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Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Agenda

Lincoln Park Barn

January 5, 2023

12:00 PM

Call to Order

Approval of Minutes

Approve Minutes From December 1, 2022 Meeting

Regular Agenda Topics

Plaza Urrutia Historic Designation

Redlands Tail Race

Winter Park Hours

Bylaws Discussion

For the Good of the Community

Future Agenda Topics

Adjournment

Next Meeting Date

February 2, 2023

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Minutes Regular Meeting – December 1, 2022

Meeting Location: Barn – Lincoln Park

Roll Call

Board Members Present: William Findlay
Cindy Enos-Martinez
Kyle Gardner
Lily Grasifi
Gary Schroen
Austin Solko
Nancy Strippel
Lisa Whalin

Board Members Absent: Byron Wiehe
Abe Herman
Phil Pe'a

City Staff Present: Greg Caton, City Manager
Jodi Welch, Director of Finance
Ken Sherbenou, Director of Parks and Recreation
Emily Krause, Recreation Superintendent
Larry Manchester, Recreation Supervisor
Allison Little, Administrative Specialist

Meeting called to order by Lisa Whalin at 12:02 p.m.

Austin Solko made a motion to approve the minutes from the November 3 meeting. The motion was seconded by Cindy Enos-Martinez and approved unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 7 No 0

Supervisor Presentation – Larry Manchester

Larry Manchester introduced himself to the Board. He is the Recreation Supervisor in charge of Adult Sports, Aquatics, and Special Events. The City manages three aquatic facilities over the course of the year, Lincoln Park, Orchard Mesa, and the Town of Palisade's pool. This summer the Lincoln Park Moyer Pool opened on May 21 and closed on September 5. The pool ended at the season at 107% of swim lesson revenue projections and 113% of admission revenue projections. The Orchard Mesa pool, though currently experiencing challenges with the boiler is on track to end the year at 109% of swim lesson revenue and 113% of admission revenue projections. This was a really successful summer for staffing. Even though this is often an employee's first job, the staff is very bought in to the risk management program, the training, and exceeding the expectations of the unannounced safety audits.

Our team sports are coming back strong after Covid declines. There is a struggle with space for adult volleyball, though youth volleyball participation is strong. Cornhole, adult basketball and pickleball remain very popular (one pickleball tournament drew 115 teams). Adult softball ended 110% of budgeted revenue with the Fall season the largest in five years.

Special events are also returning to pre-Covid levels and the department has added a coordinator devoted to special events and a floating seasonal staff to support them. Most recently the Water Lights at night event was held at the butterfly pond in Las Colonias. We sold and floated 900 lanterns for this event.

Larry updated the board on CIP projects slated for the Lincoln Park pool including, pending budget approval, replastering of the pool and adding a second boiler. These improvements emphasize the City's commitment to maintaining and keeping our facilities running. The replastering project would be done before the facility opens so that the post replaster maintenance can be continued through the summer before the pool is buttoned up for the winter. Ken Sherbenou shared with the board that on top of his expertise in Aquatics and longevity with the department he is also serving as an interim Park Supervisor while the position vacated by Kyle Coltrinari is being recruited.

Board members wondered how to access more gym space at schools. Larry advised the board that school use is mostly driving by the intergovernmental agreements.

Vice Chair

Gary Schroen made a motion that Lily Grasifi fill the Vice Chair position. The motion was seconded by Cindy Enos-Martinez and approved unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 7 No 0

Orchard Mesa Pool Renovation

Ken Sherbenou talked with the board about the Orchard Mesa Pool renovation. The first article printed by the Daily Sentinel on Sunday, November 13 was fairly accurate. The City is under contract with an aquatic design firm. Ohlson Lavoie Corporation (OLC). This is a \$523,000 design process that includes construction documents and construction administration. So far the City has spent about \$40,000 on that process. Concurrently the City has been having ongoing conversation with the partners. In 2019 there was \$2.4M estimate for major mechanical renovation. Of the partners, Mesa County agreed to contribute and the School District declined. This is a jointly run facility and all the partners need to contribute. Right now one partner, very vocally, is refusing to participate.

