

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

December 15, 2025 6 pm
Edgewater Bay Pavilion

Members Present:

Steve Ball
Kent Rahn
Amy Leach
Therese Salazar (arrived at 6:09p)
Whitney Sauer
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio

Members Absent:

Tony Segura
Wende Taylor

Staff in Attendance:

Bob Furland, Recreation Manager
Steve Janke, City Engineer and Director of Public Works
Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works
Cathy Malakowsky, Engagement and Enrichment Director
Dani Bakken, Recreation Coordinator
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Office Manager

Others in Attendance:

Phil Wacholz, Freeborn County Engineer/Director of Public Works

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order by Steve Ball at 6:01pm.

Adopt Agenda:

Amy Leach made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Whitney Sauer seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0 (Therese absent). Motion declared passed.

Approval of the Minutes:

Amy Leach made the motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2025 meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0 (Therese absent). Motion declared passed.

Public Items:

None

Old Business Items:

Songbird Trail Update – Phil Wacholz

This project was a 2015 vision that is gaining big momentum now. First set of construction plans for 2026 are complete with HDR Design. 60% of the project will run from Albert Lea (Fountain St) to Manchester and this will serve as the priority section to start. There is a total of \$1.5 million in grants secured for the project, with roughly a total of \$7 million needed to complete the trail all the way to Manchester. The bridge to crossover Hwy 13 is where a large part of the total is dedicated. There were other options that were lower cost but did not meet MNDOT requirements.

Next step for the County is to let HDR know what is wanted for a design. The design would then be presented to the City with a proposed 50% cost share of the \$1.6 million portion of section 1 and 2 that includes four bridges.

The plan is to go out for bid March/April 2026 for the first contract. The bid completion date would be early to mid-October 2026. Steve Jahnke sees no issue still getting contractors to complete this work.

Discussion was had on the location of trailheads. Options discussed were: park in Hartland, Bend in the Road in Manchester, Shoff Park, Frank Hall Park and possibly Pickerel Lake Park for the southern option.

Proposed Adams Avenue Park Update – Cathy Malakowsky

Cathy discussed the questions the board had asked at the November meeting. The Depot property is not owned by the City and the taxes are paid up on that property. There is however a \$70,000 assessment on the property due to the new roof the City had to repair, so that could be used as leverage in the future. The board had asked about that location possibly being a trail head location and history center.

Cathy confirmed that the EPA grant is for cleanup and demo only. This grant will not cover any development past fill stabilization.

There was a question from the board on the value of the buildings that are salvageable. The City would need a commercial appraisal to attach a value to a building and property. The City is having a structural engineer examine the buildings to see if any are salvageable.

Frank Hall Park Bike Shelter and Splashpad Bathroom Update – Ryan Hajek

The bike shelter location just north of the current bathrooms at Frank Hall Park is set to be complete June 1st, 2026. Removal of soil and concrete work is set to be completed this winter. Red Door Construction will begin in the spring with the shelter construction.

The splashpad bathrooms are now temperature controlled for winter with heat. City staff are waiting on the arrival of the stall partitions. The anticipated completion date is hopefully the end of January, 2026.

New Business Items:

Board Appointments for 2026 and Meeting Calendar for 2026

Due to two new board members coming on in 2026, the board has opted to hold off on designating their new chair and vice-chair until the board is complete.

The board and staff thanked Steve Ball for his years of dedication to the Park and Recreation Advisory Board and wished him well.

Due to the holidays on the 3rd Monday in January and February the board will need to decide on an alternate date for the meeting those months. Amy Leach made the motion to move the monthly meetings back their 5:30p start. The time was moved back to accommodate former board members and how that they are no longer on the board the 5:30p start time works better for staff and board. Therese seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 5-0. Motion declared passed.

January 2026 will now be on January 26 in Rm 109 at City Hall at 5:30p. The February date will be decided at the January meeting.

Staff Report Discussion:

The status of the Pickleball groups fundraising was asked by the board. The City shared that the group has communicated that they have raised nearly \$75,000 of the \$250,000 goal.

This meeting is also Bob Furland's last meeting with the City. Bob will be moving on to a new position as the Freeborn County History Center Executive Director.

