

**MINUTES**  
**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING**  
**OCTOBER 12, 2021**

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

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Don Heinonen and Gwenia Fiskevold Gould

**COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:** Dan Jourdain

**CITY STAFF & OTHERS:** Joe Czapiewski, Marcia Larson, Jamie Anderson, and Lolly Randall

**CALL TO ORDER:**

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

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:**

Director Larson stated Parks Superintendent, Aaron Weeks will not make the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 MEETING MINUTES:**

**Motion by Faver , seconded by Wesley, to approve the September 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.**

**STRATEGIC PLANNING – JFC STRATEGIC SERVICE**

Director Larson explained that Joe Czapiewski of JFC Strategic Service, completed the Parks & Recreation Strategic Plan in 2018 and based on discussions with the Commissioners and a variety of requests from special interest groups there is a need to set priorities for the parks and include recreation programming of the parks. Director Larson invited Joe Czapiewski to the meeting to be involved in the plan moving forward to update the park's plan/strategic plan.

Joe gave background on his planning along with his experience as a user of the parks with the Knights of Columbus and the Rotary Club. Joe invited the Commissioners to share with him their ideas and plans regarding developing a plan and how they would like to proceed with the process. He suggested gathering ideas from the community and user/special interest groups and see where those ideas can fit financially and logistically. Joe will assist the Commissioners to develop a strategic plan that includes staffing and budget needs to implement the plan. In the end, this is a plan that could be taken to the City Council for approval.

Director Larson emphasized that because of the Parks and Recreation Department's limited budget, it is important to focus on specific areas and develop a specific process.

Commissioner Prim stated that it is important to annually review the park priorities and believes it is especially important to touch base with the community to hear what they would like to see developed in regard to parks and recreation.

Discussed the difference between the 2018 Strategic Plan which includes more programming in the parks with a focus on recreation as well as developed the Mission Statement. The 2001 and 2011 Park Plans are more of a plan to develop the parks using the sales tax dollars that were allocated to the city's parks. This time the intention is to develop a plan that incorporates both recreation/programming and parks. Discussed the importance of looking at each "request" that comes from specific user groups to the Director, such as another fishing pier at Diamond Point Park, or a new playground at Roger Lehman Park, and determine if those ideas coincide with what the community would like to see developed.

Commissioner Wesley discussed the importance to develop a priority plan that includes financial responsibility. She stated it is also important to hear from the community as whole rather than just the user groups who can redirect the priorities.

Commissioner Anderson stated the importance to include the "silent" users of the parks and recreation programs and to gather this information by looking at what programs have high attendance and include those program in the priority list.

Joe Czapiewski suggested the first step is to develop a broad priority list and build filters into the process with one of those filters being the budget/financial responsibility but is not the only filter to consider.

Discussed looking at parks matrix that might suggest what goes into which park based on the demographics of a particular park/area.

Councilor Jourdain stated the importance of having diversity in the parks/recreation and identify how to include diverse groups and create more opportunities for them to participate. He suggested targeting the populations that have not yet been targeted and do more outreach.

Commissioner Wesley asked if there is concern doing this park planning project at the same time as the proposed Wellness Center is being considered. There is some concern if special interest groups are not included in the proposed Wellness Center, will they then have expectations that the city will fulfill their wants. Director Larson responded that the timing is perfect for the Parks and Recreation Department to develop a plan to help direct some of the requests that the Department is being overwhelmed with but does have some concern with other matters the city is facing such as the Sanford Event Center and the possible Wellness Center. Councilor Jourdain responded that he felt comfortable with the direction the Parks and Recreation Commissioners are heading and if they stay on this track, he felt funding would be there from the City Council.

Discussed limiting how specific the plan is for the Neilson Reise Arena other than stating that site does need to be planned for but limit it to this comment and place focus more on parks and recreation and/or programming.

Joe stated it will be important to keep the Wellness Center planning in mind when timing the release of online surveys. It is also important to use very specific tools, especially online, that will give the feedback needed and reaching groups that have not previously been reached. Using a target set of tools that enable people to focus on what the Commissioners need them to focus on will assist in gathering the information needed to put together a focused and comprehensive plan. Joe explained that the in-person public engagements are also important because you can reach the population that may not have access to computers and/or internet. Partnering with specific groups, such as Boys and Girls Club, Bi-Cap, schools, to reach a variety of groups will be important.

Commissioner Anderson stated the importance of the Recreation Department's programs and it seems they provide a good return on the financial investment.

**Motion by Wesley, seconded by Faver, to approve Director Larson working with Joe Czapiewski of JFC Strategic Service, to develop a planning proposal for the Parks and Recreation Commissioners consideration. Motion carried.**

### **JAMIE ANDERSON, RECREATION COORDINATOR – RECREATION UPDATE**

Jamie Anderson, Recreation Coordinator, gave an overview of the 2021 Recreation season. Jamie will present this summary with a power point to the City Council at a November meeting. Jamie reviewed the numbers and explained how they were gathered and the GIS Department helped determine residents versus non-residents.

Recreation is doing some programming in person but with consideration of Covid so participants and staff are masked and/or distanced. Day camps worked really well at City Park because there was more room that allowed for better safe distancing and staff was able to have all of the supplies onsite. There was a minor Covid outbreak at the end of camp that involved quarantining. Camper were able to swim at the high school pool twice a week. Theatre camp was also a success.

There is not a lot of indoor activities yet but there have been several outdoor activities utilizing the amenities at North Country Park. The focus continues to be on activity packs that are done by families/kids independent from recreation staff.

Jamie shared the different birthday party rental ideas and the rentals at the TIC of bike rentals and snow showing and sleds for the sliding hill. Jamie applied for a grant to purchase ice skates that can be rented out.

### **DIRECTOR'S UPDATES**

Director Larson and Parks Superintendent Aaron Weeks walked the natural trail at the waterfront with members of the Lion's Club and discussed ideas of how to develop the area. Director Larson stated that Aaron has done a lot of research of the area and has located a map and drawings of what the area looked like in the past. He has received a lot of assistance from the History Center. The Lion's Club is researching how the area can be restored. Dick Larson is the contractor who was going to do the work on the stone structures along Lake Boulevard, starting with the Marion Dessert memorial bench. He said they would not be able to work on the benches until next fall so the Parks Superintendent went out for quotes and the other quotes came in around \$20,000. The buckthorn will most likely not get removed until next year.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Anderson, seconded by Faver, to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall  
Administrative Assistant