

MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00pm, Thursday, June 21, 2018, Decorah City Hall

Attendance: Board members, Rich Gaard (chair), Cindy Albers and Jeff O'Gara. Staff members, Robin Sailor and Andy Nimrod. Visitors, Ellen Macdonald and Nathan Thompson.

Chairman Gaard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Public comment: The Board discussed the email request from Jeff Tomlinson regarding turning the cement area at Wayside Park into pickleball courts. The Board noted the growing interest in pickleball and the need for good facilities. It was noted that the Board would prefer to wait out the new elementary school discussion before making changes at Wayside Park in case a better site becomes available. Gaard also pointed out that there have been multiple discussions about the best use of Wayside Park if it was to change.

Ellen Macdonald noted that the group working on garlic mustard might be asking for help from Parks Staff next spring, especially spraying.

Great Places Grant: Nathan Thompson from Northeast Iowa RC&D gave a presentation on the Iowa Great Places application that he was working on. Decorah was designated a "Great Place" previously and had great success in securing a grant for the Trout Run Trail through it. If Decorah gets redesignated as a "Great Place" it becomes eligible for funding during the next five years. Thompson noted that discussions regarding potential projects had centered around park improvements that would address safety concerns and shore up some of the aging historic rock work in the parks. Thompson's report included that the Board/City will need to come up with funding to provide it's share of a 50/50 grant. The Board discussed using endowment proceeds and the memorial fund as ways to be able to satisfy that commitment and encouraged Thompson and Nimrod to look at multiple projects.

The Board discussed the north overlook along Park Street and the safety concerns that are developing along its walls. Nimrod asked the Board if they had thoughts about making the overlook accessible or if the historical significance made them want to keep it as is. It was noted that it has already changed because there used to be a bridge attached to the north side of it. Nimrod will look into pricing it both ways and bring it back to the Board.

There were no reports from volunteer organizations.

Department reports:

- Parks Assistant Sailor shared some information on trees in the parks. 86 new trees were planted in the parks and campground this spring, some through various volunteer groups and some were planted by staff. No tax money was used on the trees, they were completely supported through memorials, gifts and grants. There will be more trees planted this fall including a partnership with Rockwell Colli's on trees for the Dog Park.
- The Board looked at the agreement from the Iowa DNR on Trout Run Park and indicated that staff should continue to negotiate the agreement so that if signed it answers any concerns they may have,
- Nimrod reported that the fencing of the Dog Park was behind schedule due to the company installing the fence had been running into bad weather and were behind on other jobs. When the fence gets installed the park will be close to being ready to open.
- Nimrod reported that pool attendance had been excellent and the toddler slide was a huge hit. He noted that they were still working out some problems with the manufacturer on age requirements that were pointed out by John Kelly of the Iowa Board of Health during the slide inspection. The City has not paid the manufacturer and has turned it over to Burbach Aquatics, the engineer for the project for advice.

In other matters Nimrod shared that Harlan Satrom requested that one of the Park Board members consider sitting on a committee looking into a recreation center, and Chairman Gaard requested that the department host a youth golf day this summer since a golf program wasn't part of the activities this season.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 19, 2018, 7:00 pm, City Council Chambers . O'Gara motioned to adjourn, Albers seconded, and all approved.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andy Nimrod".

Andy Nimrod

Director

Decorah Parks and Recreation