

MINUTES
PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION MEETING
October 8, 2019

MEMBERS PRESENT: Annette Meyer, Don Heinonen, Tina Kaney, Tom Anderson, Tonya Prim, and Wendy Kvale

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mary Auger

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Michael Meelhouse

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: Mitch Hendricks, Cody Rutledge, Bazil Zuehlke, Jamie Anderson, Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

Wendy Kvale called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

No changes to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 10, 2019 MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Meyer, to approve the September 10, 2019 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

2019 RECREATION REPORT – Jamie Anderson reviewed the 2019 recreation programs and gave the following highlights: Donations and sponsorship were down this year. Next year there will be two sites for Kids in Motion and will offer three weeks of the middle school program. Scholarships are currently only offered for the day camps. The scholarship fund does not get depleted and the scholarship only pays for half of the day camp. The goal is to get the fund up to the \$5,000 so that the city could offer scholarships for all programs. A few new programs were offered, some were successful and will continue but the programs that did not have a good turnout will be dropped. Indoor pickle ball at the armory will start in November.

There are some new collaborating organizations such as Med Express that helped with the safe sitter/home alone program teaching about first aid.

The full-time and part-time positions are still posted and should be filled by the end of the month.

Discussed applying for the No Child Left Inside grant from the DNR.

BLUE OX AMATEUR BASEBALL PRESENTATION

Marcia introduced Mitch Hendricks, Cody Rutledge, and Bazil Zuehlke, the representatives from the Blue Ox Baseball Team. They started playing amateur baseball in 2007, went to state 2015 and have been there four out of five years. There are approximately 300 amateur baseball teams in Minnesota now. They would like to get connected with the City and have a home field. They

have been playing at the BSU fields since 2007 but it is not the Blue Ox home field and it gets very expensive and as a result, the cost for each member is around \$300. They are limited in the fundraising they can do at BSU. They want to create a culture around their team and become a “city” team. Majority of the members are from Bemidji or are going to be staying here once they graduate from college. They are interested in using the field at North Country Park. Marcia stated that the field is currently under-utilized.

Marcia gave a brief history of the baseball field at North Country Park. Discussed the Blue Ox team could possibly help out with Jason Brodina’s idea of starting a youth with baseball program that would focus on the youth in that neighborhood. Currently all of the youth programs are run by organizations and that includes baseball.

There are some requirements for the Blue Ox team to be able to claim it as their home field. The field itself will work for them but they would need lighting, stands, and improvements to the dugouts. Discussed fund raising opportunities to help defer the costs.

They would play 12 to 17 games at home and possibly host or sponsor tournaments. Their games would not conflict with running a youth baseball program out of that field.

It was agreed to hold discussions with the Vista North Board early in the process because they were concerned about lighting and noise when the park was being developed. The Blue Ox representatives agreed to be included in those discussions.

Marcia will investigate the cost of lighting, dugouts, and scoreboards. There could be an opportunity for the baseball team to market the field for funding. Discussed naming rights to the field to help pay for the costs. Discussed looking into possible grants from the major teams. Marcia will pull the policy for the naming rights and marketing and share it with the Blue Ox representatives. Marcia will also set up a meeting with Vista North Board Chair person.

Blue Ox would ideally like to start playing next June. It would take lights, scoreboard and bleachers to make it work. If they have to wait until 2021, they will continue to play at BSU.

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Kaney, for Marcia to look into the infrastructure needs requested by the blue ox amateur baseball team and look into funding options. Motion carried.

NOVEMBER 12TH MEETING

Jamie will be presenting to the City Council on November 12th Marcia suggested cancelling the Parks & Recreation Commission’s November meeting and invited the Commissioners to attend the work session on November 12th. Marcia will send out the strategic plan to the commissioners before the work session. It was agreed to cancel the November meeting. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, December 10th.

DIRECTOR’S UPDATE

Discussed the Neilson Reise Arena. Information on the rate increases were mailed to a majority of the users.

Gordon Falls - install of the playground has been postponed because the site is saturated and there have been some drainage issues. Install will be scheduled for the spring unless we get some really nice weather in November. There is some site work that needs to take place. Planning to install picnic tables and benches.

Carnegie – there are four rentals scheduled in the building. Friends of the Carnegie held an open house and had many people walk through. The part-time position will be an event attendant who will help unlock and lock the facility.

Security cameras will be installed in October at City Park and at Paul and Babe area. City Park sustained major damage last night to the multi-purpose building.

Nymore hockey rink installation has begun. The new rink should be ready for this season. Discussed the possibility of having a baseball field at Nymore Park if the program at North Country Park is successful.

The South Shore parking lot is near completion. Prairie Restoration will be doing the dormant seeding soon and they will also be working at the site where hockey day was.

The full-time position was made possible by combining two part-time positions, the City Council allocated the funds from the youth commission to the parks department and recreation fees will most likely have a small increase next year. Working with the Community Developer to try to find more funding options for the recreation programs to help offset the fees.

Discussed the blue ox marathon, and the city running some type program such as the couch to 5k that would run congruent with the marathon.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Kaney, seconded by Prim, to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant