also spent innumerable hours recruiting citizens to complete the community surveys, which resulted in over 180 survey responses. The outcome of this work is an excellent report with statistically valid information, which means it can be relied on for decision making purposes..

What still needs done

Spike's Happy Trails:

- Under the quit claim, the city is required to fence Spike's Happy Trails. Joni Short has said she will be running horses on their property, so it is important to prove up the quit claim. It was also mentioned

that property owners to the south of Spike's are encroaching on the city's streets, so it's important that the City "claims" the land while it still can.

- For these reasons, and because it was on the 24-25 Action Plan but not completed, the Committee felt it was important to firm up the quit claim before taking on any new projects.
- There are noxious weeds inside the Park, which need to be treated regardless of whether the quit claim is satisfied.
- Discussion was held regarding the type of fencing that would: 1) be appropriate for a park; and 2) keep horses out. Chair Blair noted they will be installing Jack Leg fence on their property to the west of Spike's.
- The east side fence also needs replaced, and a 'traffic control device', such as a wiggle gate, needs to be installed. This would keep 4-wheelers and the like out, but would also create a formal place to the Park.
- If the City installed Jack Leg fence on the north and east boundaries, and Blairs install the same fencing on the west side, the fencing would match. That is an ideal situation
- Chair Blair will get a per linear foot estimate to install a Jackleg fence, including labor and a wiggle gate for Spike's Happy Trails the park.

Handrails at Joanna's Park - The Liaison will check with the Mayor regarding the status of this work.

Adopt a Spot - Since Kelly Huffield has decided to step away from the Committee, someone will need to take over this program. For now, Liaison Berg will follow up with Girl Scouts on the Bair Park *Adopt a Spot* site.

New projects/needs

- Address Need for Tree Board? Liaison Berg noted that Ms. Frazer had earlier reported that the absence of an active tree board could eventually have a negative effect on the City's ability to get grant money for trees. Berg suggested that the Parks Committee could take on Tree Board duties, if that would satisfy Grantor needs. The Committee consensus was that adding Tree Board duties seemed to be a good fit for a parks committee. To be further discussed.
- Master Plan Projects/Needs –
 - Parks Employee Certifications recommended in draft Master Plan:
 - Playground inspections certification or contract – Liaison Berg will find out the cost of getting this certification, and hiring certified inspectors.
 - Arborist certification - Jen Frazer noted that DNRC will be coming to town to provide some basic arboriculture training.
 - Low-hanging Fruit:
 - Nets for a multi-use opportunity at Springs Park - The master plan estimated the cost of soccer nets at \$500. However, it was the committee's recollection that Kevin Anglin said nets would cost closer to \$1,200. Liaison Berg will research these costs.
 - Bike racks at Springs Park and Joanna's park - It was suggested that the vocational education classes could build these racks. It was also mentioned that 4-H clubs are discussing having their members participate in more community service projects
 - Cross Country Skiing - Liaison Berg will talk with golf board members to see if they are still open to letting the City sign a cross country ski loop on the course. This would allow the public to use the area, while keeping sensitive areas, like the greens, off limits. Berg noted that the course is being used for skiing, without limitations, so this could be a win-win for the City and the golf board.

- Ice skating Rink - In the '70s, there were a couple ice skating rinks that were created by grading below the surface of the ground, and filling the area with water. The cost of that would be minimal. A hockey rink in a box was priced at approximately \$10,000.
- Community garden - Jen Frazer was involved in creating a community garden in Miles City, so she will explore the cost to create one in WSS. It was suggested that the undeveloped parkland along Wall Street would be a good location for this.

Longer Term Projects/Projects to be planned for so ready to go when funds become available.

- McStravick Park – Liaison Berg noted that, within the next 5-10 years, the surface at McStravick Park will need replaced. Depending on the product used, the cost will be \$15,000 to \$35,000. The City will need to have a plan to pay for this, which may mean setting aside some funds each year in the parks capital projects fund.
- Spike's Happy Trails –Committee members shared their visions for what this park will offer, and how it would be developed. Discussion:
 - In lieu of and/or prior to the development of a 'formal' nature park, start small. This will get the park in use, and will get the public excited about the possibilities, so they will support future development.
 - Initially, a park could be created by building an entrance, installing signs, and mowing a path (as opposed to developing formal walkways) for the public. A smaller, but accessible, path could be created at the same time, possibly using asphalt.
 - Following a public tour of the park which showed a looped trail within the park.
 - Some cleanup is needed now inside the park, such as removing remnants of old fencing. It was suggested the old barbed wire could be crafted into hearts and sold, as a fundraiser.
 - Grants are available for developing trails, including the land and water conservation fund, and the recreation trails program.
 - Any work done will need to meet applicable regulations, such as any relevant DEQ review requirements.
- Combination splash pad/ice rink - The Committee discussed creating a multi-purpose facility which includes an ice skating rink and splash pad, possibly at Bair Park. Potential costs were not discussed; however, the Master Plan estimated the cost of an ice skating rink somewhere between \$500 and more than \$10,000, and the cost of a splash pad to range from \$15,000 to \$35,000.
- Dog Park - Given the number of comments in the community survey, the Committee was asked whether it should plan for a dog park. It was the consensus of the Committee that this was recently reviewed, and that nothing had changed which would now support the City developing a dog park. Dog park users are still free to form a group, to come to the City for permission to form a dog park, or to seek options, such as using some portion of the rodeo grounds, for a dog park.

<p style="text-align: center;">Looking Ahead: FY25-26 Budget Request</p>

Given the discussion above, Liaison Berg asked the Committee: "If you had \$35,000 for parks projects in FY25-26, what would you want to spend it on?"

Committee members will collect estimates as noted above, and the Committee will prepare a FY25-26 budget request at its next meeting.

Public Comment/Good of the Order Comments
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Liaison Berg reported that she had just attended a webinar entitled *Navigating Alternative Funding in Times of Disruption*. The main takeaway was that, in these times of “disruption”, there are still funds available, and it’s essential to keep on planning, so you have ‘shovel ready’ plans when money becomes available, either at the federal or state level, or through foundations.

Adjournment/Set Next Meeting Date
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The next meeting date will be Tuesday, July 8, 2025 at 5:00 at City Hall. Agenda items will include election of officers and a discussion of the Committee's 25-26 parks project budget request.

This will be Dudley Deal’s first meeting. Berg will get him an orientation packet. She will also get that packet to Emma Hensley.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.