

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

January 17, 2016 5:30 pm

Members Present:

Dan Borland
Brian Hensley
Vern Rasmussen, Sr.
Chris Utz
Mark Calderon
Jane Grund
Anne Sternhagen
Jason Howland (Ex-officio)

Members Absent:

Staff in Attendance:

Jerry Gabrielatos, Assistant City Manager
Bob Furland, Interim Recreation Director
Joe Grossman, Parks Interim Director
Jennifer Nelson, Office Assistant

Others in Attendance:

Gary Hagen, 501 Albert Lea St
Martha Sichko, 214 Lee Pl
Linda Pederson, 307 Lee Cir
Gujral, Clemencia, 217 Lee Pl

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Board President Chris Utz.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve agenda was made by Mark Calderon and seconded by Brian Hensley and was approved on a 7-0 voice vote.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Dan Borland to approve the minutes from the December 20, 2016 meeting and seconded by Chris Utz and was approved on a 7-0 voice vote.

Public Items/Presentations: None

Discussion/Action Items:

Election of Officers, Chair and Vice Chair

A motion was made by Vern Rasmussen and seconded by Brian Hensley to elect Chris Utz to remain Chair of the Parks and Recreation Board. Motion was approved on a 6-0 voice vote. (Chris Utz abstained)

A motion was made by Brian Hensley and seconded by Dan Borland to elect Mark Calderon as Vice Chair of the Parks and Recreation Board. Motion was approved on a 6-0 voice vote. (Mark Calderon abstained)

Update Items:

- a. Introduction of newly appointed Advisory Board member Anne Sterhagen and Ex-officio member Jason Howland.
- b. Martha Sichko, daughter of Dolly Jones Sichko presented a proposal to honor her mother by placing a memorial which includes a bench and marker to be placed at Weber Park located at the center of Lee Circle. Martha advised Dolly Sichko passed away last August. Dolly was known

for her volunteerism throughout the county for 70 plus years for groups such as Naeve Hospital Auxiliary, the American Heart Association, Lea College and many more. Martha explained she wrote a story about her mother and contacted Mayor Vern Rasmussen and inquired about donating a memorial to honor her mother and her love for Albert Lea. Martha was then referred to Joe Grossman. This memorial would also honor all women who have served and made a positive impact in the community. Martha stated she has strong support for this memorial from her neighbors as two are in attendance with her this evening to show their support.

Marth Sichko advised the writing on the memorial is approximately 100 words.

Chris Utz asked Joe Grossman if this memorial would be feasible. Grossman advised he is concerned the saying will not fit on a 10"x 8" or 10"x 12" plaque. Sichko was confident she could make it work. Sichko asked Grossman if he was concerned about the maintenance the plaque would require if it were to be raised and stated she had over 50 photos of other areas of town similar that required maintenance and gave a specific example of the Danish Memorial located in New Denmark Park. Sichko stated if the memorial was raised it would be more "eye catching" and peak curiosity for people to walk over and take a look.

Grossman also had concerns the proposed memorial may take away from the soldier memorial in honor of John Weber that is currently displayed at the park. Sichko understands this as a daughter of a service member and would not want to cause anything to take way from a military member.

A motion was made by Brian Hensley and seconded by Vern Rasmussen Senior to recommend approval of a the Dolly Jones Sichko memorial bench with the written saying flat on a concrete pad approved by staff. Motion was approved 7-0 by hand.

Further discussion followed the motion before the vote:

Brian Hensley advised he would favor this memorial if it were flat and easily maintained as he would like to see more memorials proposed along the trails and in the parks.as this approval would set a future precedence.

Dan Borland asked is the John Weber memorial was in the ground, Martha advised the memorial is on a rock that she believes was brought into the park. Dan doesn't like the idea of a marker in the ground as you have to bend over to read it, although he would at least like to see the plaque or marker in the ground. Possible in the future the QR codes could be used for memorial markers to allow for more information including pictures.

Vern Rasmussen believes the Danish memorial is set apart as it represents a large group of people and not an individual person. Agrees it is a good precedence to allow for flat memorials as there may be more requests in the future and makes sense for them to be maintained.

- c. Staff is planning a board retreat to be held March to discuss the roll and purpose of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the reorganization occurring with the Parks and Recreation Department. The retreat will be held Tuesday, March 21, 2017 from 5:30-7:30 at The Marketing Plant. Food and Refreshments will be served.

Vern Rasmussen inquired if it was still being planned to have board meetings at different parks throughout the year. Bob Furland advised he would like to start meeting at various parks during the spring and summer months.

- d. CIP Projects- Bob Furland reviewed highlights;
The agenda packet including the CIP projects becomes part of these minutes by reference.

