

## **PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE**

**August 4, 2009**

**4:15 P.M.**

Councilman Gilbert, Chairman, called the meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee to order with Councilpersons Robinson, Scott, Rico and Berz present. Councilpersons Ladd, Benson and McGary joined the meeting later. City Attorney Michael McMahan and Shirley Crownover, Assistant Clerk to the Council, were also present.

### **NAMING OF PUBLIC SPACES POLICY**

Adm. Zehnder recognized that there was no policy in place to deal with naming public spaces; that TPL had taken a look at this, and a situation had arisen in Heritage Park in regards to a commercial venture. The need for qualifying support was discussed along with limits and parameters. Questions about the downside was addressed by Councilwoman Ladd mentioning McKenzie Arena and also the need for a filter and possibly an escape clause. Carla Askonos was present in the interest of this policy. It was noted that we need a system for dealing with this, maybe also including a policy for those who had rendered services with thoughts to engaging citizens in this endeavor.

### **RESOLUTIONS ON NEXT WEEK'S AGENDA**

**Resolution (b)** authorizes payment in the amount of \$24,000 to Chattanooga Parent Magazine for advertisements to run 8 times during the school year promoting the Parks and Recreation Department's programs. Councilwoman Robinson expressed high praise with Councilwoman Scott wanting to know the circulation (40,000) and if the website was available. Councilwoman Berz felt that an "untapped" group were people who visit our city, mentioning providing this information in hotels and motels. Adm. Zehnder expressed that not a lot of money went into advertising, as it is very expensive, with Councilwoman Berz expressing that since Chattanooga is a "green" city that we needed much more coverage on Parks and Recreation—that the health of the community is involved, and she wanted to know what it would cost to have a really big campaign about recreation in our city. Adm. Zehnder responded that he would be happy to peruse this. A consolidated effort was mentioned with EAC and Neighborhood Services, with distribution being mentioned as a big expense.

**Resolution (c)** involves a mini-grant available through "JumpStart" from Met Life Corporation in the amount of \$1,000.00 to provide basic computer and technology training to staff.

### **PARK RULES, DOG ACCESS**

Several guests were present in the interest of this portion, with Adm. Zehnder noting that they had been working with a group of downtown homeowners who want the opportunity to take their dogs for walks; there is some prohibition to this and also the issue of cleanliness. Irresponsible dog owners make problems but it was determined that some adjustments might need to be made. Brochures were provided (and made a part of this minute material) by Rhonda Seeber on Guidelines for pets and also a pamphlet on Pet Waste and Water Quality. While most cities permit pets in various places, parks are for everyone and some have a fear of dogs—however pets are a way of life and companionship is important. It has been determined that we need to loosen up and allow for some changes in our rules and regulations. The areas open to these new rules will be Riverside Drive, Ross' Landing, Power Alley area, parking lot fringe area, city marina area and the Hunter Museum grounds.

Councilwoman Ladd felt that since we are encouraging downtown living that dogs needed a place to go. Councilwoman Robinson noted that they already could be on city streets and sidewalks, just not in Coolidge Park and the Walnut Street Bridge. Councilman Rico noted that we have a Dog Park. Councilman McGary wanted to know where we stand in relation to much larger cities that have a far more lenient policy.

**Karen Walsh of McKamey** felt that part of the problem would be enforcement and stated that McKamey would help with this.

Councilwoman Berz followed up with enforcement with Councilwoman Robinson stating that since we have so many more people living downtown that we need to grow as a city, and she was in favor of trying some new changes, mentioning sanitary stations.

Adm. Zehnder noted that we have 60 parks in the City that are pet-friendly, with the exception of downtown; that in order to see a change we need more education, signage, pet stations, and an understanding with our judges. He went over where the newly opened areas would be, which would not include Coolidge Park nor the Walnut Street Bridge. Attorney McMahan added also the Aquarium and the Passage would not be included.

Councilwoman Robinson was in favor of the changes. Councilwoman Scott stated that dogs and dog owners can do the right thing; that owners need to be responsible, and she felt we could do this with the right enforcement, rules and education.

Rhonda Seeber of Parks and Recreation acknowledged the presence of Karen Roach, Ruth Holmberg, and Vanessa Taylor.

**Vanessa Taylor**, a newcomer to the city stated that she was impressed with the pedestrian traffic; that people living downtown don't have backyards and would be responsible; that the Dog Park was great but involved getting in a car rather than walking; that she would love to be able to have her pets on the Walnut Street Bridge, which would be a wonderful advantage.

Adm. Zehnder stated that we needed to get the press and the public to buy into this.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.