

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

*May 16th, 2017 5:30 pm
Hayek Field Warming House
1215 W Clark St, Albert Lea*

Members Present:

Brian Hensley
Vern Rasmussen, Sr.
Anne Sternhagen
Chris Utz, Chairman
Jason Howland (Ex-officio)

Members Absent:

Mark Calderon, Vice Chairman
Dan Borland
Jane Grund

Staff in Attendance:

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

Others in Attendance:

Gary Hagen, 501 Albert Lea St., Albert Lea
Martha Sichko, 214 Lee Pl, Albert Lea

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Chairman Chris Utz.

Approval of Agenda:

The Agenda was approved on a 4-0 voice vote.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from April 18, 2017 meeting were approved on a 4-0 voice vote.

Action/Discussion Items:

Dolly Sichko Memorial Bench, Weber Park, 300 Lee Circle

Martha Sichko gave an update to the board regarding the memorial bench honoring her mother Dolly Sichko. Sichko has been working with Star Granite on the granite bench design. . The classic style bench will be 4' long and will match the stone as near as she can get. The granite will have to be special ordered from Europe and will take approximately three months for delivery. The memorial plaque will go on the backrest of the bench. "In honor of Dolly Jones Sichko" 1928-2016 with a 106 word count written memorial. Joe Grossman commented he spoke with the granite company and believes this will be a good fit for this particular park as the marble granite bench will be similar to the existing Weber memorial rock at the park. Sichko will coordinate with Grossman when they are ready to pour the concrete slab sometime in August. The bench should be completed by the last week in September, at this time Sichko plans to have a memorial ceremony/open house and has extended an invitation to the board members and staff.

Vern Rasmussen made a motion to approve the final concept of the Dolly Sichko memorial bench located at Weber Park and the motion was approved on a 4-0 voice vote.

Old Business:

Proposed restroom to service the downtown: committee members update (Vern Rasmussen Sr., Anne Sternhagen, Brian Hensley). The survey report and survey responses prepared by Board Member Hensley become part of these minutes by reference.

Jerry Gabrielatos shared the following data; 13 responses out of 26 mailed surveys were received from the Downtown Association mailing list. The majority wanted the restrooms to be located at the North Broadway/North Lot location near the future splash pad and a few preferred the restroom to be located in the center of downtown. Most surveys received reflected the city should pay for some if not all the costs of the project. Out of the 13 responses, 2 people suggested using portable toilets, 11 people suggested a small building and no one commented they wanted a kitchenette.

Brian Hensley gave report; the committee was tasked with exploring the public demand for restrooms.

Hensley reached out to the Farmers Market, CVB, Splash Pad fundraising group, downtown business owners and individuals. Feedback was mixed as to how to fund the project, a few people suggested fundraising by service groups, grants, mixed fundraising efforts, a few people did not want the City responsible for the project and few people wanted the City to pay for a full amenity building with restrooms. Hensley advised he traded a few emails with the Farmers Market although he was unable to meet with them as this is a busy time of year for them. The North Broadway location was favored as there are several events such as the car shows, concerts in the park, splash pad, Wind Down Wednesdays and the Farmers Market or other events happening in the vicinity.

Hensley advised Neal Lang from the theater brought up the idea of an expansion of the Marion Ross Performing Arts Center for an entrance and to close off Water Street. This could add some space for the theater as they are short on lobby space and also include restrooms accessible to the public. This could be a long term plan if the council plans to expand the MPAC building.

Hensley suggested adding a handicap portable toilet for 2017. He also recommended adding the restroom discussion back on the agenda in October for further discussion. In the time being to add and an additional portable toilet this year and see how things go with activities being held downtown.

The Farmers Market brought up the challenge of not having access to water to wash their hands when serving food. The access to water prohibits them to be food vendors. They would need to fill up a 30-40 gallon tank to be able to wash their hands. Most vendors live out of city limits and only have access to well water which is prohibited. Downtown business owners who sell food have access to water from their buildings located downtown. Vern Rasmussen advised maybe the Farmer Market needs to come up with a solution to present to the City without the city tax payers having to pay for it all. The Farmers market is using the North Lot free of charge to make a profit. Rasmussen gave the example of groups fundraising for money such as the dog park and the splash pad. Chris Utz advised there would probably wouldn't be the same enthusiasm fundraising for restrooms as for a dog park or splash pad.

