

**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
MAY 9, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Tom Anderson, Tim Faver, Don Heinonen, Tonya Prim, and Bethany Wesley

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Kristine Bommersbach

**COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:** Gwenia Fiskevold Gould

**CITY STAFF & OTHERS:** Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Bethany Wesley called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:**

None were made

**APPROVAL OF APRIL 14, 2023 MEETING MINUTES:**

**Motion by Faver, seconded by Heinonen, to approve the April 14, 2023 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.**

**COMMISSION RESIGNATION/APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

Gwenia Fiskevold Gould submitted her resignation as a Park & Recreation Commissioner because she is now a City Council member. The opening will be posted for 30 days and all applications will be reviewed by the Commissioners and make a recommendation to the City Council. Commissioners reviewed the process of filling the post along with the by-laws.

Discussed the process the Parks and Recreation Commission have used in the past when selecting the applicant to recommend to the City Council along with the potential new demands the Council may start requiring of applicants applying to be on Commissions and Boards. All agreed to continue this process as what has been done in the past.

**OUTDOOR PROGRAM CENTER**

Larson met with BSU today and discussed the future of their involvement with the OPC. BSU stated they are interested in submitting a proposal for a short term lease that will include July and August since their current lease goes through the end of June 2023. Larson expects to receive their proposal by the end of next week. They discussed doing service in place of rent in July and August and swapping services between BSU and the Recreation Department to help reduce their rent. The Recreation Department uses BSU's Gillette Center for swimming or as a rain location during the

KIM camps. They also discussed allowing the city to keep any funds collected from partnerships with BSU to help offset the amount of rent they pay.

Larson explained that the long term solution would involve a committee between BSU and the City/Commissioners. BSU has stated that they cannot sustain the service they were providing in the past. Discussed requesting financials on their programs/rentals. The Commissioners will need to discuss how they see that building being used if BSU discontinues using it. Their short term plan will include reduced hours and reduced rental items. They are not sure what they can pay, if anything. These are the items that will be in their short term proposal. The Commissioners agreed they would all like to see the short term proposal that BSU submits and agreed to meet on May 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 to review it. Anyone who cannot attend can read the proposal and email any suggestions to Larson

Larson shared that Double Tree and Hampton Inn will be expanding their services, but it may be for their guests only. Latitude 218 is in the process of opening and will be doing fish guiding, along with rental of boats, jet skis, kayaks, canoes, and paddleboards.

## **NATIVE POLLINATOR PLANTINGS**

Parks Department received funding through Beltrami County SWCD and Leech Lake Tribal College for plantings in Diamond Point Park. Locations and plants have been selected and there will be a public planting on Monday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Discussed Brinkman Park and planting a native prairie in the area that is not being mowed. Staff mows a trail around the perimeter of the park and a path down the middle. This project will require a planting plan. Fire Station 2 will receive plantings of native and pollinating plants because they are looking to reduce the area they mow. The Birds, Bees and Butterflies group will help with the plan and installation at Fire Station 2.

## **PROJECTS – PARKS**

**Tourist Information Center (TIC)** bikes are now available to rent and the new brochure racks are installed. Visit Bemidji and Paul Bunyan Communications are working together to have the weather channel streaming on the two large TV/monitors that are on the wall behind the desk. Discussed putting all events that will be going on throughout the city. Originally the plan was to get paid advertising to help offset the city's costs at the TIC. A policy and procedure needs to be developed for advertising. Larson is too busy to work on this project at this time so Wesley and Fiskevold Gould will work together on this project.

### **Natural Playground**

Working on some of items from last year and the contractor will be on-site next week to complete Phase 2 of the project.

### **Paul Bunyan Park-Landscaping**

Larson is working with Brian Grund, who has volunteered his time, to create a planting plan and are working with TK Outdoors to install irrigation.

There are some issues with the concrete on the plaza but the contractor and Mark Fuller have developed a plan to fix these issues and the warranty will be extended another year.

## **DIRECTOR'S UPDATES**

North Country Park – first double header baseball game was held on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

City Park – the softball fields are being used by Community Education for their afterschool program and league play and BASA will start using the fields in the next month.

Budget discussions are ongoing. Larson shared that she is requesting two new full-time positions. One for park maintenance and another for support staff to focus on community outreach.

## **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Prim mentioned some of the garbage left on the trail behind Park Place, along the railroad corridor.

Discussed the Superintendent position. There were 24 total applicants, and 14 made it through to be scored for potential interviews.

Fiskevold Gould reported that the dog park is looking clean. There will be more dog park events.

The disc golf course is already very busy.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Prim, to adjourn the meeting at 6:05 p.m. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall  
Administrative Assistant