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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Papillion Announces Committee to Lead Park and Recreation Improvement Efforts**

PAPILLION, Neb., May 28, 2015 – The City of Papillion announced today the formation of a resident committee to help lead the development of future parks and recreation projects in Papillion. The committee’s charge will be to work from the 2011 Parks plan to take identified needs and priorities and help make them a reality. The work will include advising City Council members on public priorities and then serving as advocates for park and recreation projects as well as a dedicated funding source for the plan.

“We’ve known our park and recreation needs for some time, as they are clearly spelled out in the parks plan,” said Mayor David Black. “Our City Council has made improving parks and recreation in Papillion a priority, and been working diligently on options. Now, the members of this resident committee will help connect with and engage the public in the process.”

City Council Members Steve Engberg, LuAnn Kluch, Gene Jaworski and Jim Glover will serve with the Committee of community members to implement the 2011 Parks plan and identify a funding source for Parks and Recreation that will serve the long term needs of the community without raising property taxes.

City Council Members Tom Mumgaard, Bob Stubbe, Troy Florence and Jason Gaines will be reviewing and guiding the financial impact and operational analysis of the proposed plan.

The Park and Recreation Committee members cover a wide spectrum of groups in Papillion, to help ensure a variety of recreation needs can be met. Residents Jeff and Lisa Strohmeyer will serve on the committee. In addition to their having a broad community perspective, Dr. Strohmeyer is the city physician, and will keep the emphasis on overall wellness. Complimentary service and partner organizations will be represented by Sue McCalman, a member of the Sump Memorial Library board, Tera Henrich from the Sarpy YMCA, Jeff Knipping from the Papillion Recreation Organization (PRO) and Paul Bohn from the Papillion-La Vista School District.

Local foundations are represented by Ann Ames from the Papillion Community Foundation and Mary Gawecki from the Midlands Community Foundation. Prominent local business owners and Executive Board members of the Historical Downtown Papillion Business Association, Kim Ahlers (Kajoma’s boutique) and Gene Pfahl (Gene’s Auto) will represent business interest in the committee’s work, along with Harlan Metschke, a community member with many perspectives, including retired School Superintendent, Library Foundation Board member and member of the Sarpy County Chamber of Commerce. All ages will be considered in the committee’s work. Jim Mathison serves on the Papillion Senior Center Board and Conner Kalthorn is a member of the Mayor’s Youth Leadership Council. A neighborhood perspective will be provided by Trent Albers and Ray Keller, both of whom reside near where recreation projects are likely to take place. Keller also serves on the Papillion Planning Commission.

Now formed, the committee will work to engage the public in a discussion of park and recreation needs and priorities, and advocate a dedicated funding source for those projects. Specifically, the Legislature authorized that funding can come from a 0.5% increase in local option sales taxes, with a vote of the public. A May 2016 ballot initiative is anticipated.

“Between \$40 million and \$70 million can be raised using this funding option, without raising property taxes,” said Mayor Black. “The City Council understands the community desires, and this Committee can connect the public to help them review their options prior to the City Council voting to allow the question on the ballot.”

The projected cost for a possible recreational project like a community center and recreation complex is not yet determined. That will be determined based on the committee’s work in the coming months. Bruce Lefler of Ameritas, the City’s fiscal agent, said they ran a variety of scenarios based on projected net sales in Papillion. The anticipated sales tax revenues would be able to pay for bonds of \$35 million, \$40 million or \$45 million.

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