

MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00pm, Thursday, May 16, 2019, Decorah City Hall

Board members present: Chairman Rich Gaard, Jeff O’Gara, Shirley Vermace and Kathy Bakken. Staff present: Andy Nimrod, Allie McIntyre and Gary Timmerman. Visitors: Ellen Macdonald, Merlin Finley, Brian Fuhrmann, Sean Scott, Eric and Jenny Peterson Brandt, Jim and Bridget Casper, Sue and Dave Snell, Josie Smith and Travis Greentree.

Chairman Gaard opened the meeting at 7:00pm and asked for public comment.

- Travis Greentree told the Board that he was present due to a discussion he had with Board member Vermace to support the use of ebikes in the Decorah trail system and that he had asked others to come and show their support as well.
- Bridget Casper uses an ebike, it is the only way she can bike anymore, and it allows her to do things with her family that she wouldn’t have been able to do before.
- Merlin Finley said that he is an 81-year old diabetic and that he can control his diabetes due to diet and the exercise he gets from riding his ebike.
- Kathy Bakken noted that she has had an ebike for three years and noted that any changes to any bike trail discussions would include safety.
- Jim Casper has been riding regularly for about five years and even though he doesn’t use one, he thinks that it is a great thing for the Decorah trail system.
- Brian Fuhrmann said that he didn’t know of any discussion regarding ebikes at a DHPT meeting. Fuhrmann noted that although he doesn’t use an ebike, he had tried them out and liked them and had purchased one for his mother in law. Fuhrmann noted that he thought it would be hard to police the difference between a class I ebike and a class III ebike and that any plans should address how that is going to be handled.
- Jeff O’Gara stated that he wasn’t for ebikes initially, but that he now sees the benefits for those who couldn’t ride without an assist.
- Jenny Peterson Brandt fully supported ebikes and is very excited with the new access to the trail it has given her because she was not able to bike all the way around the trail without it.
- Eric Peterson Brandt said the ebike has no motor, it only assists the rider.
- Sean Scott is from western Minnesota and claimed he wants to move to Decorah due to the accessibility of the trail system.
- David Bakken wanted to give full support to ebikes, but cautioned the Board to make sure they follow state regulations and how that could affect past grant awards.

O’Gara motioned to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2019 meeting, Vermace seconded, all approved.

The Board discussed endowment balances and using some of the Quasi fund for the Iowa Great Places Grant match.

Department reports:

- Applications for the Park Assistant position are due May 31
- The swimming pool is currently being filled
- Parks staff would like to engage the Board in the naming of the Carlson property
- Staff also wanted the Board to give some direction on pickleball courts, specifically Wayside Park
- The Board would like staff to work on making priority lists of upcoming projects
- Allie McIntyre of the Parks Staff shared a list of recent park work by the staff, including: a community beautification project with the Luther FB team, a 4H tree planting project at the Dog Park, the Kids for Trees Grant project at the campground, and new trash cans in Phelps Park due to a grant through the Peace and Justice Center.

Ellen Macdonald gave an updated report from the Garlic Mustard season. She shared a list of 37 volunteers that helped this past season. Ellen said that they will always be looking for more volunteers, but this year's group was exceptional. She said that the best volunteers are folks who love to be out in the woods. The group had its annual end of the season celebration May 15.

The next meeting was set for June 20, 2019, 7 pm, at Decorah City Hall. O'Gara motioned to adjourn, Vermace seconded, all approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Andy Nimrod

Director

Decorah Parks and Recreation