

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2017 5:30 pm

Members Present:

Dan Borland
Brian Hensley
Vern Rasmussen, Sr.
Mark Calderon, Vice Chairman
Anne Sternhagen
Jason Howland (Ex-officio)

Members Absent:

Chris Utz, Chairman
Jane Grund

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., Albert Lea
Gail Levorson, 73431 Hillendale Dr., Albert Lea, Albert Lea Area Pickleball Club

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Vice Chairman Mark Calderon.

Approval of Agenda: Motion to approve agenda was made by Vern Rasmussen, Sr. and seconded by Dan Borland and was approved on a 5-0 voice vote.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made by Brian Hensley to approve the minutes from the January 17, 2017 meeting and seconded by Vern Rasmussen, Sr. and was approved on a 5-0 voice vote.

Public Items/Presentations: Gail Levorson of the Albert Lea Area Pickleball Club presented a request for replacing one tennis court with four pickleball courts at the 321 James Ave Recreation Facility location.

Gail gave a quick background on the pickle ball courts. Pickleball was first organized in Albert Lea in 2013 when a group of seven people started playing together at Academy Park on the hard concrete. The City assisted them with putting up some lines and they used portable nets. The group approached the city about using the three tennis courts located at Frank Hall Park which were in poor condition and turn them into pickleball courts. The pickleball group worked with the city and was able to raise \$16,000 to put toward this project. The city resurfaced the courts. The \$16,000 went toward the nets, permanent posts and fencing. There are now six fenced in pickleball courts at this location. The Albert Lea Area Pickleball Club currently has 60 club members and continues to grow. This is an open club and extends an invitation out to anyone who would like to join. The group has a board of directors and Gail is the secretary of the club which includes eight members. Several club members are from surrounding communities such as Austin, Wells, Geneva, Blue Earth, Glenville. Some of these communities do not have courts to play on and joined the club. This has helped the club with raising funds for more equipment. Gail advised members of the club have taught Pickleball lessons through Community Ed, worked with the Parks and Recreation Department, taught children's pickleball lessons and participated in the City's Just Play Festival and the Lakes Foundation Festival. The club is coming up on their 4th

season playing on the six courts. Gail advised they run three tournaments a year and one is a larger regional tournament. This tournament is attended by approximately 80 participants who come from the Twin Cities area, Rochester, Wisconsin, Iowa and South Dakota. They are able to play 24 people at a time on the six courts playing doubles. The club also has four portable courts for the tennis court and this allows them to play 40 people at a time. This is helpful to keep the tournaments running in a timely manner. The tournaments last two days and play men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles games.

This sport is great for all ages, they have taught classes for 7, 8 and 9 year olds, ages 14-78 play regularly. The court is a third of the size of a tennis court and allows for easy play for all ages. The group has scheduled times where people can show up and play. These times are advertised in the newspaper and you do not have to be a club member to play, everyone is welcome. Gail feels this game ties in well with the Blue Zones Project and Gail was contacted by Freeborn Mower who set up a portable pickleball court on their site inside the garage and taught employees how to play. The Albert Lea Area Pickleball Club would like to see that area become a whole pickleball center by getting four additional courts along with a socialization area. There are people that have to sit and wait for an open court. People are playing all year round, at the YMCA and indoors at the Glenville School. Last year the nets went up as early as March and played through November. The club would be willing to assist financially. The lights are an asset at this venue as it allows people to play into the evening during the summer months. Gail has received many positive comments from on the courts. There is a noticeable difference playing on the portable courts especially during tournaments compared to the permanent courts.

Discussion followed and it was brought to the attention this is the last City owned tennis court and is the last lit tennis court in town. The high school has courts that are not lit, they will be out of commission for six weeks this summer for resurfacing. The tennis courts located at South West School are in poor condition, there are no posts on one side and the court is deteriorated. Gail advised she used to coach tennis and some of the players have moved over to playing pickleball. Tennis playing has decreased. Gail appreciated the information regarding the tennis courts. A letter was submitted to the Park and Recreation Board by Kim Hefindahl in favor of keeping the remaining tennis court.

Bob Furland will keep this request in mind and do some further investigation. There may be room for expansion as another option. Joe Grossman thought this could be a future possibility.

Discussion/Action Items:- None

Update Items:

Senior Center

- Trip to Jackpot junction February 22nd
- 8 hour drivers improvement training for 55 and over first class is being held March 4th for 8 hours, attendees receive a discounted insurance rate.

Arena

- Last boys section game is this evening February 21st, last high school game of the year.
- Figure Skating show "Skating in the USA" is coming up March 4th & 5th
- Home Show will be held March 10th, 11th & 12th
- Specs are being worked on for the A/C grant
- Bob Furland is working with the Figure Skating Club & Youth Hockey to raise funds to purchase new dasher boards.

Recreation

- The spring program flyer is available
- Letters will be sent out soon for summer help for the Park Leaders, Lifeguards and Pool Attendants
- Annual Co-Ed Volleyball Tournament is March 4th

- Planning a music/entertainment in the park on Thursday evenings at Fountain Lake Park. The CVB will also be partnering with this programming which may include; performing arts, magicians or music.

Parks

- Joe Grossman advised the rinks are done for the season, the boards will come out of the ground when frost is gone and dry.
- Working on inventory and tree inspections
- Joe and a few others will be attending an arborist workshop
- Noise control panels at Edgewater Bay Pavilion
- Prepping benches and tables
- Maintenance on mowers and tractors getting ready for spring
- Screens at the pickleball courts will go up in the early spring
- Staff is being trained in CPR, 1st Aid and safety training
- Travis Reichl moved jobs from utilities over to parks after Lowell Egge retired, one more person will be hired soon.

Dan Borland inquired about the status of the butterfly flower garden. Joe Grossman is thinking it may be completed by the middle of June depending on the weather. The new location is behind Brookside School area down by the old football field.

Grossman advised the preliminary Baseball Field schedule for Hayek Field is completed which includes;

- VFW- 10 games
- Legion-9 games
- AL Lakers- 17 games (7:00 or 7:30pm games)

Vern Rasmussen Sr. advised Grossman to check as it appears someone has thrown park benches or picnic tables over the railing on North Broadway down by the Gazebo.

Jennifer Nelson advised staff is working on the park inventory sheet which will be added to the books when completed.

Board Member Items:

Dan Borland - Encourage everyone to come out to the Green Mill on March 13th to help support the Lakes Foundation. The Lakes Foundation is fundraising for the dredging of Fountain Lake.

Vern Rasmussen - Sr. advised the Albert Lea Lakers Baseball website is up and running @ albertlealakers.com. Donny Roberts who owns the baseball club is working on drawing up a contract with the Legion to sell 3.2 beer. Also the housing of players is a paid position for anyone is interested.

Jason Howland – Brought up the possibility of a adding a restroom to the North lot area especially with the Splash Pad being located in the area. There has been more traffic in the area such as the Farmer's Market, and downtown events. Howland would like to discuss the pros and cons of this possibility. Vandalism is a concern. The Legion is not appreciative of public traffic to their restrooms.

Adjournment: A motion was made at 6:15 pm by Brian Hensley to adjourn the meeting and seconded by Anne Sternagen motion was carried.

Next regular scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, March 21, 2017 at 5:30pm at The Marketing Plant located at 137 S Broadway Ave, Albert Lea. This meeting will be a board member retreat so please plan on spending some extra time, food and refreshments will be provided.

Park and Recreation Advisory Board 2017 Spring and Summer tentative meeting date schedule as follows;

March 21st (Retreat) The Marketing Plant, 137 S Broadway Ave, Albert Lea MN

April 18th Senior Citizens Center (Skyline Plaza), 1739 W Main St., Albert Lea MN

May 16th Hayek Field (Warming House), 1215 W Clark St, Albert Lea MN

June 20th Academy Park (Warming House), 910 Frank Hall Dr., Albert Lea, MN

July 18th Pioneer Park Pavilion, 100 Hawthorne St, Albert Lea MN

August 15th Edgewater Bay Pavilion, 1940 Edgewater Dr., Albert Lea MN

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Furland
Parks and Recreation

Approved:

Mark Calderon
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Vice Chair