

Bijou park hindered by lack of master plan

By Kathryn Reed

Bijou Community Park needs help.

“There are a lot of things people would like to do and add to the park but there is no master plan,” Pete Fink told the South Lake Tahoe City Council on Nov. 15.

Fink is a member of the city’s Parks and Recreation Commission. That advisory board has become a more vocal and active group in the past couple of years. One of the main purposes of the commission is to identify needs in the community and bring them to the council’s attention.

Just like when **Commissioner Scott Valentine** spoke last month about bike trails, Fink also advocated for an expanded budget. This would be for more front line staff and maintenance, as well then allowing for the expansion of programs.

Fink said the parks in town are being loved to death, especially Bijou.



Bijou Bike Park has multiple courses for all ability levels. Photo/LTN

The city has talked about doing a master plan, but that is as far as it has gotten. It will likely be brought up again at the council's February strategic plan meeting.

With the passage of Measure P this month, the city will soon have more money for recreation. About 60 percent of the revenues will be used to pay back the bonds once those are issued. That means there will be "leftover" money that could be used for more immediate and routine needs that the commission identifies – as well as for a consultant to prepare the master plan.

A master plan would also help with conflicts that exist.

"The gate is open for the dog park, but the park is closed (in winter). Having the gate unlocked sends mixed messages. A master plan can help with a solution," Fink said.

As the Greenway Bike Path continues to be built, it will tie into Bijou park. But what's on the books now would affect disc

golf. A master plan would help plot where the various users would recreate.

The commission recommends:

- The council continue discussions with the California Tahoe Conservancy in regards to property exchanges so Bijou Community Park could expand.
- Installing a pedestrian-triggered crosswalk from the entrance of the park to the community ball fields on the other side of Al Tahoe Boulevard.
- Considering more concessionaires in the park.
- Having the park open in the winter – which would mean bathrooms, drinking fountains, snow play area and parking.

When a police officer is needed the incident at a park is often not the first priority. Fink suggested a park ranger of sorts to be dedicated to patrolling the various entities.

He broached the idea of altering the city's agreement with TAMBA so the cycling organization could hire a part-time person dedicated to working on the bike park at Bijou.

The nonprofit spent \$18,000 on the park this summer, which included redoing the pump track so it's not as steep. Benches have been added along with a repair station. A new line was added on the slopestyle course. More features were put in on the loop route to help people build skills. The BMX hill is now asphalt.

City recreation areas also include Lakeview Commons, Regan Beach, Bonanza Park, Campground by the Lake, Bijou Golf Course and the recreation center.