

MINUTES
PARKS & TRAILS COMMISSION MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Anderson, Tina Kaney, Don Heinonen, Tim Faver, and Tonya Prim

MEMBERS ABSENT: Wendy Kvale

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: James Powell, Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

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

Amendments to Agenda: No amendments were made to the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF JULY 14, 2020 and AUGUST 25, 2020 MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Anderson, to approve the July 14, 2020 and August 25, 2020 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION – JOHN EGGERS – 100% GRADUATION RATE

John Eggers presented information on the 100% Graduation Rate program. He explained that the program started in 2017 at Red Lake Nation. The Red Lake Tribal Council passed a resolution in support of the 100% graduation rate. John stated that this is a community event, not just a school event and the program will be successful with continued community support. The Bemidji City Council and the Beltrami County Commissioners along with nearly 400 businesses and organization have all supported the goal of encouraging 100% graduation rate. John believes there is a long list of advantages when students graduate from high school. A packet was submitted by John to the Commissioners. He explained that the program does not cost anything.

John shared that in Minnesota the graduation is 83%, in the Native American communities it is 50%, and overall Beltrami County has a 65% graduation rate. Discussion was held regarding why the graduation rate within the Native American communities is so low. John believes it is important to constantly remind the youth how important it is to graduate. John offered to supply coloring and activity books that could be included in the recreation boxes.

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Heinonen, to Support the 100% Graduation Rate Program. Motion carried

POLICY DISCUSSION

Marcia reminded the Commissioners that the Parks and Recreation Department established operating policies and the Commission reviewed an Advertising Policy previously. Marcia is recommending that the Commission review and update the current policies and establish new policies such as the Advertising Policy and the league/facility policies to assist the operations of the department. At the next Parks & Recreation Commission meeting, Marcia will provide the Commissioners with a full list of policies to review along with some recommended changes to existing policies such as the Amenity Donation Policy.

There are some areas that will not include advertising such as the outdoor rinks but there are some areas that could use advertising/sponsorships like the disc golf course and baseball fields and pickle ball courts.

At a previous meetings, the Commissioners discussed the Advertising policy as it relates to the softball complex and the baseball field. Also discussed that the Recreation Department is looking for additional sponsors as budgets get more challenging. Marcia provided the Commissioners with a draft of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policies.

The question was raised if once there is a policy in place, would the Commission will need to look at every advertising/sponsorship agreement. Marcia believes as long as there are clear and complete agreements, the Commissioners would not necessarily need to review and approve each one.

The policies will be reviewed by city attorneys and the city's insurance company.

Discussed the need to be careful how many causes we allow to place signage in the parks. The advertisement costs will be paid for by the group that wants to get the revenue from the advertiser. For example the baseball teams would get the advertisers and bring it to the park department for approval.

The Neilson Reise Arena has not been part of the advertising push due to time constraints within the department. It can be looked at in the future.

The softball league does hang banners during league play from their sponsors but they have to take the banners down every night in part because the city is not getting any revenue from these banners and there are sign ordinances that have to be followed.

Advertising and sponsorships will be a great way to bring revenue to the Recreation Department.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES

Don has had people ask him about Neilson Reise Arena and if the city is planning to reopen it. Marcia stated that she is unsure when and if the arena will be opened. The City Council needs to make this decision but currently they are focused on getting the Sanford Center ice open for BSU practices and community ice rentals. The BCA has their ice sheet up and they will soon be opening up their second sheet of ice. The Neilson Reise Arena is subsidized between \$80,000 and \$100,000 a year.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

- **Monarch Festival** – this is starting this weekend, it will be a month long and the Watermark Art Center will be holding. There will be garden tours, fall planting webinar along with a variety of different of activities all month.
- **Natural Playground – North Country Park** – construction and seeding are almost complete. There will be a natural play pop-up put in the park this month too. The Rotary Club will be applying for grants for this park. Tom suggested a butterfly count like the Audubon bird count. There is a Bioblitz program that identifies a variety of species like butterflies and Marcia will look into this as a possible program for next year.
- **Fall Programming** – there is not face to face recreation programming. There are more facilitated events in the parks. Currently there are a lot trail recreation events. There is a silly walk put up at Paul Bunyan Park. City park has a variety of hop scotch. There is an after school cooking program that will be done via zoom. Home Alone program will also be held via Zoom.

Tonya asked how programs are advertised. Marcia stated that we use all social media, there are some radio and newspaper advertising. Jamie sends emails to past participants. Tonya suggested an email of current programs to past participants and send it to the Parks & Recreation Commissioners.

- **Parks/Facilities** – Parks are trails are open for public use. Parks' restrooms are not open but there are still portajohns in the parks.

Tonya asked about the vandalism in the parks. Marcia stated that it has not been as bad as other years and that could be because there have been a lot of people/families in the parks.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Heinonen, to adjourn the meeting at 5:45. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant