

Covington: Unmatched quality of life



CITY OF COVINGTON SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA CITY COUNCIL JOINT STUDY SESSION WITH PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Council Chambers – 16720 SE 271st Street, Suite 100, Covington

Tuesday, June 11, 2013 - 6:00 p.m.

***Please note meeting start time ***

GENERAL INFORMATION:

The study session is an informal meeting involving discussion between and among the City Council, Commission (if applicable) and city staff regarding policy issues. Study sessions may involve presentations, feedback, brainstorming, etc., regarding further work to be done by the staff on key policy matters.

CALL CITY COUNCIL JOINT STUDY SESSION TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

ITEM(S) FOR DISCUSSION

1. Parks Priority Advisory Committee (PPAC) (Thomas)
2. Progress on PROS Plan Goals (Thomas)

PUBLIC COMMENT Speakers will state their name, address, and organization. Comments are directed to the City Council, not the audience or staff. Comments are not intended for conversation or debate and are limited to no more than four minutes per speaker. Speakers may request additional time on a future agenda as time allows.

ADJOURN

For disability accommodations call 253-480-2400 at least 24 hours in advance. For TDD relay service call (800) 833-6384 and ask the operator to dial 253-480-2400.

****Note* A Regular Council meeting will immediately follow at approximately 7:00 p.m.***

Agenda Items 1 and 2
Covington City Council Special Meeting
Date: June 11, 2013

SUBJECT: JOINT MEETING WITH THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

RECOMMENDED BY: Scott Thomas, Parks and Recreation Director

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. BPAC Charter
2. PROS Plan Executive Summary

PREPARED BY: Scott Thomas, Parks and Recreation Director

EXPLANATION:

The purpose of this joint meeting with the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council is to discuss major upcoming parks and recreation initiatives for the City, Commission and Department. Two topics for discussion include how to secure a stable ongoing source of funding, and progress toward achieving the goals established in the PROS Plan.

In January, at the annual Strategic Planning Summit, Council discussed the need for stable and sustainable funding for parks and recreation. Council envisioned a citizen-based effort to recommend strategies for obtaining the needed revenue, similar to the Budget Priorities Advisory Committee (BPAC). The new advisory group may include members of the Parks and Recreation Commission, former BPAC members and additional citizens. To what extent should the BPAC charter guide the parks and recreation charter? What is a desirable timeline?

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan was adopted three years ago. The plan outlined Covington's major parks and recreation challenges, key recommendations, and near term actions. Where do we stand half way through the life of the plan? What do we expect to accomplish in the next three years?

ALTERNATIVES:

None

FISCAL IMPACT:

None

CITY COUNCIL ACTION: ___ Ordinance ___ Resolution ___ Motion X Other

PROVIDE INPUT TO COMMISSION

REVIEWED BY: City Manager

ATTACHMENT 1

Budget Priorities Advisory Committee Charter

Purpose

- Educate and engage the community regarding mandated services, discretionary services, and the crucial role of the town center
 - Consider community meetings, surveys, social media, and focus groups
- Provide a report that includes:
 - City needs—both operating and capital
 - The community’s priorities—both operating and capital—within existing revenue
 - The community’s priorities for new revenue
 - The community’s willingness to support new revenue
 - The community’s preferred sources of new revenue
 - Recommendations
 - Include election date(s), if applicable

Structure

- 13 – 15 members
 - Significant representation of civic leaders, local business owners, and city registered voters.
 - May include city advisory commission members but must not include City Council members or City staff
 - Shall include one youth representative from each local high school
- Staff will seek nominations from City Council members, city advisory commission members, city staff, chamber of commerce, service clubs, and the community at-large
- Staff will propose members that represent a wide variety of people and viewpoints, including advocates and skeptics
- Council will consider staff’s recommendations and appoint the committee
- The committee chair will be selected by the Council
- The committee will designate a different member as vice chair

