**PARK BOARD TRAIL COMMITTEE MEETING**

 Wednesday July 30, 2021 3:30 PM

 Kirkwood Parks Operations Building

Attendees: Alan Hopefl (chair); Kathy Paulsen; Alvin Reid; Kim Hedgpeth, Recreation Supervisor; John McKinley 443 N. Van Buren; Randy Schaefer 400 N. Van Buren;

Joe Hill 1122 Dovergate Dr.; Dave Schultz (Gateway Off Road Cyclists) Wildwood, MO

Meeting called to order at 3:35 PM

**II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Proposal of Entrance to Kirkwood Park from Couch Avenue

Tabled until the issue is clarified

1. Proposal of trail connecting Greentree Park with Emmenegger Nature Park

Tabled until Matt Helbig is available

**III. NEW BUSINESS**
 A) Proposal for Mountain Bike Trails in Kirkwood Park

John McKinley and Dave Schultz presented their proposal to build mountain bike trails in Kirkwood park in the area between Ball Diamond 5 and Rifle Range Drive. They stated that there is a community of bike parks in west county and St Charles and they would like to bring this community to Kirkwood Park. This would be an opportunity for kids to get outside and a lot of communities are doing this. Schultz stated that they would repair erosion damage to present trails and would build additional trails specifically for mountain biking. This would be a beginners mountain bike trail.

GORC would build and manage the trails. They would build and repair trails with volunteers and say their trails would have minimal erosion. They would use grants and donations to pay for this. There are no other mountain bike trails within the I-270 loop or in Forest Park.

Committee concerns:

Environmental effect of adding additional trails in this area. The Kirkwood Parks Master Plan classified all the forested land in the west valley of the park as PASSIVE/Natural area. (minimal man-made elements and trails, low intensity). It further suggests that the west valley be returned to a more passive park use.

A plant inventory of this area April- October 2011, by Dave Tylka of Meramec Community College, found 160 unique native plant species and recommended that the “forest be restored and protected for future generations.” The report also noted that the trails there are in bad shape, many run directly up and down hills and have significant erosional damage. Some trails are muddied quagmires. This mountain bike trail proposal is contrary to the use of this area in the Parks Master Plan and could lead to further degradation of the area.

Other concerns include GORC funding for this project via grants and donations which can be an unreliable source of funding.

Relying on long-term and acute maintenance of these trails by volunteers could be unreliable and then fall on park staff.

It appears that there would be minimal input on this project by Kirkwood Parks staff as GORC would plan, build and maintain an area of our main park.

There is a concern that this activity would lead to conflicts with the people who now use this area for low impact activities such as hiking, bird watching, dog walking, etc. Kirkwood park at 92 acres is too small for mountain biking trails. The trails GORC has developed and maintains include Greenfelder Park 12 mile trail (1732 acres); Creve Coeur Lake Park > 5.5 miles (2146 acres), Cliff Cave Park 3.75 miles and 2 miles (525 acres).

 The committee recommends that this request for mountain bike trails in Kirkwood Park be denied.

 Meeting adjourned at 4: 35 PM