

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
May 19, 2021
Minutes

Members Present:

Loren Anthony
Tyson Nielsen
Brett Remsberg
Camielle Austin

Members Absent:

Russ McCaig

Visitors:

Commission Representative:

Kendra Wilkinson

Staff Present:

Kevin Wishart Don Argo David Dillner Tabitha Sharp

Brett moved to accept the March 17, 2021 minutes as presented.

Tyson seconded the motion.

Motion carried 4 – 0.

YMCA Proposal

- Chair Loren Anthony stated that staff have told the board that a new proposal has been presented, he asked if the board was in favor of hearing the new proposal.
- The board voted 4 – 0 to hear the new proposal.
- Matt Engel stated that after seeing the results of the survey, the YMCA felt that there was significant issue with the cost and so they have submitted a new proposal with the costs changed. He stated that they have changed the recreation sports cost to \$25 for members and non-members. He stated that the rate is more affordable to the middle class in El Dorado, and they will continue to offer scholarships to anyone who applies. He stated that the other thing that changed is that there would be no free sport activity in the first year because the rate structure is more affordable now.
- Matt stated that he felt that there is still a lot of confusion surrounding the proposal and he hopes that everyone understands that the YMCA is trying to provide a good program that helps the community.
- Camielle Austin asked if the price will remain at \$25 in the future.
- Matt stated that he anticipates it will. He stated that if there are increases, they will be minor \$1 or \$2 increases over time.
- Brett Remsberg stated that he was concerned that the survey was over a different proposal, and changing the proposal now was not going to be reflective of that survey.
- Matt stated that he knew it was a last minute change, but he met with his supervisors last night and received approval earlier today. He stated that if the board looks at the other issues in the survey, he felt that their proposal could address those.
- Brett stated that he was concerned that competitiveness is not enough to keep the program going.
- Matt stated that he felt the divisions provide a spot for every kid and other programs will supplement any lag in the more competitive leagues. He stated that he felt sports were important for child development.

- Loren asked if there was a proposal like this in the greater YMCA area.
- Matt stated that he felt each city was different. He wasn't aware of others, but they were providing this proposal out of respect for their relationship with the city.
- Camielle asked if the YMCA would be willing to do another video and survey.
- Matt stated that they feel strongly that their proposal is good and he didn't feel it was necessary to do another survey.
- Brett stated that he didn't feel like the survey answered any of the questions.
- Matt stated that there were questions that weren't on the survey that would have given us better information.
- Mike Payton stated that his family has participated in El Dorado sports from the time that they moved here. He stated that when his children were ready for more competitive leagues, he sought out other opportunities. He stated that he is against the proposal, he felt that the connections in the community and with the recreation department staff are solid. He felt that the same comradery would not be available through the YMCA. He stated that to have good competitive sports, there needed to be a relationship with other areas and he felt there wasn't enough information on the different levels to make a good decision.
- Loren stated that as a citizen of El Dorado, the recreation department has done a great job working for the children of El Dorado. He asked Kevin if the recreation board could continue as they were.
- Kevin stated that they could, they would continue to work and bring changes and new programming to the recreation board.
- Loren asked about offering competitive programming.
- Kevin stated that more competitive programs are already available through the YMCA and travel leagues today. He stated that there is nothing that prevents both entities offering programming moving forward. He stated that he believes that the community will choose what is best for them. He felt it wasn't an adversarial relationship with the YMCA, it was just an opportunity for choice in the City of El Dorado.
- Loren moved that the El Dorado recreation department continue to offer programming as they have and to reject the proposal from the YMCA.
- Camielle seconded the motion.
- The board felt that their questions had been answered.
- Motion carried 4 – 0.

Spring Activities

- Kevin stated that we are a week into the baseball/softball season. He stated that they have been rained out this week, but will continue when the weather allows. He stated that there are 428 participants between t-ball and 15U softball/baseball leagues. He stated that the numbers are on par with the 2019 season.
- Kevin stated that tennis is being offered this summer. He stated that there are 27 in camp and 12 in the league, there is some cross over between enrollment.
- Loren asked what the age groups were.
- Don stated incoming 3rd – 5th and incoming 6th – 8th.
- Kevin stated that registrations are still coming in.
- Camielle asked if the online registrations are available yet.
- Kevin stated that it will be live soon.

- Kevin stated that lifeguard training is beginning this week. He stated that graciously the YMCA has offered to allow some of the training to happen in their indoor pool. He stated that they will be done the day the pool opens, May 29th.
- Kevin stated that the splash pads will be open on the 29th of May.
- Kevin stated that we have hired approximately 70 young people for the summer activities.
- Kevin stated that Brian has been working with the umpires and getting them trained. He stated that the staff is young, but they are doing well.
- Loren asked if they had enough lifeguards.
- Kevin stated that there are 18, but they would prefer 23 or 24.
- Brett asked if they anticipated more traffic at the pool this year.
- Kevin stated that they will be fully open this year. He stated that they will be closed on Mondays and offer free swim days on Wednesdays. He stated that they are limiting private parties because of the limited staff. He stated that lifeguard shortage is not just a local problem, he stated that it is a problem nationwide.

New Business

- Tyson Nielsen asked how he could do a fundraiser for the recreation department. He stated that his team plays in a handful of tournaments each year that provide funding for the parks and recreation departments. He stated that they often go to small towns that don't have nearly what we have.
- Kevin stated that he felt that the planning could begin any time, but felt that the City Manager would have to answer the fundraising part.
- David stated that he felt it could be done.
- Tyson stated that he thought they could recruit ten or fifteen teams and have a small tournament.
- David stated that the Destination Services Coordinator was ready to start recruiting tournaments and could help.
- Tyson complimented the softball fields, he stated that they were better than most of the surrounding fields.
- Kendra asked if she could make a few comments on the survey. She stated that there was 62% in favor of a change in the leagues. She stated that she read the survey and all of the comments as well as attending both public meetings. She stated that most of the reactions were not from people who read the proposal. She stated that she didn't feel that the recreation board had listened to the proposal with an open mind. She stated that the recreation staff is woefully understaffed and we are asking them to do more with less. She stated that if they aren't willing to look at this proposal, the recreation board needs to talk to Kevin about staffing issues and present the City Commission with a proposal requesting more staff.
- Brett stated that it was not the job of the board to present the YMCA proposal.
- Camielle stated that if they were willing to go back to the public with the new proposal, she would consider changing her vote. She felt that a shortened survey would have provided her with more information for an informed vote.
- Tyson stated that he did not disagree that the department was understaffed. He stated that he also agreed that they tried to fix the money issues, but were not interested in going back to the public for more conversation. He didn't feel that he could make a decision without the input of the citizens.

- Loren stated that the question on individual sports stated that people were in favor of the city retaining the recreation programming. He stated that he didn't feel like the Y was trying to work with the city, they were just trying to take over the programming.
- Kendra asked David to tell the board how they could move forward.
- David stated that a conversation would be had about how to better staff the parks and recreation department and include that proposal in the budget being provided to the Commission. He stated that having a conversation about raising taxes is often difficult and there are needs in many departments, but the Commission would have to make that decision.
- Camielle asked Kevin what he needed for a full staff.
- Kevin stated that he couldn't answer that question at this time.

Director's Report

- Kevin stated that on June 23rd, there will be an event called the Forest Park Showcase. It will be a family friendly talent show.
- Kevin stated that the 4th of July event will take place on July 3rd in conjunction with the El Dorado Broncos game.
- Kevin stated that as mentioned before, the online registration system will be available soon. He stated that it is their intention to roll it out for fall events.

Adjourn 7:02 p.m.