

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

*April 18, 2017 5:30 pm
City of Albert Lea Senior Citizen Center
1739 Main St W, Albert Lea*

Members Present:

Dan Borland
Brian Hensley
Vern Rasmussen, Sr.
Mark Calderon, Vice Chairman
Anne Sternhagen
Chris Utz, Chairman
Jane Grund
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., Albert Lea
Susie Peterson, Executive Director of the Albert Lea Convention and Visitors Bureau, Member of Splash Pad Committee
Sara Stultz, Assistant Editor at the Albert Lea Tribune, Member of the Splash Pad Committee
Verliss Huntley, with the local Farmers Market

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:33 p.m. by Chairman Chris Utz.

Approval of Agenda:

Motion to approve agenda was made by Vern Rasmussen and was approved on a 7-0 voice vote.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the March 21, 2017 (retreat) meeting and were approved on a 7-0 voice vote.

Action/Discussion Items

Future possibility of a restroom west of the proposed splash pad along Washington St.

Jerry Gabrielatos passed out an informational sheet on the proposed splash pad, which become part of these minutes by reference.

Chris Utz called for a brief update on the proposed splash pad by Susie Peterson, Executive Director of the Albert Lea Convention and Visitors Bureau and Sara Stultz, Assistant Editor at the Albert Lea Tribune, who both on the splash pad committee.

Sara Stultz advised this projects has been in the works for a while, last February the project received City Council gave approval. Stultz advised ground breaking for the estimated \$160,000 project. The design doesn't have any above ground features and will also include landscaping and complement the downtown. Jets of water will be coming out the ground from a concrete pad. Water will be held

underground and used to water plants downtown. The project includes fencing and landscaping as a buffer along Fountain Street to keep the children safe. The core funds for the project have been raised and fundraising will continue to complete landscaping features. There are no requirements by the Minnesota Department of Health for restrooms. Stultz advised she is not opposed to have restrooms nearby although restrooms were never a part of the splash pad project plans.

Susie Peterson reiterated the restrooms were not part of the splash pad project and would be up to the citizens and the City of Albert Lea to consider.

Gary Hagen asked where the used water would go and if the water had chlorine, Susie Peterson advised the water comes out of city pipes and is not chlorinated, the water would then go into a holding pond area.

Verliss Huntley spoke as a member of the local Farmers Market. Huntley advised the Farmers Market has been using the north lot location for sales the last fifteen years. Huntley advised the Farmers Market was excited to be at this location as a community gathering place. She was very happy about the street scape project and the improvements this allowed to the downtown area. During the construction of the street scape project the Farmers Market held sales in the Northbridge Mall parking lot. After using this location for a year many vendors decided to stay at the Northbridge location on Saturdays do to seeing increased sales during this time. Huntley personally hopes the market will come back to the downtown location once the splash pad is up and running and more activity is going on in the area. Huntley advised the American Legion was not happy with the increased traffic to their restrooms when the market sales are going on at the north lot location. Huntley assumed the intent of the street scape project was to draw more uses and people to the downtown. Huntley noted the city has provided portable restrooms to the north lot during the sales. These restrooms are used by the Farmers Market, walkers, city employees and anyone that happens to be in the area. Huntley believes there is a real need for a restroom if the city is interested in drawing more activity to the area. Huntley advised she wrote up an editorial and it was received with many positive responses on Facebook in favor a restroom for this area. She would ideally like to see a structure that could be used to serve food and drinks during events. Huntley commended the park board for how nice and well-kept the parks are and what a good job everyone does. She believes beautiful parks deserve better than a porta-potty.

Chris Utz asked what the cost would be for a basic restroom. Jerry Gabrielatos advised a structure similar to what is located at Pioneer Park which includes male/female restroom, covered shelter and kitchenette. The cost for this type of project is estimated at \$200,000. The estimated cost of a basic restroom structure would be \$40,600.

