

**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
MARCH 9, 2021**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Anderson, Tim Faver, Gwenia Fiskevold Gould, Don Heinonen, Tonya Prim, and Bethany Wesley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wendy Kvale

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Dan Jourdain

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

Tonya Prim called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

Everyone introduced themselves to Dan Jourdain, the new City Council member.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:

No amendments were made.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 9, 2021 MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Anderson, to approve the February 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT/ALGOMA PARK

Marcia reviewed the concept and grant application. The playground is from 1990 and was moved from the old Nymore beach area so a new playground is needed in Algoma Park. Landscape Structure put together a playground concept that utilizes the concrete that is already there and incorporates the existing swings. It is a seven acre park that was acquired when the city annexed the area in 2011. There was a softball field, no parking, tennis court and unsafe playground. The park was rundown and overgrown and Parks Department was given \$30,000 to make improvements in the park. The \$30,000 covered moving the playground to the park, installation of a gravel parking lot, fixed the backstop on the softball field, put in the six pickelball courts. Funding is always a challenge for fixing up the neighborhood parks. There isn't a lot of money in the parkland dedication fund. The annual park's budget includes \$75,000 for all of the parks. Discussion was held regarding some of the issues at the park and lack of lighting was identified as one issue. Lighting is a very expensive amenity to add to a park.

Marcia explained that the grant is due March 31st and the max amount to receive from the grant is \$250,000 that requires a 50% match. The budget for the concept is approximately \$600,000. The high priority items identified by the neighborhood survey are the restroom building and playground but these are also some of the more expensive items.

Marcia recommended to put the project on hold and try to get a long term plan financially for the neighborhood parks since there is likely no funding match available at this time. Discussed having the Parks & Recreation Commission develop an overall plan for all of the neighborhood parks that would identify the needs of each park and then put an approximate dollar amount to each park. Then the Commission could request the City Council to allocate funds for the neighborhood parks. Discussed Cameron Park and the needs of that park such as the lift station that needs to be replaced and replacing the existing restroom facility. There is \$250,000 in the CIP to spend on Cameron in 2023 but this will not cover all of the necessary costs.

It was agreed that the Commissioners will independently visit some of the neighborhood parks to help identify the various needs of each park and table the Algoma Park project for now.

COVID/POLICY UPDATES

Facility Rental – Marcia explained that facility rentals will go live on March 11th online. All of the building occupancies have been defined and signage will be placed. Current guidelines determine that there can only be 25% of the occupancy rate but this could change by summer time. The open air pavilions have less restrictions. This year the rentals will start on Memorial Day weekend but the park's restrooms will be open and porta johns placed by May 15th. The Parks and Recreation Department does have a COVID-19 preparedness plan that is posted on the city's website.

Marina slips at South Shore are available to rent and a few have already been rented. The garden plots are available to rent and many plots have been rented. Sanford Health approached the Parks Department to run a large community garden on their land. Marcia will continue discussions with them on this potential future project.

Softball Leagues would like to start playing. Marcia will be meeting with them prior to the City Council's special event meeting that is scheduled for March 22nd. However games cannot start immediately as the Parks Department needs time to prepare the fields.

PAUL BUNYAN AND BABE CONSERVATION

Last summer, Jensen Conservation Services evaluated both Paul and Babe statues. There are several areas on both that need to be addressed. This will be a two part project, one will be the conservation of Paul and Babe and the second part will be addressing the drainage issue of the water on the plaza.

The cost is \$24,500 for the conservation part of Paul and Babe. Babe's hooves have deteriorated faster because of the freeze and thaw. Jensen Conservation has indicated they can work on Paul and Babe in early May. Working with Finance Director to determine the source of funding for the \$24,500.

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Faver, to move forward with the conservation of Paul and Babe for \$24,500. Motion carried.

For the second part of this project, Marcia is recommending hiring Freeberg and Grund Engineering firm to address the drainage in the plaza at a cost of \$8,950. The proposal was

reviewed and include redirecting the water in the plaza away from Babe base so it will not continue to collect under Babe and deteriorate Babe's hooves.

COMMISIONER UPDATES

Tim Faver shared that 2/5/1945 on the Life magazine shared a story of Paul and Babe as the centerfold.

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTER COMMITTEE (TIC) – Bethany Wesley shared there was a first meeting on the TIC. They reviewed the history of the building and discussed the future of the facility. Discussed hiring a greeter and doing rentals of specific amenities such as kayaks, canoes, and bicycles. Also discussed renting out the building as we do other facilities. There will be another committee meeting in a week. The restrooms will be opened in the summer.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

The sponsorship packets have been coming back with positive results. Recreation Department has received over \$10,000 in sponsorships.

The new Park Superintendent, Aaron Weeks will start on May 3rd. He is from South Dakota. Working on staffing the maintenance positions along with recreation positions.

Lois Jenkins, from the Beltrami County History Center, has been doing research on Gordon Falls Park and is working on getting signage together to be placed in the park. She will also do some research on Cameron park and perhaps will do some history research on some of the other parks.

The city council will be meeting on March 22nd to discuss special events held at the waterfront. Sanford Health and the county nurse will be present at the meeting. Will also discuss permitting or process to hold protests at the waterfront.

Commissioners discussed creating a policy for the demonstrators/protestors. The idea is to have something simple for people who may ask for permission. All agreed it would be best to keep any potential policy simple.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Faver, seconded by Wesley, to adjourn the meeting at 6:10 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant