

MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00 pm, Thursday, January 21, 2021, Decorah City Hall (Board was virtual)

Rich Gaard, chair of the Decorah Parks and Recreation Board called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm. Board members and staff present: Shirley Vermace, Brian Fuhrmann, Kathy Bakken and Director Andy Nimrod. Visitors included: Curt Peterson, Steve Pasche, Jo Iverson, Dennis Magnuson, Jim Sims, Travis Greentree, Joe Breitenstein, Jerry Thompson, Josie Smith, Libby Abbis, Kent and Marla Klocke, Nick Pearch. Eric Doll and Emma Lorenz were also there from Jeffery L Bruce Company.

Public comment: Gaard and Vermace noted the popularity of the plowed walking routes. Nimrod reported that the office had been pleasantly surprised at the number of people that had commented on them. Gaard had taken his grandson on the book walk along Pulpit Rock Road and had really enjoyed it.

Vermace motioned to approve the minutes from the December 17, 2020 DPR meeting, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved.

Election of Board members: Vermace motioned that Gaard remain as Chair and Fuhrmann be the Vice Chair for 2021. Bakken seconded and all approved.

Landscape architects Eric Doll and Emma Lorenz gave a presentation regarding the latest plans for Carlson Park. The scope of the park continues to be dialed in based off of feedback that the Board and the Community had shared with them. The 3D presentation showed access and infrastructure and suggested many potential amenities, including hiking trails, bike trails, camping, a look out, disc golf, a skills course, natural play areas, an arboretum, gathering spots for both smaller and larger groups, and its own landmark feature along Highway 9. The Board and architects discussed if costs should be shared in a way that projects could be phased in over time, or if they should be cataloged in a way that donors or grant writers might pick them a la carte. Eric Doll informed the Board that he would be working with Park-Rec. staff to email the Board specific questions to help prepare for a final presentation in February. The Board confirmed there will be lots of strategy to discuss regarding development of the property down the road.

Director Nimrod reported that Decorah Parks and Recreation needed to select a representative to serve on the Winneshiek County Transportation Enhancement Committee. Brian Fuhrmann volunteered, Bakken motioned to confirm Fuhrmann, Gaard seconded and all approved.

Nimrod reported on the City Council's annual budget meeting and shared the balances of the endowments. He also noted that he and Erika Randall had met with the Northeast Iowa Community Foundation and that it sounded very promising to be able to set up an electronic way to be able to make donations. The idea was spearheaded by Decorah Human Powered Trails volunteers.

Department reports

- Nimrod shared a report from Erika Huegel, Recreation Superintendent: Hoopsters (4th-6th grade) and Sharp Shooters (1st-3rd grade) Basketball resumed this month after being suspended in mid-November. Programs for both of these groups will wrap up at the end of January. Registered participation for this program is up 20% compared to last year. Adult volleyball leagues that were suspended in November resumed. 40 adults with special needs attended the G2G Drive Thru Santa event Saturday, December 19. DPR partnered with Decorah Public Library and Decorah Public Schools to host a February Book Walk. The story of *The Tacky Penguin* is posted beginning on the trail just south of the 5th Ave Bridge, across from Will Baker Athletic Fields, and continues traveling south along the trail to and around the campground.

- The arrival of winter has the park crew busy. New winter trail maps for walkers and CC skiers were shared. The ice rink and sledding hill were finally getting to the point they were in good shape. A little more winter would help all of the park activities.

Other matters:

- Fuhrmann and Nimrod shared a short report on Carlson Park to Rotary last week.
- Nimrod reported that the Rick Carlson family had bikers on their private driveway along the park and requested that staff work on making sure park users knew where the property markers were.

The next meeting was set for Thursday, February 18, 2021, 7:00pm. Vermace motioned to adjourn, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved, 9:13pm.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Nimrod". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "N".

Andy Nimrod, Director
Decorah Parks and Recreation