Jennifer Nelson read statements from Mark Calderon and Dan Borland who had sent an email they were unable to attend the meeting although wanted to share their thoughts on the restroom discussion.

"I have asked around to some people about the restrooms. Most of the people I talked to would like to see them but also are worried about the cost and vandalism." Mark Calderon

"My only concern is that we don't rush into a decision about the restroom for the downtown but do plan on a facility into the future two to three years out." Dan Borland

Joe Grossman reminded the board members of vandalism and maintenance costs associated with existing public restrooms. The upkeep of added restrooms could be overwhelming.

Chris Utz would like the downtown restroom discussion tabled until the October meeting.

Update Items:

Senior Center: Bob Furland advised the Senior Center is busy with activities and trips such as the Wild Rose Casino in Emmetsburg, IA and a trip is planned to the Side Kick Theater May 25th in Minneapolis.

Parks: The Parks Dept. is busy tree trimming and planting, an Arbor Day celebration was held in April. Parks is also in the process of hiring seasonal staff. A new pole barn is going up west of the Hayek Field playpark to store baseball equipment, checking shelters, and restrooms. Spring is a very busy time of year for shelter rentals. Dock repairs and fountains will be going in this week. Chris Utz inquired if the fountain in front of the hospital belonged to the City, Grossman advised it belongs to the hospital. Flowers went in downtown, working on landscaping around town and had septic issues at Bancroft Park. Tree roots had to be cleaned out and some of the lines needed replacement. The Hayek Park playground equipment will be removed this week. There is no plan to replace at this time do to it is not safe as it is too close to the baseball diamond. People have been hit by baseballs at the park. This play equipment was scheduled to be removed as it no longer passes inspection. Grossman advised they are looking into purchasing fitness style equipment to install along the Blazing Star Trail.

Arena: Bob Furland advised the arena is hosting the after grad party on Friday evening. The arena has hosted this event the past 4-5 years and advised it has been great working with the high school on this event. The A/C and ventilation project should be completed by mid- June and soccer wraps up May 27th. The dasher board project received council approval and the project will be moving forward.

Recreation: Staff is preparing for the pool opening on June 3rd. Jenny Nelson has been busy issuing dock permits, 282 dock permits have been issued so far. The Summer Park & Rec catalog is out and the public has started registering for programs such as swimming lessons. There was a baseball tournament this past weekend with 18 teams being at Snyder Field and 6 at Hammer. "Thursdays on the Fountain" starts May 25 and is funded by the CVB, Mayo Foundation and MN Tourism.

Work Plan Items:

- Bob Furland advised the Recreation Department is working on evaluation systems. Surveys have been sent to program attendees for feedback.
- Jerry Gabrielatos advised door counters will be installed at the arena to track event attendance.
- Furland has been meeting with the YMCA and trying to figure out how to collaborate more and help each other with programming and programming costs.
- Furland advised he has been communicating Community Ed with discussion topics include programming and office space.
- Furland also advised staff is working on functionality, convenience and efficiency of the registration process. He is in the process of shopping, comparing and pricing new registration and scheduling programs. This will help to make it easier for the public to access and register for programs on line and share information easily between offices as the parks staff is located at the city garage and recreation staff is at the arena location. A second work station is planned for the front counter of the recreation office to assist with speeding registrations.

Gabrielatos also advised the painted benches have been set out downtown from a grant awarded to the Freeborn County Arts Initiative from left over money from the "idea splash" and to check them out when you have time.

Board Member Items:

Brian Hensley inquired if a group proposing an ADA (disability) park has approached the City. Bob Furland had communication and the group advised they are not organized enough at this time to talk

about a proposal. In the future Furland, Gabrielatos and the City Manager will be meeting with this group when they are ready. Gabrielatos advised there may be grant possibilities to assist with this type of project.

Jason Howland wanted clarification regarding the downtown restrooms. There will be a second portable toilet added to this location. Grossman advised he is communicating with the vendor regarding their contract with the City.

Howland also brought up a request from a resident in the Lake Chapeau area that would a park with play equipment, Howland advised this is the third resident in this area that has approached him wanting a park in this neighborhood. Howland advised the resident to contact the Parks and Recreation Office to be added to the agenda at a future meeting to talk about his concerns.

There were some questions about the park dedication fees for this area.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 6:32 pm on a 4-0 voice vote.

Next regular scheduled meeting will be Tuesday, June 20 at 5:30 p.m. at Academy Park (Warming House), 910 Frank Hall Dr., Albert Lea, MN.

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

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