

**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

**COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:** Dan Jourdain

**CITY STAFF & OTHERS:** Marcia Larson, Aaron Weeks, and Lolly Randall

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Tonya Prim called the meeting to order at 4:37 p.m.

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:**

None were made

Director Larson introduced Aaron Weeks, the new Park Superintendent to the Commissioners.

**APPROVAL OF AUGUST 10, 2021 MEETING MINUTES:**

**Motion by Wesley, seconded by Heinonen, to approve the August 10, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.**

**LAKE BOULEVARD**

Stone Structure and Marion Dessert Memorial Fund – Director Larson explained that a few years ago, Bill Dessert asked about two projects. One being the installation of memorial benches and the other being the repair of the stone benches/structures along Lake Boulevard. The memorial benches are near the Carnegie Library. The structures have taken longer to complete because of difficulty in finding a mason to complete the work. Dick Larson, a local mason, has submitted a cost estimate for the work on the bench/structure at the corner of Lake Boulevard and 6<sup>th</sup> Street, next to Library Park for the amount of \$5,825.00. Bill Dessert has offered to pay for the repairs with the Marion Dessert Memorial fund and the work will be completed this fall.

Discussed repairing the other structures; however, the first one that will be done is in the best shape. Staff will see how this repair goes and then review the other benches to determine if they are repairable. Will also need to look at how to finance them because they will be more expensive than this first one. The funding will have to come from outside sources. There is a plan to mark the benches to see how much they move, if at all. Staff will discuss with Bill Dessert about placing a memorial plaque on the bench.

**Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Faver, to approve hiring Dick Larson to fix the memorial bench for Bill Dessert and to move forward in reviewing the rest of the benches on Lake Boulevard. Motion carried.**

Discussed the current policy on memorials placed in the park.

Forming a Workgroup – At last month’s meeting, Commissioner Faver requested a workgroup to look at Lake Boulevard and get a list of items that need to be addressed in the area. Director Larson stated that it is important to identify the goals of the workgroup and include Superintendent Weeks as part of the workgroup. Discussed looking at cleaning, building, and fundraising for the trail that runs underneath the stone wall. The Bemidji Lions Club approached Superintendent Weeks about this project because they are interested in refurbishing the trail and replacing some of the wooden bridges that used to go over the culverts. Discussed doing some signage of the history of the trail and the History Center may be willing to help with this. Suggested having the Commissioners take a walk on the trail to get an understanding of what is involved and get ideas from them on what they would like to see done in the area.

Discussed having a workgroup to identify the issues on Lake Boulevard but will start with the Commissioners meeting with the Lion’s Club, Director Larson and Superintendent Weeks and walk the area to get an idea of the scope of work that can be done by the Parks Department. Superintendent Weeks will set up a day and time and email the Commissioners before the October meeting and then have discussion at the October meeting.

Bike Route – Director Larson stated that the on-road bike lane is for southbound bike travel and the trail is for northbound travel. After discussions with City Engineer, Craig Gray, the recommendation is to not have a bike route on the road but allow bikes to follow the rules of the road. Director Larson provided the City Engineer’s email comments in the packet that stated the bike lane was a requirement to get Federal funding needed for the project that was done in 2010.

Discussed posting ‘no bicycles’ signage on the sidewalk. This is possible once the bike lane lines fade away completely. The bike lane signage can come down at any time.

## **PARK FEES AND CHANGES – 2022**

Director Larson stated that new fees and charges are set by Ordinance and the first of three Ordinance readings by City Council is scheduled for October 4, 2021.

Discussed some of the issues with rental of the Sapphire Pavilion being occupied when the renters show up. Staff will be improving the signage next year to hopefully alleviate this issue. Discussed adding a calendar at the site so people can see when it is rented or available. Will also try to have staff check in during rentals. There currently is signage in the kiosk on the pavilion stating the dates and names it is rented but there still have been issues so placing a larger, more visible signage for the public should help.

Director Larson reviewed some additions to the Parks & Recreation Fees for 2022 that include the following:

Weekend rate for the South Shore Marina slips – Weekend (3 day) Slip Rental (Friday-Sunday) - \$75.00. One permit per household per season.

Court fees for pickle ball and tennis courts - \$6 per court per hour renting up to 4 courts only.

Disc Golf Fee - \$75 per day

Commercial Use Permit – \$250/Annual, \$100/Month, \$25/Day

Birthday Party Rental - to be held at specific locations - 2hours/staffed - includes themed supplies - \$150

Tourist Information Center rental space - when the TIC it is not open to the public – \$100 for 2 hours

Discussed giving the groups, like the disc golfers advanced notice that fees will be coming next year. Discussed raising fees every other year.

**Motion by Heinonen, seconded by Faver, to adopt the fees as stated by Marcia Larson. Motion Carried.**

All of the newly added fees need to have a policy included and the Commissioners will review the policies at a future meeting.

### **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

City Councilor Jourdain shared an email he received regarding safety issues at North Country Park with families walking across the street to go to the park. Director Larson explained that the City Engineer is the one that makes that decision

**Motion by Anderson, seconded Fiskevold Gould, to request the City Engineer install a cross walk on 30<sup>th</sup> street leading to North Country Park. Motion carried**

Commissioner Heinonen questioned if there is a need for a traffic light at the intersection.

### **DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

City Council voted to raise Babe as an option to address the drainage issue under the statue. Staff will look at fundraising options. Hopefully this can be done next fall. Director Larson will be working with Brian Grund on this project.

Tourist Information Center – there is a proposed budget of \$90,000 for 2022 with \$30,000 funded through rentals and marketing, \$30,000 funded from Visit Bemidji, and \$30,000 funded from the city's general fund. The proposed 2022 CIP budget includes increasing the Parks CIP budget \$175,000.

North Country Park ribbon cutting/grand opening was very successful and the park has been very busy. The Rotary Club will be discussing the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of the park.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Faver, seconded by Anderson, to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall  
Administrative Assistant