- Vacancies may be filled in like manner
- The city's finance director will serve as liaison between the committee and staff
- The city community relations coordinator will assist as applicable
- City Councilmembers and city staff will not attempt to influence committee recommendations
- The committee will sunset upon issuance of a final report (December 31, 2012), but no later than June 30, 2013, if Council chooses to extend the committee's sunset date

Duties

- Meet no less than once per month
- Abide by the Open Public Meetings Act
- Make decisions by consensus
 - Make decision by majority vote only when consensus is not possible
- Keep the community informed
 - Use common language, not government jargon
 - Consider the website, newspaper, newsletter, Facebook, etc.
- Use limited staff time efficiently i.e. focus on activities with a high return on investment
- Submit decisions cards for the 2014 budget process as applicable (no later than July 2013). If a ballot issue is recommended the timeframe may be earlier depending on the election date chosen.
- Give a verbal report to Council each month during Commission Reports as applicable
- Prepare a draft report for public review and comment
- Submit a final report to Council
 - Include minority reports as applicable



ATTACHMENT 2

Covington Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan

Promoting Community Fitness & Active Living

MAY 2010



Covington Parks, Recreation & Open Space (PROS) Plan

Promoting Community Fitness & Active Living

MAY 2010

“In addition to being a place to experience beauty in nature and preserve the ecological health of the community, parks can play a key role in the promotion of healthy and active lifestyles. Parks are an important public resource and careful thought should be devoted to determining how they should be modified to improve the health of our population. The current evidence suggests that there is enormous potential for parks to increase physical activity across the United States.”

*President’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports Research Digest
Series 9, No.1, March 2008*

Andrew Mowen, PhD; The Pennsylvania State University
Andrew Kaczynski, PhD; University of Waterloo
Deborah Cohen, MD, MPH; RAND Corporation



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

City Council

Mayor Margaret Harto
Mayor Pro-Tem Jeff Wagner
Councilor Marlla Mhoon
Councilor Mark Lanza
Councilor David Lucavish
Councilor Wayne Snoey
Councilor Jim Scott

Parks & Recreation Commission

Kollin Higgins, Chair
Liz Fast, Vice-Chair Dave Aldous
Conni Elliott Bryan Higgins
Martin Larson Steve Pand

City Staff

Derek Matheson, City Manager
Scott Thomas, Parks & Recreation Department Director
Pat Patterson, Recreation & Aquatics Manager
Ethan Newton, Aquatics Supervisor
Rachel Bahl, Senior Lifeguard

Consultant Team



Steve Duh, Project Manager
Mary Stewart
Kim Voros
Hannah Kapell



Su Midghall
Rebecca Ball



Gordon Wilson

Executive Summary

Introduction

Imagine Covington in 10 years, a walkable community with many options for healthy activity and facilities that serve as exceptional public gathering places and foster a sense of stewardship and pride. Consider a downtown plaza that acts as the community's living room and is the focal point for events and entertainment. Consider a pedestrian and bicycle friendly trail network that connects public facilities, such as the library, schools and parks, and that is built with safe routes, clear signage and access to the regional trails nearby. Consider expanded and accessible natural areas framed by local creeks and with environmental interpretive stations for outdoor education.

As a strategic road map for the future, this Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Plan envisions a city park system that will provide high-quality recreational opportunities for residents and visitors during the next decade and beyond. In addition to renovating and developing existing park lands, the plan calls for developing a system of interconnected shared-use trails and bikeways and enhancing recreation programming to serve a growing population. To provide planning and policy framework to support these efforts, the 2010 Covington PROS Plan includes:

- Goals and objectives for providing and maintaining services as the City continues to grow
- Summary of public outreach and community feedback
- Assessment of community and recreational needs
- Detailed analyses of the existing inventory including current conditions and management issues, along with a service area assessment and park gap analysis
- Capital improvements plan with projects ranked in order of priority
- Review of funding and implementation strategies

Major Challenges

Parks, trails, greenspaces, natural areas – these are essential elements of long-term community sustainability and a legacy for Covington's future. The fast pace of recent development and population growth reinforces the need to take seriously the City's role as an environmental steward and as a social steward, with the fundamental responsibilities to protect, maintain and enhance its natural resources, while also providing a rich environment to foster healthy, active and engaged citizens. In an effort to meet its vision for the future, several known challenges must be considered.

