

## MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00pm, Thursday, March 15, 2018, Decorah City Hall

Rich Gaard, Parks and Recreation Board Chair opened the meeting at 7:05pm. Board and staff members present included Jeff O'Gara, Kathy Bakken, Cindy Albers, Shirley Vermace and Andy Nimrod, Director. Others in attendance included Mayor Lorraine Borowski, Peter and Judy van der Linden and Paul Scott. Vermace motioned to approve the minutes from the February 8, 2018 Board meeting, O'Gara seconded, all approved.

### Volunteer groups:

- Nimrod shared Jerri Osenga's letter to the Board regarding the Prairie's Butterfly Garden annual volunteer meeting coming up April 17. The letter invites the Board to come to the meeting. Vermace offered to attend as a liaison between the volunteers and the Board.
- Nimrod reported that he had attended the most recent DHPT meeting and discussed trails on the Carlson property with the volunteer group. The group has offered to stake out a core loop and allow for park-rec staff to analyze the route before any construction begins. Staff will be working with Benji Nichols to finalize a donation letter for DHPT.
- C.R.E.W. is making a final donation push to support Decorah's prom with a post prom party following the grand march and dance in Marty's at Luther College.

Nimrod reported that not much construction work had taken place since the last Board meeting, but that construction crews felt they were more than half done bringing material back in. Nimrod also reported that Driftless Land Stewardship (D.L.S.) had been brought in to help advise engineers on the restoration effort of Dug Road. They have experience with algific slopes and working with FEMA on projects.

After discussion, the Board has decided not to consider farming part of the Carlson property this year. Waiting another planting season will allow for staff to do a better job of preparing the property for rental. The Board has considered farming it to gain some revenue for future projects on the property as well as prepare the property for either prairie or tree seedings down the road.

Mayor Borowski shared the Decorah School District's offer on the City's property for a new lower elementary school. The Board looked at its mission statement and felt that they need to make sure that recreation needs are addressed and are not "band aided" for the project. Ball diamonds, tennis courts, and use of the school's gymnasiums are all critical for recreational offerings by Parks and Recreation. The Board discussed the financial information that had been put together two years ago when the first proposal came forward. Mayor Borowski felt that a lot of community discussion still needed to take place before the Council would make any final decisions. The Board thanked the Mayor for coming and leading the discussion.

The Board felt that information staff shared on capital improvement projects was good and that they supported staff to continue to work with City administration for the City's visioning process.

### Department reports:

#### Recreation:

- The Great Inflate & Pancake Breakfast was held Saturday, February 24, 10am-2pm in the Decorah High School gyms. 470 individuals purchased wristbands for the inflatables and 869 individuals (not including those that just came for pancakes) attended the event. The Lion's Club served the pancake breakfast with funds going towards the Tree Bank, and the inflatables were sponsored by Deco Products, Gundersen Health System, The Family Table, and Viking State Bank. We are hoping to hold this event again next year.
- Spring registration has begun, and the deadline for soccer registration is this Friday, March 16.

- We are hosting a G2G St. Patrick's Day Party for adults with special needs on Saturday, March 17, 2-4pm at the UCC Church. This event will feature music, games, bingo, and Culver's custard. The Luther College Men's Soccer team is volunteering at this event.
- The annual Easter Egg Hunt will be held at 3pm Sunday, March 25, in Phelps Park.
- We are also continuing to collect donations for Decorah's Post Prom event. This will be held Saturday, April 14, 11pm-3am in Marty's at Luther College.

*Parks:*

- Lots of tree maintenance
- Lots of planning going into spring tree plantings
- Started on Dog Park Shelter
- Was only able to groom trails twice all winter

*Swimming:*

- Toddler Slide update, porpoise has been removed and site is prepped
- Water boiler is ordered and will be ready for opening

*Campground:*

- Opens the weekend of April 1
- Took a bunch of ash trees down as well as some failing cottonwoods
- Getting registration squared away to try and become more efficient

*In other notes Nimrod reported that he had been contacted by the VFW in regard to creating a veteran's memorial in Decorah, possibly in one of the parks. The Board was interested in pursuing the concept. Also, Spence McKinney was working to engage the Vennehjem neighborhood to raise some money to install playground equipment in Vennehjem Park.*

*The next meeting was set for 7:00pm, Thursday, April 19, 2018. O'Gara motioned to adjourn at 8:30 pm, Albers seconded, all approved.*

*Respectfully submitted,*



*Andy Nimrod  
Director*