

City Council

Special Meeting Minutes

January 24, 2023
City Hall, Council Chambers
749 Main Street
6:00 PM

Call to Order – Mayor Maloney called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. **Roll Call** was taken and the following members were present:

City Council: ***Mayor Dennis Maloney***
Mayor Pro Tem Deborah Fahey
Councilmember Kyle Brown
Councilmember Chris Leh
Councilmember Maxine Most

Absent: ***Councilmember Caleb Dickinson***

Staff Present: ***Jeff Durbin, City Manager***
Megan Davis, Deputy City Manager
Adam Blackmore, Parks, Recreation, & Open Space Director
Abby McNeal, Parks Superintendent
Bryon Webber, Parks Planning & Project Manager
Ember Brignull, Open Space Superintendent
Meredyth Muth, City Clerk

DISCUSSION/DIRECTION – PARKS GENERAL MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN

Director Blackmore stated that in late 2021 the City awarded a contract to Studio CPG & Facility Engineering Associates to review the Parks Division maintenance and operating practices. They are here this evening to review the methodology, findings and recommendations.

Consultant Heather Noyes, Studio CPG, reviewed the project timeline noting there was a pause in the process due to the Marshall Fire. The process included surveys and stakeholder interviews. They then completed a deep data analysis. She stated there has been staffing changes in the department in the last year and staff has already begun implementing some changes.

She reviewed the department and its assets. She noted that staff engagement in the process was significant and staff answered questions on many topics.

City of Louisville

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Maureen Roskoski, FEA, reviewed the baseline for the Parks Department and the benchmarking of the department compared to other cities. The process included an organizational assessment that aligned it with best practices for maintenance processes. She stated recent changes are already moving the department towards more optimized processes.

Roskoski noted maintenance and asset data has been a lacking previously; once that information is better known it will be easier to maintain what the City has. They also looked at staffing levels in the Parks Division and noted the staff is over performing for the number of staff they have versus the work load but this is not sustainable.

She stated they also looked at peer data and found that Louisville has about four times the number of parks per capita but are handling that with about 75% of the average budget; doing more with less.

She reviewed the eight recommendations for improvement:

1. Implement Consistent Maintenance Processes, Levels of Service, and Customer Expectations
2. Develop a Preventative Maintenance Plan
3. Adopt software to manage maintenance workflow (Lucity)
4. Implement a staffing plan consistent with benchmarking data
5. Develop a system to document and track actual staff task time
6. Complete the inventory of assets, refinement of accuracy of data
7. Conduct parks and recreation specific resilience planning, that includes security, emergency preparedness, and continuity of operations.
8. Implement a performance management system using KPI'S

Public Comments

Josh Cooperman, Louisville, stated he would have liked the consultant to consult with the Sustainability Advisory Board. He encouraged the Council to consider imbuing sustainability goals into the Parks operations.

Cynthia Corne, Louisville, stated she agreed with the previous speaker and would like new park projects designed to be sustainable. Louisville is a parks and open space town and we need to take care of these.

Helen Moshak, Louisville, applauded the commitment to maintenance and operations and asked the Council to consider making the same commitment to the Open Space Division which has many of the same issues with heavy use and under staffing.

Mayor Pro Tem Fahey would like to see a plan for what is going to happen and who will be doing which items. She also would like to see how there can be more coordination with the Parks Board, the Open Space Board, and the Sustainability Board on these issues.

Mayor Maloney noted the report shows that staff is over performing compared to funding. He also agreed with the public comments that sustainability needs to be considered in this process and that a similar process is needed for the open space division as well.

DISCUSSION/DIRECTION – OPEN SPACE & PARKS SALES TAX RENEWAL

Director Blackmore stated the existing Open Space & Parks 10-year 3/8% sales and use tax, approved in its current form in 2012 by Louisville voters, will expire at the end of 2023. This sales and use tax was originally implemented in 1993. The tax was modified in 2002 to allow the tax revenues to be used for the operation and maintenance of open spaces and parks; the percentage and length of term remained the same. This same percentage, term, and purpose was approved again by the Louisville voters in 2012.

The Parks, Recreation & Open Space Department, in coordination with the Finance Department and City Manager's Office, requests City Council consideration and direction as the tax will be "sunsetting" this year. Council can consider and actions needed to place this renewal on the 2023 ballot.

Public Comments

Sherry Sommer, Louisville, stated people in Louisville support open space and people expect some of the money should be set aside for acquisition.

Jessamine Fitzpatrick, Louisville, stated it is a critical time for this to be considered as the tax will sunset this year. We need to get this right. She suggested considering changes to the language on the ballot. She noted the City's boards and outside organizations could offer help.

Cindy Bedell, Louisville, stated she hopes the ballot issue will pass and would like people to understand there are different types of open space. She would like to encourage habitat preservation in the use of open space.

Josh Cooperman, Louisville, expressed his support for renewing the sales tax. We love the open space and need to maintain it. He suggested using some of the funds for sustainable uses in parks.

Helen Moshak, Louisville, suggested the City find experts to help the City look at ways to split the tax or change the tax in ways that could expand its uses. She supports getting community input in the process.

Cynthia Corne, Louisville, stated everyone in Louisville values open space and parks. She stated there needs to be good communication to the residents about this ballot issue. We need to get the question right.

Mayor Pro Tem Fahey stated it is critical to get this on the ballot in November and get it passed. She would like input from the City's boards, staff, and experts on how to do this ballot issue.

Councilmember Brown agreed with Mayor Pro Tem Fahey. He noted the need to continuing to maintain the level of funding and service.

Councilmember Leh agreed with his colleagues and wants to make sure we put forward the best measure and don't leave this to chance. He would like to make sure equity is included in the conversation around the tax and how it can benefit all people in the community. He noted the great open space in the county has limited the space available for affordable housing and that should also be in the conversation.

Councilmember Most stated she wants to make sure the affordable housing conversation does not get convoluted with the open space conversation. The parks and open spaces make us a more open and accessible community.

Mayor Maloney stated this amenity is highly valued in Louisville. We all want it on the ballot and the funding from this tax is paramount to maintain parks and open space.

Mayor Maloney suggested the Council create a task force to work on this. It should include two members from the Open Space Advisory Board, two members from the Parks and Public Landscaping Advisory Board, and one from the Sustainability Advisory Board as well as possible representation from the former EDI Task Force and/or EDI staff. The group could take input and craft ideas on how to create the best ballot language to put in front of community members. He would like it to also include himself and Mayor Pro Tem Fahey.

Councilmember Most asked that the boards consider EDI in their appointments.

Staff will work with the boards to have each one nominate who will serve on the Task Force.

Staff will bring back a formal resolution to create the task force at a future Council meeting.

ADJOURN

Members adjourned at 7:23 pm.

Dennis Maloney, Mayor

Meredyth Muth, City Clerk