Staff Updates:

Recreation: Report provided by Bob Furland and Dani Bakken;

- Winter/Spring Fun Guide will be hitting mailboxes early next week.
- Registration for Adult Fitness classes and Young Athletes are now open online.
 - Weight training and stretch and strength with Pilates will be held on Mondays and Wednesdays beginning January 26th.
 - Young Athletes is an innovative sports play program that introduces children, ages 2-7 years old with and without intellectual disabilities to the work of sports. Classes will be held for 6 weeks on Tuesdays beginning January 20th.
- Adult volleyball started the winter season and have moved locations from the Armory to Glenville-Emmons High School. Unfortunately, the high school is not available come January, so City staff is looking for a new location and solution to finish the winter season.
- The Santa letter mailboxes are now available at City Hall inside the Clark St entrance and at the City Arena. There is also a Google Doc that can be completed online and submitted as well.
- The outdoor rinks and warming houses are anticipated to be open in 7-10 days depending on next week's forecast. The weather has not been cooperative with ice making up to this point. Parks staff will be working diligently as weather allows to get them ready by the holidays.

Parks: Report provided by Ryan Hajek and Ben Bangert;

- Ongoing snow removal from sidewalks, parking lots and trails.
- Ice rinks are under construction. Weather pending, plan to open sometime during the week of Dec. 15th.
- CVB ordered a quantity of new and replacement banners for Broadway and Bridge Ave. with summer and winter designs.
- Brush clearing project at Ulland's Construction dump has made quite a bit of progress.
- Zach Godtland has transitioned from Street Dept. to Parks Dept. and will continue to help with plowing as needed.
- Furnace is installed at the Splash Pad bathroom; interior wall coverings and amenities will resume weather permitting.

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

- Facility updates –
 - See Facilities Project Update below
- Events -
 - A Peewee Youth Tournament Dec 6/7
 - Teams from Mason City, Ames, and Litchfield
 - A Squirt Youth Tournament Dec 12/13/14
 - Teams from Ames, Austin, Des Moines, Sioux City, Nebraska, Proctor and Fond Du Lac.

- ALHS Boys and Girls High School teams are in full swing and play most Tuesdays and/or Thursdays at home.
- Other events –
 - Weekday public skate and stick and puck calendar can be found on our website or Facebook page.

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

- None

Senior Center: Report provided by Bob Furland;

- Trips -
 - None
- Programs/Events –
 - Christmas Luncheon December 5 11 a.m. – Edgewater Bay Pavilion
 - Memory Café – December 17 at 2 p.m.
 - Art with Emelia – December 17th at 10 a.m.
 - The Senior Center will be closed December 22-26 for the holidays.

Marion Ross Theater: Report provided by Bob Furland;

- **Facility Updates –**
 - See Rec facilities update below.
- **Upcoming events –**
 - Anthony Shore as Elvis Christmas Show – Dec 14th 2 p.m.
 - Dawson Family Christmas Show – Dec 20th 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. SOLD OUT

Referendum Project Updates

City Arena

Lobby and office area

- Continued work on the completion of punch list items

Refrigeration and arena floor

- Leak detection on the Colstrup arena floor piping is ongoing through the arena concrete floor pour
- Dasher board anchors are being installed
- Steel mesh installed over the top of the piping on Colstrup floor
- Refrigeration room ammonia piping is ongoing
- Electric equipment is being installed
- Install new door frames in compressor and electric room

Aquatic Center

- Roof underlayment was installed on the new admission building.

Marion Ross Theater

- Door actuators to be installed on December 11th

Coming up next week:

City Arena

Lobby and office area

- Punch list item completion

Refrigeration and arena floor

- Colstrup floor will be poured on January 16
- Pour compressor pad in the refrigeration room

Aquatic center

- No new work

Marion Ross Theater

- No new work

**** Top 5 Project Updates:**

Restrooms by Splash Pad –

- Update under Parks updates

Develop the Union Pacific rail to trail –

- Update at the meeting from Phil Wacholz and Cathy Malakowsky

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:

Therese Salazar –

- There is an MLK event on January 19 at Riverland – Albert Lea Campus starting at 6p. The community is invited.

- There is a lamp on Bridge Ave near Glenview Dr that is not working. It has a pink ribbon on it. Steve will follow-up on this.

Steve Ball –

- Discussed the street lights on Fountain St and Lakeview Blvd to Fairway being more festive.

Amy Leach –

- Follow-up on the curb cut out on Lakeview Blvd to the east of the entrance to Edgewater Park for pedestrian crossing.

Adjournment: Therese Salazar made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting and Amy Leach 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