

MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00pm, Thursday, February 20, 2020, Decorah City Hall

Board Members Present: Rich Gaard, Kathy Bakken, Shirley Vermace, Brian Fuhrmann; Staff Present: Andy Nimrod, Judy Syverson, Erika Randall, Scott Ihde, Jon Geiger, Scott Vande Krol, Luke Cote; Guests: Stephanie Fromm from Winneshiek County Development, Mary Lewis, Ross Hadley; Veterans Memorial Committee: Glenn Larson, Ray Koshatka, Nils Kjome, Andy Borske, George Tekippe

Chairman Gaard opened the meeting at 7: 00pm.

Public comment: Mary Lewis reported that Friends of the Park met on 2/19/20 to discuss this year's plan for "garlic mustard season". Mary will be taking over Ellen McDonald's leadership duties as she has chosen to step down. The organization will be having a garlic mustard pull on April 18 which they will advertise in the local media to attract new volunteers. They would also like to promote the event by posting in park kiosks pictures and information pertaining to garlic mustard along with info on the April 18 pull.

Stephanie Fromm of Winneshiek County Development presented "Project Child Care" packets containing information on the community need for childcare providers. Iowa has lost 40% of its child care businesses over the past five years. In 2019, Winneshiek County had a shortage of approximately 1,400 child care slots. Sunflower Child Care Center alone has 140 on their waiting list. Stephanie has been working on a matching grant to help resolve the problem, and is contacting organizations and leaders in the area that may be interested in helping pilot a project to improve and/or create a child care/education facility and hoped that the DPR Board would be supportive.

Bakken motioned to approve the minutes from the January 16, 2020 Board meeting, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved.

Reviewed work from NE Iowa RC&D regarding branding and logo: Director Nimrod reported that there had been two meetings to date regarding the Wellness Grant that will provide wayfinding signs, brochures, and other improvements for the city trails. The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 20. Nimrod shared samples of the proposed Park-Rec. logo, park identification signs, and trail identifications signs and markers.

Reviewed a park design for Dry Run Plaza.

Reviewed a park design for Mary Christopher Park and heard input from the Veterans Memorial Committee, board members, and Park-Rec. Staff. Glen Larson asked if the Board would consider making the space a 50-foot circle instead of a 40-foot circle as additional monuments may be needed to accommodate the names of all Winneshiek County veterans. He also reported that the cost of the project was \$160,000 (which includes \$10,000 for maintenance budget). Kathy Bakken thought that it would be best to have staff mark out the proposed Veterans Memorial area at Mary Christopher, showing a 50-foot circle as opposed to a 40 foot, so to have a better visual of the Veteran's Memorial space as opposed to the rest of the park. A meeting was set for Thursday, March 5, 7:00 pm to look at the space and consider the additional footage request. Among other input from Veterans Committee members, George Tekippe proposed the idea of having pervious pavers instead of concrete to keep water from pooling in the area.

Discussion of long-range goals of Board and Staff: Director Nimrod had sent out a goal setting exercise to Board members and staff to fill out and return to the office. The exercise included their wishes for capital Improvement project goals, initiatives led by or partnered with DPR, and policy review and/or establishment. All answers were compiled together, sent to all to review, and then posted at the meeting. The Board and staff were given a finite number of stickers to post beside their favorites to give a visual of the most popular capital improvements and goals. Some of the top picks were: Development of Carlson Park, shade at the pool, perform a master park plan for the Decorah Park System, more attention to trail maintenance and improvements—possibly a devoted trail maintenance person with equipment and budget, reevaluate the alcohol policy in the parks, and seasonal staff pay scale reevaluation.

Department reports:

- *Eight people asked to hunt this season in the city parks, and surveys were sent to all of them.*
- *The parks crew are looking at enlisting a “goat rental” company to take care of some of the invasive species in the parks.*
- *Winter grooming of the trails received rave reviews this season. Fuhrmann asked that a winter trail maintenance policy be discussed at the next regular Park-Rec. Board meeting.*
- *2020 campground reservation requests are being taken starting March 2.*
- *Spring brochure was released on February 15. Special events coming up the next two weekends are the Fly Fishing Clinic, Superhero Sunday, Great Inflate & Pancake Breakfast, and G2G March Madness.*

Two meetings were set:

Special meeting: Thursday, March 5, 2020, 7:00pm, City Hall

Regular meeting: Thursday, March 19, 2020, 7:00 pm, City Hall

Bakken motioned to adjourn at 9:15 pm, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved.

Respectfully submitted,



Andy Nimrod

Director

Decorah Parks and Recreation