

New trees will sprout in Memorial Park

By Jeanne Davant

Manitou Springs City Council gave its blessing Tuesday to a plan to plant several trees in Memorial Park.

Dave Aldridge, chairman of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, said the board had set aside funds to work on trees this year. Board members have surveyed the city's parks to determine which trees need to be replaced or removed because of disease and whether additional trees should be planted to provide more shade and encourage diversity in the landscapes.

In Memorial Park, the board proposed planting two trees by the memorial and two more near the playground area to provide balance, shade and color. Those trees would be coral berry crabapples and ornamental pear trees.

The board also suggested planting three trees toward the middle of the park, a part of the proposal that some Council members questioned. "One issue in the park is maintaining the grass," Aldridge said. "The big cottonwoods along the creek provide shade on the west side. But in the summer, on the north side, the grass just burns up. We thought trees placed in the center would provide shade and prevent that."

The trees would be Patmore ashes that would grow to 40 feet and would be pruned up from the bottom, city gardener Mary Ellen Montgomery said.

Councilman Matt Carpenter and Mayor Marc Snyder wondered why the plan called for planting trees in the middle of the park's open area.

"Personally, I like to see people playing Frisbee out there," Carpenter said. Carpenter also was concerned that the trees were located within the area where a large tent is erected for events like the Pikes Peak Ascent and Marathon and Buddy Walk.

Councilman Michael Gerbig suggested adding the trees to the north side of the park and retaining the open space.

Councilwoman Ingrid Richter said she thought the larger issue was irrigation of the park.

Public Works Director Bruno Pothier said the city is beginning this week to water all the parks — nearly a month earlier than usual because of dry conditions.

Council members voted 4-0 in favor of Richter's motion to approve the plan with modifications based on Council's discussion. Mayor Pro Tem Aimee Cox and Councilman Ed Klingman were absent, and Councilman Rick Barry abstained from the vote.

"I feel that City Council making decisions about tree placement in a public park is not a policy decision," Barry said. "My inclination is to leave this to Bruno and staff rather than coming to Council." Pothier said he had proposed coming before Council because "Manitou Springs is very sensitive to tree planting and cutting. By making decisions of planting trees, which is forever, it can create a lot of consequences."

Pothier said the central trees could be placed so they would not impinge on the tent location.

In other business, Council...

- Approved on second reading an ordinance vacating a portion of right-of-way on Cedar Path.
- Approved agreements with the Colorado Springs Housing Authority and Crystal Park Metropolitan District. The Housing Authority agreement is a prerequisite to a plan for merging Housing Authority programs in El Paso County, which aims to achieve greater efficiency in

administering the programs. The Crystal Park agreement was a renewal of the annual pact between the district and Manitou Springs for provision of firefighting services.

- Proclaimed April 24-30 Administrative Professionals Week.
- Issued a proclamation of support for the Manitou Springs Forward Visioning Process.

Steering Committee Chairman David Chorpenning said the 24-member committee has been meeting biweekly since January and announced that another community visioning pot luck will be held June 26 at Venue 515.

[Return to Article Index](#)