Board members are concerned that this will have a negative impact on passing the Community Recreation Center. Ken Sherbenou reassured the board that the narrative that the City hasn't taken care of the facility is inaccurate. The City has been doing maintenance. The previous agreement didn't address major capital and the mechanical components from 1986 are wearing

out. The City has replastered, redone decking, and refurbished locker rooms, as well as maintained pool pumps and heaters and chemical distribution components. Similar to a car, you can replace oil and spark plugs and other parts but at some point you need to replace an engine if you are going to keep running the car.

Board members wondered what kind of messaging they should be sharing when folks are asking them questions. Ken Sherbenou reminded the Board that the City is invested, was working on a plan for renovation, but the school district owns the land and the building. Major renovations such as HVAC and other mechanical components are not solely the City's responsibility to maintain. It takes investment from the partners, and one partner is unwilling to participate.

For the Good of the Community

Ken Sherbenou advised the board that the ballot language for the Community Recreation Center will go to Council on Wednesday, December 7. Jodi Welch shared that the resolution has to be written to comply with Tabor laws and protect the City in the future. There was a court case that allows a revenue question tied to debt to be written as one question instead of two which should make it more clear for voters. The April ballot will have this question as well as four council seats.

Board members wondered if cannabis revenue should be mentioned in the question. Staff advised that due to the complexity of the question the revenue from cannabis should be addressed in other messaging rather than on the ballot. Bill Findlay made a motion that the Board support Council approving this version of the ballot language which they have reviewed. The motion was seconded by Kyle Garnder and carried unanimously.

Motion by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board: Yes 6 No 0
(Nancy Strippel had to leave before this vote was taken.)

Bylaws review was tabled until January.

Adjourn

The board adjourned by acclamation at 1:36 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next regular meeting will be January 5, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,
Allison Little
Administrative Specialist

Plaza Urrutia Fronton

Project Goals:

List the Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque Handball Court) in the City of Grand Junction Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts and ultimately the State Register of Historic Places.

General Information¹

Historic Building Name: Plaza Urrutia Fronton (Basque Handball Court)

Current Owner Name and Address:

City of Grand Junction – Parks and Recreation Department
Canyon View Park
250 North 5th Street
Grand Junction, CO 81501

Date of Construction: 1978

Construction History:

Originally built in 1978, in the backyard of Jean Urruty's small ranch, owned previously by farmer Leonard Long. The corner was sold to the City of Grand Junction for parks use by Bennie Urruty after her husband passed in 1984.

Refurbished in about 2003. New flooring poured, with walls reinforced and aligned for safety by Mays Construction of Grand Junction.

Landscaping around fronton was planted by citizens & cared for by municipal workers. The Handball Court corner was established and built out with amenities including a new picnic pergola from the City of Grand Junction. Planting areas were installed with shrubs and trees, including an Oak gifted by Jean and Maggie Doyhenard, representing resilience and freedom for Basque immigrants and their families.

Road construction in 2021-22 erased a sizeable amount of greenspace in the Handball Court Corner's south end, but the structure is sound.

Historic Background:

The fronton was built in 1978, so Basques might play their favorite childhood game in this new place that became their home. Young Basque men found beautiful brides here, then brought their new little families to the court to play, laugh and eat the most amazing lamb imaginable. Sometimes Basque men just got together after Sunday Mass to play,

¹ General information, construction history and history taken from Preliminary Property Evaluation Form, prepared by Mona Dyer, 12/13/2022. Full PPE form on file at History Colorado and available at request.

eat and speak to each other in their native language. Those gatherings were soulful to watch, seeing Basques who immigrated originally to tend sheep on the Western Slope finding new ways to make their way here...creating a beautiful pocket of Basque culture in Western Colorado.

The fronton was built out of necessity. Basque handball was played barehanded with a rubber ball that's hard as rock. Standard handball courts of the day were not robust enough to withstand the power delivered by a rubber ball batted by a barehanded Basque man. The Basque "Uncles" were asked to play somewhere else because their fun was wrecking everyone else's walls. As a result, Plaza Urrutia was born.

Jean and Bennie Urruty were gracious enough to make a home for the fronton. It was erected in the backyard of their farm... between a ranch house, a sheep lambing shed and silo if I recall. Basque Celebrations with traditional music & dancing, contests and amazing culinary delights took place on site. I have firsthand knowledge of at least one epic Basque wedding reception there ... with countless other get togethers celebrating the happiest and saddest days of our Basque family's lives. Small children's birthday parties, graduations, Memorial Remembrances ... the Handball Court is/was a place of Celebration or calm solace. After Jean passed in about 1984, Bennie eventually sold the corner lot to the City of Grand Junction to square up property originally owned by Leonard Long and sold to create Canyon View Park. The Handball Court corner was quiet for a time.

Plaza Urrutia was nearly lost once. In the early 2000's the structure was slated to be razed to make way for more parking for the bigger, more modern plans of a city park complex. Citizens stood behind the small Basque population and launched a fight that ultimately won City Council approval to preserve the Fronton. Citizens & businesses pitched in & worked together to reclaim and refurbish the corner to make it green and welcoming again. It became a place where anyone can play...where a Basque community proudly holds fond memories. An Oak Tree grows there, symbolizing the freedoms of Basque people.

In September 2022, Plaza Urrutia hosted a pelota exhibition. It turns out Plaza Urrutia is the only true Basque Fronton in Colorado. World class players representing the North American Basque Association demonstrated their skills at the fronton in Grand Junction. Turns out Jean Urruty, the man who built the original handball court, was an early member of NABO.

Historic Significance:

The Plaza Urrutia Fronton is significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic Heritage for its association with the historic and continued presence of the Basque community in the City of Grand Junction and its association with Basque culture as a handball court and location where community and cultural events occurred.

Basque immigrant Jean Urruty, who was a founding member of the North American Basque Organization, built the fronton on his property so that Basque immigrants to the city would have a location to play handball, a game uniquely identified with Basque culture. Aside from being a location where handball was played, the Basque community used the Fronton as a location for gathering in celebration and participation in cultural events including sharing food and speaking the Basque language. As such, the Fronton deftly conveys its significance as a location common to the Basque community.

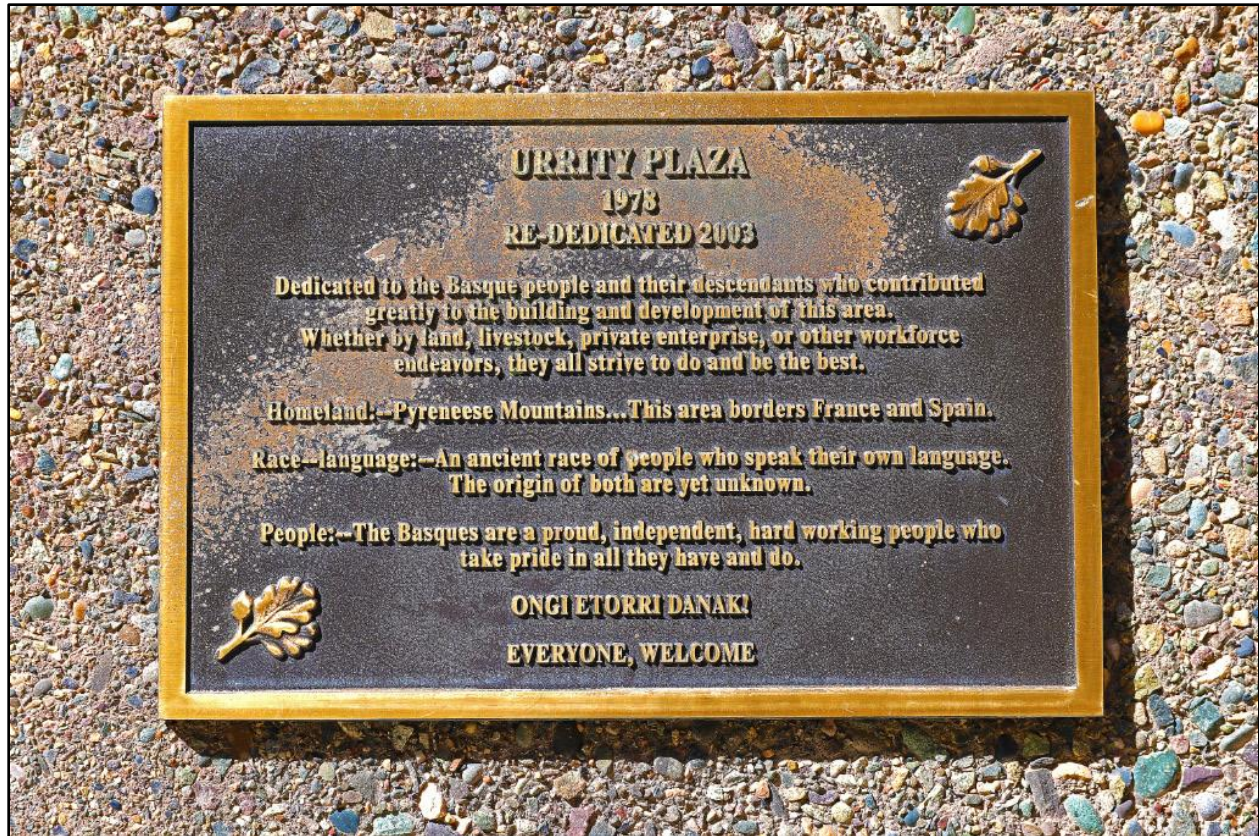
Requests of City of Grand Junction Parks and Recreation Advisory Board:

