

MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING
7:00pm, Thursday, November 18, 2021, City Hall

Rich Gaard, Board Chair opened the meeting at 7:00pm. Board members present included Brian Fuhrmann, Cindy Albers and Kathy Bakken. Staff member present included Scott Vande Krol and Andy Nimrod. Others in attendance included Zach Kerndt and Benji Nichols.

Public comment:

- Nimrod shared an email from John Whalen that expressed his concerns regarding too many bike trails and the development of possibly more. Besides erosion issues the email notes concern for the ecology and wildlife habitat of the parks system. The Board urged staff to meet with Whelan and look at his concerns. Nimrod shared that this is another reason why more staff are needed to take care of all of the different aspects of Decorah Parks and Recreation.*
- Fuhrmann shared an economic impact study from the Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission that showed the total economic impact of Trout Run Trail was almost \$13 million annually.*

Albers motioned to approve the minutes from the October 21, 2021 meeting, Bakken seconded, all approved.

Winter activities discussion: Nimrod reported that staff were being hired to run the warming house at the skating rink. Office and parks staff were working on a new winter trail guide. Fuhrmann shared signage from Marquette, Michigan that might work well for us for winter trail etiquette.

Financial matters: Nimrod shared the fund balances. Gaard shared an article from Winneshiek Medical Center that publishes its annual donations. Gaard, Nichols and Nimrod will be meeting with Terry Gaumer of the Community Foundation soon and will discuss ways to market the endowment funds. Nimrod reported that annual budget work was underway and that he would be sharing preliminary work at the December Board meeting.

Future projects and budgeting: Fuhrmann reported that a small group was working on a plan to begin some development at Carlson Park and what fundraising might look like.

His group was focusing on family adventure and thought important pieces to get established early on were to address parking, create good access into the park, begin developing trails for beginners, and build a pump track and skills course. Gaard reported on a meeting with Burbach Aquatics regarding a splashpad. Burbach's were in town in early November to look at potential sites. Both projects will have presentations coming for the Board this winter.

Scott Vande Krol, manager of the Pulpit Rock Campground gave an annual report of the campground. It was another record-breaking season and the campground stayed busy right up until closing. Staff have been busy trying to implement a new registration system that allows for more reservations. Vande Krol hopes to have half the sites reservable by 2022. He feels that keeping half of the sites available as a first come first served is important as well as that has been popular for many years. The Board discussed a recent report from the Decorah Sustainability Commission to look at solar panels for the campground. The Board directed Nimrod to see if Novak Electric would come to a Board meeting and give a presentation on the information that Novak's initially shared with the Sustainability Commission. The Board also discussed an air quality report from the commission but did not take any stance on the issue. Vande Krol reported that the new shelter staff had built at the CG was popular with campers.

In other business Nimrod shared that while referencing the park policy manual while working on the signage part of the Wellmark Grant he noticed that the manual had not been updated since 1977. Nimrod will bring copies of the park policy manual to the December meeting so that the Board can become familiar with it. The Board discussed working to update the manual at a work session this winter.

The next meeting was confirmed for December 16. Albers motioned to adjourn, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved.

Respectfully submitted,



*Andy Nimrod
Director
Decorah Parks and Recreation*