- P & R Programs- 15% increase to allow for music in the park entertainment.
- Arena had a 17% increase mostly due to having summer ice this last year.
- The Theater had a 44% increase in the budget this year to make necessary routine repairs including window repairs, hand dryers and supplies. First phase of carpeting this year \$10,000, second phase will be next year \$14,000.
- One of the diving boards will be removed to make room for a new climbing wall as it is becoming difficult to insure diving boards. The following year the last diving board may be removed and another play feature added in its place, possibly a drop slide in 2018.
- The city was awarded a \$70,000 Mighty Ducks grant to help cover the cost of the replacing the arena air conditioning system along with an air exchanger.
- The soccer carpet will need to be replaced, possibly with another used carpet.
- Replacing dasher boards in the Nystrom arena would cost approximately \$110,000 and Furland advised he is working with figure skating and youth hockey to raise money for this project.

Upcoming CIP Items Highlights;

- (2018) Arena, Geo System \$30,000 , is currently over 20 years old
- (2020) Arena Roof \$275,000 is currently 25-30 years old
- (2018) Theater Air Conditioning \$75,000 plus

New and upcoming Programming highlights;

- Play parks opened two full-time parks this past summer and saw an increase in users and looking at opening up a third playpark at Sondergard Park.
- Improve on the Music in the Parks
- Push advertising for the Just Play Event in June.
- Kids Mud Fun Run will be held again in August, this event had 54 participants and hoping to boost this event this year to attract a higher attendance.
- Continue to be involved with Autumn Blaze Festival in October.
- Working along with the YMCA with running the “Off the Wall Soccer” program
- Yellow Brick Broadway in August is an event along with the Theater involving characters.
- Supplies were purchased to hold a “Haunted House” event at the City Pool.
- Community Education is using an office space at the City Arena and discussing how to assist each other in upcoming programs to save on costs.
- Holding open houses at playparks and “pop up” park events to get more people involved.

Jerry Gabrielatos discussed his new role overseeing the Recreation Department. Gabrielatos has met with Bob Furland regularly since the announcement to discuss goals. He uses the 2015 Community Survey to guide decisions on what type of programming to pursue and what the citizens would like to see. Discussions continue on how to measure metrics of programming including evaluating and making decisions what programs are working and which are not worth the investment of cost or time.

Gabrielatos has listened to concerns regarding the City not replacing the Park & Recreation Director position and that some of the long term goals wouldn't be addressed. He assures we will do our best to ensure long time visioning is done. Gabrielatos thanked the board members in the role they play and praised that an engaged group of people will assist in making things happen in the community and cited the new dog park as an example of success.

Gabrielatos advised programming is important although so is functionality. Improvements need to be made such as installing a credit card machine at the pool to allow for a convenient payment option and a user friendly registration program. Community outreach is very important and a great way to meet more people who are organized such as the Latino and Karen Communities. The Parks and Recreation Department is a vehicle that can drive a lot more community engagement.

Bob Furland encouraged the board members if they have any ideas for programming please bring them to him for consideration.

Chris Utz believes the area of Euclid Ave and Court St may be a good area of focus as there are no play parks in the area. This may be a good location for a pop up park. Joe Grossman commented the City owns a piece of land which is an urban renewal area next to Kerry Ingredients. This area is currently a green space.

Brian Hensley likes the idea of collaboration with the different groups that are out there and stated the Lakes Foundation interested in being involved with the Let's Play Event. Finding ways to get the word out to similar groups another event is happening and gave the example of Katie Pestorius has put together a youth running program being held this spring and the same group may be interested in the Mud Run also or vice versa. This may also assist in finding volunteers.

Anne Sternhagen brought up the National Figure Skating Club did a 5K skate event last year which could easily be an event held at a local park.

Board Member Items:

Brian Hensley brought up the idea of coordinating the summer parks program with the schools free lunch program being held at Hawthorne and Halverson schools. Students could participate in some park activities before going in for lunch.

Vern Rasmussen Sr. gave updates on the colligate baseball team. Players have started signing on and is off and running. He is looking for ideas to help get people to the ballpark. There are 350 kids participating in youth baseball program between the ages 0-14yrs. VFW and Legion baseball opportunities for ages 15-up. Every Monday the AL Lakers will be holding baseball clinics and practices for these local baseball programs in June and July. Rasmussen is also working on concessions. This League follows NCAA Baseball Rules. The AL Lakers will be playing 18 home games in Albert Lea.

Vern also received a few comments on people are confused with what is happening with the Community Education collaboration with the City.

Adjournment: A motion was made at 6:30 pm by Brian Hensley to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Mark Calderon was motion carried.

Next regular scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, February 21, 2016 at 5:30pm at the City Arena.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Furland
Parks and Recreation

Approved:

Chris Utz
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chair