

MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
AUGUST 16, 2022

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Anderson, Kristine Bommersbach, Tim Faver, Tonya Prim, and Bethany Wesley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gwenia Fiskevold Gould and Don Heinonen

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

Bethany Wesley called the meeting to order at 4:38 p.m.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:

None were made.

APPROVAL OF JULY 12, 2022 MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Faver, seconded by Anderson, to approve the July 12, 2022 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

PROJECT UPDATES:

North Country Park:

Natural Playground Project– the City Council awarded the quote to Frenzel Construction for Phase II of the Natural Playground project. Council also approved using the ARP funds to include the bituminous pathway. The Council did acknowledge the need to finance the maintenance budget for the parks. Bemidji Rotary Club has been successful in fundraising for this project. The project will start this fall. Much of the necessary items have been donated such as large logs and boulders.

Fence - Duane Starkenburg, Board President of Vista North contacted Marcia regarding maintaining the fence that runs along the east side of North Country Park. The fence was in place before the park was developed but it is not the most attractive fence with barbwire along the top of it. North Country Park is a 20 acre park given to the city by North Country Hospital as parkland dedication in 2010 and the fence was there when the city took the park over.

Discussed how the fence is in the way for kids to get to the park. A sidewalk or paved trail would be ideal in this location to make it safer for residents to get to the park. Discussed having a trail from the new Veterans Home to the park. Marcia will pass this information onto to Joe Czapiewski to have it included in the strategic plan.

Paul Bunyan Park:

Babe/Plaza – phase one of the project went well, Babe has been raised 15” and the concrete has been poured and is curing. The next step is for Jensen Contracting to remove the lifts, lower Babe and backfill and compact the soil. Phase II of the project includes removal of the concrete, installing the catch basin, re-pouring the concrete and install greenspace. The Park’s Department will be doing the plantings. Jensen Contracting did tilt babe a bit to help with the water run-off. There may be some issues with the historical sign by Babe. The project should be completed by the end of September other than the green spaces being planted.

Discussed contacting a local garden club to see if they would be interested in planting the greenspaces.

Trail Projects – The Engineering Department continues to work on these two trail projects - 23rd Street and Ridgeway. The Ridgeway trail goes from T.H. 197 north to 30th Street and the 23rd Street trail goes between City Park and the Middle School. Both trail projects will be completed by the end of fall.

Discussed putting a crosswalk at the corner of 30th Street and the possibility of traffic light put up at this location. The engineers do not recommend putting up a cross walk mid-street for safety reasons.

The Marion Dessert Foundation funded the project to refurbishing the memorial bench located on 6th Street and Lake Blvd. There is interest in fund raising to possibly repairing some of the other stone benches.

STAFFING

Aaron Weeks, who was the Park Superintendent resigned and his last day was August 4th. Applications were due on August 10th and 20 applications were received and 15 made it through to the scoring process. Eight applicants will be interviewed on Monday, August 22nd.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Monday is the City Council worksession where they will review the parks new strategic plan. Dan Jourdain will not be on the City Council after this year. Discussed that electric bikes/skate boards are allowed on trails. Discussed signage on Lake Blvd. Marcia will discuss this issue with staff and report back to the Commission.

DIRECTOR’S UPDATES

Rentals at the Tourist Information Center have been going great. Travel packs have been selling out. Paddle boards are now being rented. Hours will be reduce as the summer ends.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Faver, seconded by Bommersbach, to adjourn the meeting at 5:35 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant