

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

*May 21, 2019 5:30 pm
City Hall Council Chambers
221 East Clark Street*

Members Present:

Mark Calderon, Chair
Jennifer-Vogt Erickson
Jodi Hartman
Steve Ball, Vice Chair
Rich Yost

Members Absent:

Belinda Krysan
Anne Sternhagen
Jason Howland (Ex-officio)

Staff in Attendance:

Jerry Gabrielatos, Assistant City Manager
Joe Grossman, Superintendent of Parks
Bob Furland, Recreation Manager
Jennifer Davis, Recreation Program Supervisor
Jennifer Nelson, Recreation Administrative Assistant

Others in Attendance:

Gary Hagen

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

Approval of Agenda:

Steve Ball made a motion to approve the agenda for this evenings meeting and Jodi Hartman seconded the motion. The agenda was approved on a 4-0 voice vote. (Jennifer Vogt-Erickson was not in attendance for approval of the agenda)

Approval of the Minutes:

Steve Ball made a motion to approve the minutes for this evenings meeting and Jodi Hartman seconded the motion. The minutes were approved on a 4-0 voice vote. (Jennifer Vogt-Erickson was not in attendance for approval of the minutes)

Public Items: None

Action/Discussion Items: None

Old Business: None

Update Items/Staff Communication;

Recreation: Report given by Jennifer Davis as follows;

- Aquatic staff orientation is May 22nd
- Rec staff orientation is May 29th
- Play Park open house is May 31st from 5-7 at Academy, Hawthorne and Sondergaard Parks

- Albert Lea Floats and Plays is June 1st
- Off the Wall Soccer season ends June 1st
- Play Park and Rec on the Go activities will began on June 3rd
- Splash Bash will be held June 7th
- Adult co-ed sand volleyball and co-ed softball has started, Davis advised they were unable to fill a men's softball league this year. Surrounding areas are seeing the same trend, either having no league or less teams participating.

Furland gave an update on the pool bath house. The assumption was that a small portion of the wall on the bathhouse needed to be repaired and the contractor hired to make the repairs had concerns and suggested to have an engineer look at the wall to get their opinion. It was found there are steel beams that run the whole length of the pool along the north wall that are encased in concrete or covered in stainless steel that have deteriorated to the point of being unable to support the block that sits on them. The block was starting to tip and the entire north wall of the bath house was deemed unsafe and had to be taken down. A temporary structure will be constructed and a total assessment of the entire building will be taken at a later time. This was something that was unforeseen and additional flaws in the building were found as well. The building is over 40 years old and is failing far sooner than it should be.

The plan is to open the pool as scheduled having the kiddie pool and slide area open using the small bath house and if all goes as planned the larger pool will open a week or two late. If construction takes longer than planned the high school will work with recreation to accommodate session one swimming lessons.

Furland advised the Governors Fishing Opener was a success. The event went well and received many compliments. Furland advised many attendees commented on how beautiful the parks and lakes are. He even heard a few people who had attended past openers say this was the best one they have ever attended. The Governor's staff and Minnesota Tourism were very pleased with the event and the community received great media exposure.

Gabrielatos advised last year in Willmar when it was announced that Albert Lea would be hosting the next fishing opener by Explore Minnesota they introduced Albert Lea as the "Recreation Capital of Southern Minnesota". When the Governor was interviewed he repeated that line. This is a wonderful branding opportunity for Albert Lea.

Furland advised they went through approximately 3,000 plates during the Friday evening community picnic "Hooked on Broadway". There was a wonderful community turn out for this event. Many people had their photo taken with the "#onlyinMN" sign set up at the end of North Broadway. This GFO was made possible by the 600 plus volunteers from the community.

Parks: Report given by Joe Grossman as follows;

- Extra effort was given for the GFO
- Just about up to full staff
- The dock at Edgewater Park was moved due to dredging and will be moved back after completed
- Baseball and volleyball recreation season has started
- The weather is slowing plant material down by weeks
- Seasonal employees will go through a safety training in June and full-time employees receive safety training quarterly
- The City is currently going through a compensation study for employees

Rich Yost advised there was also a baseball tournament at Snyder Field the same weekend as the fishing opener and the parks staff did an exceptional job during the tournament.

City Arena: Report given by Bob Furland as follows;

- June is a busy month during the off season. Hockey and figure skating groups are renting ice for practices and camps. The ice will come out at the end of June.
- 78 applications were received for the Ice Arena and Recreation Coordinator position.

Senior Center: Report given by Jenny Davis as follows;

- Trip to the Old Log Theatre to see The Tenderly Rosemary Clooney Musical May 22nd
- Monthly casino trip to Mystic Lake on June 11th
- Red Wing Tour June 25th to see the shoe company and pottery museum
- Preparing for a 6 week series on chronic pain self-management (June 10th – July 15th)

Jerry Gabrielatos advised Carol Marth, Senior Center Director will be administering a survey to members asking what type of programming they would like to see at the senior center, how they get to the senior center and ask why they are members of the senior center. Gabrielatos advised to be a senior center member you only have to be 50 and the regular youngest attendees are 68 which leaves a gap. Gabrielatos advised they have had meetings with the library staff as the library also offers adult programming as well and there are crossover opportunities to use both facilities frequently. The library is also planning to use the senior center kitchen to host cooking classes. They are looking to capture the people that are 50-68 years of age and increase options for those 68 and over. There has been discussion relocating the senior center to city hall once the fire department leaves although parking could be an issue if the survey reflects most members drive themselves to the senior center.

Gabrielatos advised he will be going door to door to promote the new Rec on the Go program. Gabrielatos is also still researching ESports and will be traveling to Bethany College in Mankato as they have an ESports program at their university which offers scholarships to students. There is a learning curve for staff before ESports could be implemented as a recreation program to offer to the community.

Gabrielatos is looking into installing counters at the parks as the city relies on data to make decisions. It is important to know how many and how people use the parks. Public works is looking at purchasing some counters for projects and they could possibly be borrowed to use at the parks as well.

Gabrielatos also reached out to the Albert Lea Community Theatre group to have actors help market and promote recreation programming. He is also working on the summer community picnics and making them more resident driven by allowing neighborhoods to organize their own block party and request Rec on the Go to participate and drop off a bounce house. Police and Fire could also be invited to the picnic as well to meet people which is good for community relations.

An article will be run in the Albert Lea Tribune on how to enjoy Albert Lea on two wheels. This article will promote biking and show how Albert Lea is best seen on two wheels.

Furland advised the Albert Lea Area Cyclist group along with the city is working on making Albert Lea a bike friendly city. They have been meeting with the local SHIP (Statewide Health Improvement Partnership). They are working on bike friendly roads, proposed trails and hope to have a trail map out this fall highlighting area bike trails. The Rock -n-Roll the Lakes bike ride is scheduled for Saturday July 13th.

Jennifer Vogt-Erickson voiced her concern of all the plastic she finds in the lakes. She attended the lake clean-up day headed up by the Lakes Foundation of Albert Lea. She finds lots of plastic bags and small pieces of plastic in the lake. Vogt-Erickson believes this is a growing problem and maybe an issue the park board would want to address as plastic pollution is a problem. Grossman agreed as an environmentalist and resource management person this is a problem. Grossman believes people should be using more reusable containers and not disposable plastic bottles and acknowledged recycling is a global issue.

Grossman received an application for an adopt a park from Girl Scout Troup 47848 for a short period of time. Grossman will contact this group and coordinate a day for clean up at Wedgewood Park or Edgewater Park.

Furland welcomed and introduced Rich Yost who is the newest board member.

Board Member Items:

Steve Ball asked how Dan Borland's memorial bench was presented to the council. Grossman advised there is a policy Phil Wacholz was not aware of and believes he wants to formalize the proposal before it is presented to council.

Adjournment: Steve Ball made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting at 6:14pm, and Rich Yost seconded the motion. Adjournment was approved on a 5-0 voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Nelson
Acting Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Mark Calderon
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chairman