1. Pass a motion indicating support of an application to the City Historic Preservation Board and City Council for designation in the City Register of Historic Sites, Structures and Districts;
2. Pass a motion or in same motion indicating support of an application to the Colorado State Register of Historic Places; and
3. Provide a letter indicating support of both City and State historic designations.

Current Photographs:

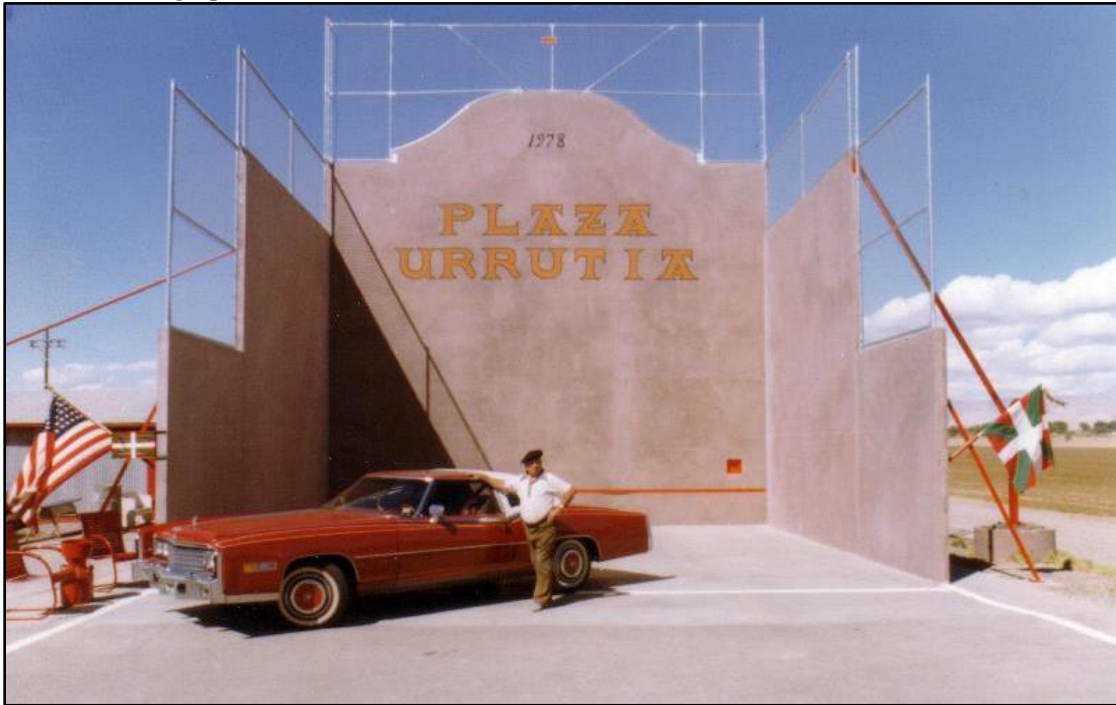








Historic Photographs:



Date of picture is 1978. Photographed is Jean Urruty, who is responsible for the construction of the Fronton in the same year.