

PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

*March 18, 2023 6 pm*  
Edgewater Bay Pavilion

**Members Present:**

Steve Ball  
Jodi Hartman  
Therese Salazar  
Tony Segura  
Kent Rahn  
Amy Leach  
Whitney Sauer (arrived 6:02p)  
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio

**Members Absent:**

none

**Staff in Attendance:**

Cathy Malakowsky, Community Engagement and Enrichment Director  
Bob Furland, Recreation Manager  
Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Mike Westney, Parks Superintendent  
Dani Bakken, Recreation Coordinator  
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Office Manager

**Others in Attendance:**

none

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Steve Ball at 6pm.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Therese Salazar made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Amy Leach seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0 (Whitney absent). Motion declared passed.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Amy Leach made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2024 meeting and Therese Salazar seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0 (Whitney absent). Motion declared passed.

**Public Items:**

Recreation staff received a project application for Grizzly Field from Ron Eriksmoen and Steve Piper, on behalf of the youth and adult football and rugby teams that utilize that facility. Staff and the board reviewed the application and agreed that this location is underutilized and making it more useful to the

user groups would be beneficial. There were a few items of concern and questions regarding the project that was discussed:

- When will the City receive the site plans being drawn up by Jones, Haugh and Smith?
- Questions on long term maintenance and the City's role, as well as the use of portable toilets and at who's expense would those be placed?
- General question on the esthetics of the containers to be used for the locker rooms/press box? Will this be appealing to the eye?
- Zoning rules and guidelines for that area, specifically setback from the lakeshore?
- Would the so-called temporary containers be viewed as private property of the user group being stored on City property and how does that fall in the City ordinance?
- Will there be a need to grade the field to level the playing surface, as well as turn the field slightly?

The board agreed that they would like to find out more answers to these questions and invite Ron and Steve to the April board meeting for further discussion.

#### **Action/Discussion Items:**

- **UP Rail to Trail: Ideas for naming the new trail**
  - The board broke out into three small groups to brainstorm potential names to make a recommendation. Ken Rahn provided a list for the board and staff to look through. The Trails Association suggested keeping the Blazing Star Trail to have a long trail with added miles. It would also be an edge for additional funding as it would be finishing an existing trail.
  - All three groups reported back with similar responses with all of them suggesting to stay with the Blazing Star Trail. Second option ideas were Southern Star Trail and Northern Star Trail to keep with the star theme.
  - Tony Segura made the motion to recommend the naming of the new section of the trail to be the Blazing Star Trail. Therese Salazar seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of the said motion 7-0. Motion declared passed.
- **Updates on the Rec Facilities Referendum**
  - Cathy Malakowsky provided the board with a recap of the referendum informational public meetings that have taken place so far. She also shared that the Gold Kiwanis service group donated \$500 toward the project. The final public open house will be held at the Marion Ross Theater in partnership with ACT on March 19 from 4-6p. The city has received endorsements for the referendum from the District 241 school board, Greater Jobs, CVB, Chamber of Commerce, Albert Lea Hockey Association, Albert Lea Figure Skating Club along with others.

#### **Staff Reports:**

Ryan Hajek provided an update on the Inclusive Playground. The group has now raised \$955,000 which included the City's \$350,000 contribution. The project total is close to \$1.25 million. Playground equipment will be purchased soon. They are no longer putting up the perimeter fencing (\$02,000) and the parking lot will be delayed for now but has to be done per the City ordinance. They are also eliminating the concrete slab for portable toilets. They will also delay the water and sewer work for future bathroom. The hope is to start site prep in 2024 and purchase equipment and start the project in August.

Ryan also shared that the City received four Emerald Ash Bore contractor bids. Kent asked about how residents can identify Ash trees. There was discussion on using an app on your smart phone that can help identify by taking a picture of the tree with your phone.

**Recreation:** Report provided by Bob Furland and Dani Bakken;

- The summer guide is finished and will be mailed out in the middle of April
- Recreation and the library are partnering to offer an open house on May 2
  - Working with SMART transit on getting transportation from different areas in town
- During spring break, no school events were held on March 14 and 15
- We will be hosting an Easter egg hunt on March 30 from 9-11a at Central Park
- The Easter Bunny will be doing deliveries on Friday, March 29
- Started pool manager interviews last week, and will be hiring lifeguards, attendants, and play park leaders
- Afton mailed out dock renewals due March 29. Open dock rental day is Friday, April 12 at 6am
- Garden renewals have also been mailed out and are due March 29. Open gardens will be rented on a first come, first served basis on April 1 at 8am

**Parks:** Report provided by Mike Westney;

- Aeration signs have been taken down & put away.
- Hockey boards have been taken down & put away.
- Edgewater Bay Pavilion's yearly cleanup & maintenance is done.
- Belleview & Troy Hammer playgrounds have been approved.
- Snyder Field Complex – Water lines were run to each field, landscape & maintenance work is being done on the fields, fence work will be done on the volleyball courts, and concession building will be power washed inside & out.
- Hayek nets are being put up & maintenance is starting.
- In the process of purchasing a new mower.
- Working on equipment maintenance.
- Working on Southwest bathrooms.
- Will be putting the new Pelican breeze dock in.
- Taking down & trimming trees.
- Banners to be changed out uptown.

**City Arena:** Report provided by Bob Furland/Josh Heilman;

- **Facility update –**
  - Ice will be taken off of Nystrom beginning March 25. Colstrup will stay on through April.
  - Emma Barclay is working on updating and creating new safety guidelines.
- **Events -**
  - Hockey tournaments
    - Done for the season
  - Waldorf Games
    - Done for the season
    - Will continue to rent ice twice per week through the beginning of April
  - High School Games

- Done for the season
- HS open hockey is being offered through the beginning of April
- Figure Skating
  - Albert Lea Figure Skating Show will be held March 23 at 7pm and 24 at 2pm
- **Programs –**
  - ALHA spring youth hockey league will begin the week of March 18 and run through April 30, two nights per week

**Aquatic Center:** Report provided by Bob Furland/Dani Bakken;

- Spring clean up has begun. Staff have removed a fence portion between the kiddie pool and concession area.

**Senior Center:** Report provided by Bob Furland;

- **Trips -**
  - None
- **Programs –**
  - March 19 Emergency Response Basics class
  - March 21 Blood Drive
  - March 27<sup>th</sup> Art with Emelia
  - April 2 Tech Tuesday
  - April 3<sup>rd</sup> Coffee with a cop
  - April 10<sup>th</sup> Board meeting

**Marion Ross Theater:** Report provided by Bob Furland;

- Play: The Completed Works of William Shakespeare will run March 14,15,16,17 and 20,21,22,23.
- Kit Mayer and the Pack concert – March 30. Mayer, along with a selection of material from some of their favorite artists, includes Bob Dylan, Neil Young, Ray Charles, The Grateful Dead & more

**Other:** Report provided by Cathy Malakowsky;

- The City Council adopted the park rules and they are now in effect.
- Recreation and the Albert Lea Public Library are working on fresh programming for this summer and brainstorming on how to provide transportation to programs, events and the pool.

**\*\* Top 5 Project Updates:**

Restrooms by Splash Pad –

- Included in the proposal for long-term maintenance of Rec Facilities

Develop the Union Pacific rail to trail –

- Naming of trail on the agenda

Develop an off-season field house –

- Status of the non-city group working on this idea?

Upgrade Snyder Fields –

- See update under Parks

Update aging facilities, including the City Arena and Aquatic Center –

- Referendum agenda update

**Board Member Items:**

- Whitney Sauer –
  - Participated in the Swim, Skate, Climb spring break activity as a staff member with Community Education and felt that things went really well with over 100 kids participating.
- Tony Segura –
  - Asked about youth basketball opportunities in the community. Staff referred him to the YMCA or the youth basketball association, as recreation does not hold any basketball activities.
- Steve Ball –
  - Steve inquired about portable toilets around the lake to see if more are needed. Staff informed him that there are portable toilets at Brookside landing, as well as permanent bathrooms at Lakeview Park, Pioneer Park and the City Beach which are all great locations for those running/walking/biking around the lake. Portable toilets are highly vandalized but they are utilized at the local parks.
- Jason Howland –
  - Jason spoke regarding the new public dock that will be going up on Fountain Lake off of Bridge St near Katherine Island. Ryan Hajek added that the DNR has the money but they are working to complete the specific dock design such as adding a kayak launch area.
  - Discussion was also had on the SRWSD projects planned for this summer on Fountain Lake.

**Adjournment:** Amy Leach made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting, and Whitney Sauer seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 7-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Afton Wacholz  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

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Steve Ball  
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chairman