

PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

May 15, 2023 5:45 pm  
City Hall – Council Chambers

**Members Present:**

Steve Ball  
Jodi Hartman  
Therese Saindon  
Amy Leach  
Rich Yost  
Whitney Sauer  
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio

**Members Absent:**

Tony Segura

**Staff in Attendance:**

Cathy Malakowsky, Community Engagement and Enrichment Director  
Bob Furland, Recreation Manager  
Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works  
Mike Veldman, Parks Foreman  
Dani Bakken, Recreation Coordinator

**Others in Attendance:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Steve Ball at 5:45pm.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Rich Yost 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. Motion declared passed.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Jodi Hartman made the motion to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2023 meeting and Therese Saindon seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0. Motion declared passed.

**Public Items:**

**Action/Discussion Items:**

**UP Rail to Trail Plan – Discussion and Potential Action**

Cathy presented updates on the UP Rail to Trail Plan and discussed how the plan was created (plan can be found on the City of Albert Lea website). The board discussed the plan for the trail and what the next steps look like. Safety was the main discussion in regards to the trail plan as that is the main priority.

Amy Leach made the motion to adopt the plan and move it forward to the Albert Lea City Council. Jodi Hartman seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of the motion 6-0. Motion declared passed.

### **Staff Reports:**

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

- Apex Facility Solutions has started assessing the Arena, Pool, and Theatre.
  - Friday 5/5 - lighting and electric evaluation at Theatre, Aquatic Center and Arena
  - Monday 5/8 – Aquatic Center assessment
  - Thursday, 5/11 Refrigeration systems at the arena, structural review of the arena, visit park buildings
- Youth Soccer, Grizzlies Football and youth baseball have started and are using the city fields.
- Afton has been scheduling sports teams for field use for the summer
- Working with Waldorf on a new contract. They are hoping to add a second team.
- Kayak and canoe station at Frank Hall Park will open on May 12.
- Recreation helped organize and provide kid’s activities at Cinco De Mayo event.
- June 17 will be Albert Lea's first Pride event; the event will take place at Central park on June 17
  - The Community Gardens on Margaretha Avenue have shifted to the north because Design Ready Controls needs the previous site for additional employee parking.
- Play Parks:
  - Will open on June 5
  - This year we are staffing Hawthorne, Lakeview and Academy Play Parks
    - We currently have 8 staff hired for playparks
    - 2 will be at Hawthorne Only
    - 2 will be at Lakeview only
    - 2 will be at Academy and different summer events
    - 2 will be floaters
  - Hours will be Monday-Thursday 9:00am-4:00pm
  - We will be partnering with Community Education to offer different activities at play parks
    - Their trailers will rotate between the playparks throughout the summer to provide Stem activities and crafts
- Sponsorship
  - Have had several calls about businesses wanting to sponsor stuff this summer. I am working on finishing the sponsorship guide so we can start offering that to local businesses.

**Parks:** Report provided by Ryan Hayek and Mike Westney;

- Staff are finishing up turning the water on at parks for bathrooms, etc.
- All City docks have been put in
- New Denmark fountains are up and running
- Gardens are tilled and ready for use – Margaretha gardens were relocated slightly to the north
- Work continues at Snyder Fields
- Will be starting work on the new volleyball court at Snyder
- Will be getting the beach ready to open
- Start spraying around trees and fence lines

- Mowing staff have started & still looking to hire part time help
- Electrical work at Lakeview Play Park building for the new bathroom is being finished and will then be ready to open for public use

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

- Jed Bair will transfer to the Parks department on May 22 and return to the arena in the fall
- We have been Interviewing to replace Jed's position at the arena.
- Summer maintenance has started
- Minnesota Mavericks have been practicing on weekends
- One compressor on the Colstrup arena went out and is going to be replaced in the next two weeks

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

- The pool is being filled and opens for the season on June 5.
- We are currently only hiring for lifeguards
- We have hired
  - 4 pool managers
  - 11 attendants
  - 22 lifeguards
- Swim lesson registration started May 1 - a lot of the aqua tot and level 1 classes are full with waiting lists
  - Session 1- June 12-June 23
  - Session 2- July 10-July 21
  - Session 3- July 24-August 4 (morning Sessions only)
- Head Start:
  - We are going to offer free pool passes and 1 free session of swim lessons to head start kids again this summer with the help of Blue zone funding
  - We have 39 families (200 people) who are getting season passes
  - 22 students are interested in the free swim lessons

**Senior Center:** Report provided by Bob Furland/Cathy Malakowsky;

- May 17 Trip to Wild Rose Casino
- May 22 Spring BBQ at the center
- June 7th Coffee with a cop
- Floors have been striped and waxed

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

- June 15 – 25<sup>th</sup> Cinderella
- June 30 Elton John tribute

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

- The Albert Lea City Council voted May 8 to approve the Aquatic Center program for Head Start students. Through this program, Freeborn County Head Start students receive 1 session of swim lessons and a family season pass at no charge. Blue Zones Albert Lea will provide up to \$6,000 in funding for this program in 2023. as part of a \$20,000 Mayo Foundation grant to help fund youth rec programs.

- Parks and Recreation staff met with ALPD staff to discuss vandalism at City parks and facilities.
- The council also approved resurfacing the Aquatic Center parking lot after the pool closes this summer. The project includes a stormwater pond measuring 85' X 75' between the parking lot and basketball courts. This will require removing 2 trees. The pond will be designed to prevent a child from rolling or running into it, and shallow enough that a child could stand up if landing in the water. The purpose of the stormwater pond will be to treat runoff from the parking lot and help mitigate street flooding.
- The Summer Fun Guide was mailed to all Freeborn County addresses last week.
- The Albert Lea Public Library is adding 10 new Discovery Kits for checkout, including a disc golf set.
- The Parks and Rec Board project process and application are now posted: <https://cityofalbertlea.org/parksproject/>.

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

#### Restrooms by Splash Pad –

- No update

#### Develop the Union Pacific rail to trail –

- Cathy is presenting on this for the May meeting.

#### Develop an off-season field house –

- No update

#### Upgrade Snyder Fields –

- Tiling is complete at Snyder fields. City staff continue to work on grating and laying rock on the west end of the parking lot area. There will be continued dirt work and seeding grass to fix areas that were disrupted during the tiling project.

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

- See the Recreation updates regarding the Apex comprehensive building audit site visits this week.

### **Board Member Items:**

- Jason Howland –
  - ACT will be holding a Kids Theater Camp in July; M-F 9-11am with a performance on Friday evening to cap off the week; more information will be available on the ACT website in the near future. Ages for the camp are 9-13 and will take up to 50 kids.
  - Cinderella will be on stage beginning in June.
- Rich Yost –
  - Provided an update on the scoreboards at Snyder Fields. The hope is to have them installed prior to the youth baseball tournament the week of June 9-11.
  - Almost 450 kids are signed up for youth baseball and softball this summer.

**Adjournment:** Rich Yost made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting, and Amy Leach seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dani Bakken  
Stand In Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

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Steve Ball  
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chairman