

MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00pm, Thursday, February 17, 2022, Decorah City Hall

Chairman Rich Gaard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, board members Zach Kerndt, Brian Fuhrmann, Kathy Bakken and Benji Nichols were present. Also in attendance was Mayor Borowski, and staff members Scott Vande Krol, Craig Spilde, Blake Moen and Andy Nimrod.

Public comment: The Board noted that they had been receiving positive feedback on the groomed trails, the Winter Walkers program and the new signage on the kiosks that were part of the Wellness Grant.

Bakken motioned and Kerndt seconded a motion to approve the January 20, 2022 minutes, all approved.

Splashpad discussion: Discussion centered mostly around the potential costs and how that compared to other splashpads near Decorah. Gaard asked if there was any more work coming from Burbach Aquatics. Fuhrmann noted that he read the splashpad in Harmony cost less than half of the current estimates. Nimrod noted that the City's Sustainability Commission was interested in weighing in on the proposed concepts if the project looks like it might move forward.

Adding solar power to the campground discussion: The Board discussed the presentation from Novak Electric at the January Board meeting at length and identified the following list of things to refer to as the City considers the proposal:

- The Board is in favor of adding solar and not limit it to just the campground*
- The Board is not in favor of the proposed site of the solar array but would prefer looking at a couple of sites near The Cut and or by the Hideaway camping area*
- The Board would prefer a solar project that would also include the Hideaway, which uses 20-25% of the yearly electric bill*
- The Board wants to make sure long-term planning is taken into consideration, staff is already looking into increasing the number of sites that offer 50 amp services and also car plug in stations*
- The Board wants a plan to be put in place that helps makes Pulpit Rock a destination campground in the future, just like it is now*
- The Board would like an assessment of sorts of the current electrical infrastructure in the campground and upgrade as needed if project moves forward*
- The Board directed Nimrod to talk with Perry Novak about work he has done at the campground and get his thoughts on the life expectancy of the current system*
- The Board directed Nimrod to talk with Alliant Energy about doing an energy assessment of the campground and what increasing the amount of energy needed would look like*
- The Board asked where the electrical savings will go, towards the campground or tax relief for Decorah?*

Financial matters: Gaard and Fuhrmann shared that they had attended the budget meeting of the City Council and that the Park-Rec proposed budget had been well received. Nimrod reported that conversations since then have been about ways to increase revenue for the City and that in the next year there will probably be an expectation to raise our fees for swimming, camping and programming. There was no update on the Hotel/Motel negotiations.

Department reports:

- Biddy BB concluded last week, 115 participants and 32 volunteer coaches*
- Ice Rink is going great*
- CC ski trails are in good condition and usage is high*
- Organizing of Post Prom is underway*

- *Lots of camping reservations are being made (half of the campsites are reservable, which is new this year)*

Other business: Nichols reported that a group was interested in sponsoring a run/walk around the holidays next year with proceeds going to Park-Rec. Fuhrmann and Nichols will be bringing up some plans for some development of Carlson Park at the March meeting. The next meeting was set for March 17.

Fuhrmann motioned to adjourn, Nichols seconded, all approved.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Andy Nimrod".

Andy Nimrod

Director

Decorah Parks and Recreation