- **Funding Issues.** Expectations for parks and recreation services remain high in the minds of residents, and deservedly so, but operating and capital revenues are generally inadequate to meet public demand. The department must secure alternative funding to

enhance maintenance and renovate existing parks, establish a network of interconnected trails, acquire additional park land, and provide recreation opportunities to serve an ever growing community.

- **Maintaining Existing Facilities.** Residents voiced concerns with current maintenance levels, vandalism and surveillance. The need to reinvest in existing parks, specifically Jenkins Creek Park, was a recurring theme in public meetings. Any inability to address these issues will likely erode citizen support for the park and recreation system over time.
- **Active-Use Parks.** During the planning process, residents voiced a desire for more community park space to provide more sport fields, picnicking facilities and active recreation, in addition to smaller neighborhood parks with better geographic distribution. While site planning for Covington Community Park progresses, the City currently does not have a developed community park.
- **Increased Population.** By 2020, Covington's population is expected to exceed 20,000 people. Growth and development, while vital to the health of the local economy, place a strain on limited public funds for services and the availability of land for parks, trails and natural areas. While recent residential development projects have provided private parks throughout the City, larger areas of Covington are still unserved with parks within short walking distances.
- **Obesity-related health issues.** While statistics are not specifically available for Covington, increases in the rate of obesity are spurring a growing health epidemic - affecting recreation programming and the need to provide opportunities for active lifestyles. In the US, 66% of adults over 20 years of age are obese or overweight; for children between the ages of 6 and 11, 19% are overweight. In a 2007 report by the Washington State Department of Health, 60% of adults were obese or overweight, and 25% of 10th graders were overweight or at risk for becoming overweight.
- **Identity & Information.** While residents and local business people expressed their general support for Covington's nascent parks and recreation system, they voiced frustration about not knowing what the City has to offer in terms of programs and places to play, and they encouraged the City to more actively promote their offerings and support community events and activities.

While these challenges exist, they also provide a context to a set of new opportunities for enhancing Covington's park, trails and natural areas system and for expanding its recreation and health programming.

Major Recommendations

The key recommendations applied to the overall park and recreation system include the following:

- Establish a combined service standard for neighborhood and community parks of 8 acres per 1,000 people and an overall parks and natural areas service standard of 14 acres per 1,000.

- Acquire additional parkland to meet future demand, including one proposed community park and six neighborhood parks, along with a downtown plaza and natural area expansions.
- Explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.
- Explore options with Maple Valley, Black Diamond and King County for the development of a joint community facility for recreation, fitness and leisure activities
- Develop and implement minimum design and development standards for park and recreation amenities within private developments.
- Review and consider long-term, stable funding sources, to include analysis of support for new sources of revenue by the voting public. Revise and re-enact the park impact fee program as a means to finance new park and trail acquisition and development.

Bringing the Plan to Life

Specific near-term actions include the following:

- Providing routine maintenance on all park properties and on the Aquatic Center to keep them safe and enjoyable
- Constructing phase 1 of Covington Community Park
- Renovating and re-opening Jenkins Creek Park
- Providing high priority open swim programs, swim instruction and aquatic activities
- Pursuing partnerships to provide community events and festivals, health and fitness programs and informational and educational programs
- Updating and publishing the parks brochure and map; enhancing web site content
- Acquiring land for Town Square Park

This plan is a road map for providing high-quality, community-driven parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities in Covington during the next 20 years. It articulates the City's vision for parks and recreation, provides tangible support for policies in the City's comprehensive plan and sets reasonable priorities. It is also a repository of critical data and analyses that will serve as a valuable benchmark in all future planning efforts.