

**MINUTES
PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION MEETING
MAY 12, 2020**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Faver, Don Heinonen, Wendy Kvale, and Tonya Prim

MEMBERS ABSENT: Tina Kaney and Tom Anderson

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Michael Meelhouse

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Amendments to Agenda:

No amendments were made to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 14, 2020 MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Faver, to approve the April 14, 2020 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

COMMISSION VACANCY

Marcia explained that Annette Meyer has a verbal resigned from the Parks & Recreation Commission today. Annette recently moved out of the city limits so in accordance with the City Ordinance, she can no longer be on the Commission. She hopes to move back into the city but is not sure when that may happen. Marcia suggested to wait to see what happens with the Covid-19 situation before trying to recruit a new commissioner.

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Prim, to approve Annette Meyer's resignation from the Parks & Recreation Commission and to start the recruitment process and review the situation next month, Motion carried.

COVID-19 UPDATES/DISCUSSION – PARKS

Marcia reported that all parks' restrooms, TIC, and the Carnegie Library are closed.

Playgrounds and the skatepark remain closed as of April 7th.

Chris Richardson, Recreation Staff, is monitoring the parks in the evenings and weekends. He is providing information and educational materials on social distancing in the parks.

Marcia, along with staff, have created three videos to encourage social distancing while still enjoying the parks. With the assistance from Josh at Visit Bemidji, videos were done at the pickleball court, the dog park, and the disc golf course.

Summer camps will most likely be cancelled for this season and staff will focus on promoting the Rec on the Go program. Recreation is selling social distancing T-shirts to provide revenue to the recreation department to try to help make up some of the revenue lost from cancelling Kids in Motion Day Camps and other programs.

These facilities are currently open:

- Summer disc golf course
- Dog park
- Park areas
- Trails
- Basketball courts
- Tennis and pickle ball courts

Park Rental Facilities – no new rentals are being taken and full refunds are being offered for cancellations. We have cancelled all park reservations through May 31st. The decision to cancel further rentals will be based on the upcoming CDC recommendations and the Governor orders.

Restrooms remained closed in all of the parks. Most cities in Minnesota have kept their park restrooms closed. It will take a lot of capacity and resources to keep them clean and sanitized and safe for the public.

The public beaches will need to be addresses in regard to social distancing. The concern is areas where people will congregate making social distancing impossible.

Since March, the Park and Recreation Department has issued around \$7000.00 in refunds.

Summer Theater camp has also been cancelled.

The docks and fishing piers have been installed.

Jamie has been working on the Red on the Go program and will launch that this week on Facebook Live. The camp boxes are \$25.00 and scholarships are available. Discussion was held on increasing the amount of scholarship per participant, currently it pays 50% of the program. Commissioners agreed that it's important the participants pay something towards the camp boxes to keep the "buy in" idea but give more scholarship amount than just 50%.

The 5k program, Moose on the Loose, had 120 participants.

NORTH COUNTRY PARK

Once Marcia receives a copy of the final concept and the costs, she will forward it on to the commissioners. The Rotary Club requested swings added so that was done. The final concept will need to be presented to the City Council for approval.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Wendy asked about the reaction regarding closing the ice arena. Marcia responded that it was a mixed bag, some understood and some were upset that there wasn't a location for their kids to skate, which has been determined by the Governor's order. Marcia stated that the real question is what the city council will do next with the Neilson Arena. Michael stated that they are going to do a work session later in the month regarding next year's levy and they will most likely discuss the arena at that session.

Tonya expressed concern over the amount of broken bottles on the trail system behind the Park Place Apartments, also known as the railroad corridor. It was suggested to put a few garbage cans in the area to see if it'll help keep it clean.

Most of the park's staff is back full-time. They have been platooning and alternating start times. Jake Pederson from the arena is working in the parks. There will be five seasonal employees this year.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Prim, to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant