

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**July 14, 2020**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tina Kaney, Tom Anderson

**COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:** Michael Meelhouse

**CITY STAFF & OTHERS:** Marcia Larson, and Jamie Anderson

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

No amendments were made to the agenda

**APPROVAL OF JUNE 9, 2020 MEETING MINUTES:**

**Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Faver, to approve the June 9, 2020 Meeting Minutes with the correction that Tom Anderson was absent. Motion carried.**

**PARKS AND RECREATION MONTH/ RECREATION PROGRAMMING UPDATE:**

Recreation Coordinator, Jamie Anderson reported on events and activities planned to celebrate Park and Recreation Month in July. The Recreation Department will be offering “bonus” program in the box for July including Nature Box, Bike Challenge, Beach in a Box, Campfire Kit. In addition, other special events including Clue Game, Geocache Challenge, Media posts on the benefits of parks and recreation and photo contest will be held. Discussion was held on the success of Rec on the Go and the other programming.

**COVID-19 UPDATES/DISCUSSION – PARKS DEPARTMENT**

Parks and Recreation Director, Marcia Larson provided an update on facilities in the parks and reviewed the Parks and Recreation Preparedness Plan. It was reported the park restrooms, tourist information center, and Carnegie Library remain closed. All facility rentals for summer 2020 have been cancelled and refunded. The Commission discussed the softball leagues and the recent positive covid-19 cases amongst players. The Director reported that Bemidji Area Softball Association was notified on July 10th league play would not be permitted on the City’s softball fields based on the growing community spread particularly with people participating in softball leagues, discussion with county health and in the best interest of the community. The Commission supported the decision to not permit use of fields for league play. Discussion continued on community spread and impact on parks.

## **PARKS UPDATE**

### Natural Playground

The Director provided an update on the Natural Playground as the Committee continues to meet on a regular basis to assist with the promotion of the concept. Kerry White is working on the preliminary construction documents. A pop-up will be held in North Country Park in conjunction with the Nature Box promotion the end of July.

### Gordon Falls

The Director reported the playground was successfully installed, as were other amenities. The park is very busy.

### Paul Bunyan/Babe

The Director reported that Jensen Conservation Services was hired to travel to Bemidji to conduct an assessment on Paul and Babe and incorporate their findings and evaluation into a written assessment, which will, outline recommended program of care and repairs. Jensen worked with the City on the major repair/renovation of Babe in 2006 so is familiar with the construction and the work that was completed at that time. The cost is approximately \$1,500 for the assessment and will be paid out of the Parks Department Budget.

## **AUGUST 11<sup>TH</sup> MEETING**

The Commission agreed by consensus to cancel the August meeting due to the primary election noting that if an issue comes up that needs to be addressed prior to September the Commission would hold a special meeting.

## **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Tim Faver asked about Dutch Elm Disease Tree removals and which department is responsible. Marcia Larson reported that the Parks Department also oversees the urban forest and has begun the annual dutch elm disease tree inspections this week. The Parks Superintendent has created a covid policy/plan on conducting inspections/notifying owners of trees on private property of diseased trees. A press release and information will go out this week letting the public know. It was reported there were over 120 dutch elm diseased trees last year.

## **DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

The Director provided an update on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and how well the community care took of the parks. The Department utilized social media to promote clean up and to thank the public for cleaning up the parks.

The Director also noted there has not been any applications for the open position on the Parks and Recreation Commission so will post and promote that opening. Also requested the Commission assist in recruiting.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Prim, to adjourn the meeting at 5:44 p.m. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia Larson  
Parks and Recreation Director