Joe Grossman believes at this time the cart is ahead of the horse. The design and what type of restroom needs to be studied and determine what is needed and what type of design is wanted or are there other alternatives.

Brian Hensley inquired how the city determines which parks get restrooms. Joe Grossman responded the most recent restrooms are located at Edgewater Bay Pavilion and Pioneer Park Pavilion.

Jerry Gabrielatos advised a different type of person would be using the restrooms downtown than the people at Edgewater Park. Gabrielatos advised working at City Hall there is a different clientele that uses the public restrooms than at Edgewater Park and believes this should be taken into consideration. The north lot location may be used as a place for people to congregate.

Dan Borland commented at least the people would have a place to use a restroom.

Vern Rasmussen also commented kids tend to congregate at Pioneer Park also until they are driven out at night. Rasmussen believes restrooms are needed downtown and also agrees with Grossman that

some more study on this subject and determine what type of structure the public would favor. Rasmussen also acknowledged vandalism could be an issue. Rasmussen advised these issues would need further discussion such as how late would the restroom be left open and who would be responsible to lock the door. The police are busy a lot of the time and may not have time to lock them up at night. Again Rasmussen reiterated the restrooms are 100 percent needed downtown.

Brian Hensley inquired what criteria would be necessary to get a project like this in the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP).

Grossman advised the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board can propose a project anytime. The project would need to be approved by the council and go through a budget process. It needs to be vetted and find out if it's a worthwhile project and would be discussed and prioritized.

Chris Utz also advised the exact location would need to be determined. Could the restrooms be located in an existing building downtown? It would be nice to have a restroom but would need to find out if the project is feasible and if the funds would be available.

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has been tasked look into where the restroom would be located, what type of structure is needed and how would the project be funded.

Vern Rasmussen advised the Legion is not happy with the people using their restrooms as this use is not covered under their insurance.

Rasmussen advised several people he has spoken to are concerned about the children's safety with the splash pad being so close to Fountain Street. Money is still being raised for some of the landscaping and buffer zone between the splash pad and the busy road. Rasmussen believes the restroom is needed as North Broadway has become busier with activities and events being held in this area. Believes Brian Hensley has a good idea of creating a committee to get out and talk to people and find out what people would like to see and be able to voice any issues or concerns they may have with locating a restroom do

Vern Rasmussen, Brian Hensley and Anne Sterhagen volunteered to get the pulse of the downtown community and relay back to the board what their findings next month. Utz advised it is imperative all members of the board research do research for this project.

Dan Borland mentioned contacting the Downtown Association group to get their input.

Susie Peterson advised Wind Down Wednesday will be a little different this year due to powering issues for food trucks. The area of the Freeborn Bank Building has better power accessibility, so the activities will be moved further north this year. The road will be blocked off at William Street although cars will be able to turn East or West at the intersection of William and Broadway Ave S. The bands will be playing on Clark St. Peterson also advised another event has been planned for Thursday evenings between May 25th through August 1, 2017 from 5:30-7pm called Thursdays on the Fountain which will include entertainment at Fountain Lake Park. This area is becoming much more active.

Dan Borland inquired if the water at the splash pad will need to be tested daily. There was a comment it should not need testing as the water is fresh and not recycled or held anywhere.

Joe Grossman advised there will be two portable restrooms placed at the north lot location for the time being. Grossman advised he porta-potty cost is around \$140.00 a month which includes them being checked once a week.

Grossman listed several parks that have been added since the 1990's. More facilities will continue to be added and this can be an issue for upkeep and staff required to maintain the facilities.

Vern Rasmussen remembers the restrooms that were located downtown twenty years ago were closed down because of continuous vandalism.

Rasmussen also mentioned to Verliss Huntley if this is something the Farmers Market would want maybe there is an organization interested that could start fundraising for the project to get things started.

Martin House Donation

Chris Utz read a letter addressed to the Parks and Recreation Board for a request he received from Therese Claussen that her family would like to donate a purple martin house in memory of her dad Casey Dziura who was a care taker at Edgewater park from 1986-1993. Claussen went on to say this would be a wonderful tribute to him for his love for purple martins and the pride he took in keeping the park looking its very best. The twelve compartment mini castle is made by Nature House Inc. is constructed of aluminum and consisting of a three section post with a lanyard lock operation to raise and lower the house. Claussen would like to have a small plaque next to the bird house with her father's name and years of service at the park.

Grossman advised he had spoken with Therese and referred her to the Audubon Society. The Audubon Society maintains the bird houses at the park. Grossman isn't sure if this house is adequate, he will call her back and also reach out to the local Audubon to see what they think.

Update Items:

Senior Center: Bob Furland commended Paula Juveland on what an excellent job she does with her work at the Senior Center. An overnight trip to Grand Casino is planned for April 25-26th. The Center is hosting a 55 plus drivers improvement course May 8th and 9th along with many over activities such as bingo and yoga. Furland gave a brief tour of the Senior Center.

Parks: Grossman advised the wind screens have been put up at the pickle ball courts, Arbor Day is coming up. There is an Arbor Day planting event at the Children's Center. Tree planting on Park Ave, after the construction has been completed. Water is getting turned on and checking septic systems (Edgewater and Bancroft Bay) at the park restrooms. Areas are wet and getting ready to mow when it dries up a bit.

Arena: Construction started this week on the air conditioning and air handlers, all the old duct work has been removed from the main arena. Bids came in for the dasher boards last week and came in at around \$112,000 which was good because it was close to the estimated \$110,000. Youth hockey is helping fundraise for half the project cost. Hopefully they will installed by the end of August. The arena has been busy with soccer and hockey.

Recreation: New summer brochure has been completed and will be disbursed at the beginning of May. The guide will be in the same catalog along with Community Ed. Jennifer Davis had 72 Easter Basket deliveries. Volunteers from the National Honor Society assisted Davis in Easter basket deliveries. Easter egg hunt had over 100 participants. Off the Wall Soccer started last week which includes 220 children ages pre-k to 10 years of age. Jennifer Nelson has been busy renting gardens and docks.

Bob Furland advised Thursdays on the Fountain is an exciting new event including live music. The downtown stores are also open on Thursdays, AL Lakers baseball games starts at 7pm on Thursday evenings. The entertainment cost for the live entertainment is from a CVB grant (\$5,000) and also the Mayo Foundation (\$2,000).

Work Plan Items:

Jerry Gabrielatos emailed a working document out to the staff and board members. This email has data which will assist in showing if programs are worthwhile and will give staff a better idea where to spend money on advertising. Gabrielatos advised members of the board all have their own area of expertise and let us know if you have any suggestions.

Dan Borland inquired about the wild flower park at Brookside, Grossman advised it is still being planned on and has been in email contact. Planning on mid May or early June to start.

Vern Rasmussen asked Grossman what is going on with the moisture issue at the dog park. This area is wet and it has been a problem. Grossman advised the long term plan would be to bore a pipe underneath and tile it out as a solution.

Jerry Gabrielatos advised the Freeborn County Initiative is planning on painting benches and planning on selling the benches and the money made will go toward the Arts Initiative. The benches will be painted by artists and placed in different locations around town and then be auctioned off at the end of the summer. The money for the benches came from Southern Minnesota Initiative Fund money. The funding was from money not used for the Cell-fi Tour project. The Freeborn County Arts Initiative wrote up this proposal and were granted funds for this project.

Brian Hensley mentioned the Rock Gym and Boathouse Work Place Wellness Program.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 6:44 pm on a 7-0 voice vote.

Next regular scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, April 18 at 5:30 p.m. at Hayek Field (Warming House, 1215 W Clark St., Albert Lea.

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

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,

Jennifer Nelson
Acting Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Chris Utz
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chairman