

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2025 6 pm
Marion Ross Performing Arts Center

Members Present:

Steve Ball
Kent Rahn
Therese Salazar
Whitney Sauer
Wende Taylor
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio

Members Absent:

Amy Leach
Tony Segura

Staff in Attendance:

Bob Furland, Recreation Manager
Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works
Ben Bangert, Parks Superintendent
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Office Manager

Others in Attendance:

none

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Steve Ball at 6:00pm.

Adopt Agenda:

Wende Taylor made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed.

Approval of the Minutes:

Wende Taylor made the motion to approve the minutes from the October 20, 2025 meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed.

Public Items:

None

Old Business Items:

None

New Business Items:

Proposed Park on Adams Ave – public outreach results and recommendation to City Council on type of park to develop

The City inherited this property at 620 Adams Ave through tax forfeiture and would now like to apply for a \$1.25 million federal grant to help remove hazardous buildings and their contents. The City is looking for public support for a few different options that the site could be utilized as.

1. Mini park: remove all buildings and make into a park with greenspace and parking.
2. Mixed use area: remove hazardous buildings and leave the three structurally sound buildings and look to sell to a private business for reuse. The City would develop the rest of the area into greenspace with parking and perhaps other amenities.
3. Full trailhead: Remove all buildings and develop full trailhead with parking, a shelter, restrooms and other amenities. This option could also include leaving the three structurally sound buildings and sell to a private business.

The City sought community feedback through a survey and the results were presented to the board. 160 surveys were mailed and 35 were returned. Of those 35 returned they responded as follows: 1 supported any of the three options, 6 preferred the mini park, 13 preferred the mixed-use area and 15 supported the full trailhead. There were 6 comment letters provided to the City with 2 supporting any option, 1 preferred the mini park and 3 voiced their support for mixed use area.

The board discussed the following:

- EPA Grant – Is this grant in full (\$1.25 million) or is it a matching grant? Does this grant only cover costs associated with the demolition and removal of the hazardous waste and materials, or does it cover any costs for the improvements that would be made to the site once cleaned up – such as parking lots, park space, shelter, bathrooms, etc? What happens if we don't get the grant – will the City still fund the demo of the hazardous buildings?
- What would be the value of the buildings that are salvageable? What would the City look to sell them for?
- Is playground equipment included in any of the options? They board voiced concerns of adequate space for that and also if it would be the best due to industry emissions close by.
- Jason Howland discussed the Old Depot building and the board was curious on the City's intention with that building. If it is salvageable, would it be better to put efforts into making that the spot for parking and a restroom along that stretch of the proposed trail instead.
- Has there been any cost estimates on the different plan options?
- The board would also like an update on the current status of the Songbird Trail.

The Park and Recreation Board has chosen to hold off on making any recommendations to the City Council and would like to receive follow-up information on the above questions at the next meeting.

Staff Report Discussion:

None

Staff Updates:

Recreation: Report provided by Bob Furland and Dani Bakken;

- Young Athletes finished on November 11. We received a lot of positive feedback and will be holding another session in January.
- Adult volleyball starts on Monday, November 17 at the Glenville-Emmons High School.

- Winter/Spring Fun Guide was sent to the printer this week and will be mailed out at the beginning of December.

Parks: Report provided by Ryan Hajek and Ben Bangert;

- Fall preparations continue. Winterizing park facilities/ leaf mulching & collection/ fountains and docks off Fountain Lake.
- Splash Pad Restroom- delays in materials for interior- continues as staff are available.
- Christmas decoration refurbishment- 15 Christmas trees, with fresh paint, garland, lights. Fountain Lake Park to New Denmark Park.
- Fall tree planting complete. 70 park and boulevard trees. 18 spade white pine trees from Bancroft park to WWTP for windbreak.
- Ice rinks are being set up and repairs made as needed.

City Arena: Report provided by Bob Furland/Josh Heilman;

- Facility updates –
 - See Facilities Project Update below
- Events -
 - B Bantam Youth Tournament Nov 7/8/9
 - Teams from Eastview, Cottage Grove, Dodge County, White Bear Lake, Des Moines, Mason City and New Ulm
 - A Bantam Youth Tournament Nov 14/15/16
 - Teams from Waconia, Sioux City, Fremont, Dodge County, Winona, Des Moines and Kansas City.
 - ALHS Girls Hockey team started practices Oct 27 and hosted their first game with Luverne on Nov 11th with huge victory 5-4. They will play at home again on Nov 13.
 - ALHS Boys Hockey team started practices Nov 10.
- Other events –
 - We have had participation in our weekday public skate by many young Mite aged skaters.

Aquatic Center: Report provided by Bob Furland/Dani Bakken;

- None

Senior Center: Report provided by Bob Furland;

- Trips -
 - A Christmas Carol trip – December 9
- Programs/Events –
 - Christmas Luncheon December 5 11 a.m. – Edgewater Bay Pavilion
 - Continued meetings regarding the possible relocation of the Senior Center

Marion Ross Theater: Report provided by Bob Furland;

- Facility Updates –

- See Rec facilities update below.
- **Upcoming events –**
 - Mitchell Hall Band with authentic Johnny Cash music– Nov 30 at 2 p.m.
 - Anthony Shore as Elvis Christmas Show – Dec 14th 2 p.m.
 - Dawson Family Christmas Show – Dec 20th 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Referendum Project Updates

City Arena

Lobby and office area

- Continued work on the completion of punch list items

Refrigeration and arena floor

- Subfloor heat piping is complete
- Insulation and vapor barrier are complete
- Installing rink floor coolant main piping has begun
- Condenser pipe installation continues
- Refrigeration piping continues to make progress
- Refrigeration plant electric work continues
- Well inspection and testing are ongoing

Aquatic Center

- Block work on the new entrance continues
- Albert Lea Electric is installing wire and conduit

Marion Ross Theater

- Window and door installation is complete
- Walls painted
- Baseboard is currently being installed

Coming up next week:

City Arena

Lobby and office area

- Punch list item completion

Refrigeration and arena floor

- Installation of chairs for rink piping
- Installation of rebar
- Plumbing inspection for mains
- Electric connections to the geothermal well
- Final connections for the geothermal well

Aquatic center

- Install roof framing for new ticket building
- Roofing will be installed
- Electric and data cable installation

Theater

- Replace all lighting in the lobby and entrance area
- Install ADA door opener buttons
- Final cleanup
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Marion Ross Theater

- Front doors are installed. Crews will be back on October 20th to start windows and install the drop ceiling and electric ADA door opener.

**** Top 5 Project Updates:**

Restrooms by Splash Pad –

- Update under Parks updates

Develop the Union Pacific rail to trail –

- Update under Cathy Malakowsky's updates

Develop an off-season field house –

- Status of the non-city group working on this idea?

Upgrade Snyder Fields –

- No new update

Update aging facilities, including the City Arena and Aquatic Center –

- See update under Referendum Project Updates

Board Member Items:

None

Adjournment: Wende Taylor made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting and Therese Salazar seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Afton Wacholz
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Steve Ball
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chair