

PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

*February 24, 2025 6 pm*  
City Arena

**Members Present:**

Steve Ball  
Kent Rahn  
Therese Salazar  
Wende Taylor

**Members Absent:**

Amy Leach  
Whitney Sauer  
Tony Segura  
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio (City Council Meeting)

**Staff in Attendance:**

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

**Others in Attendance:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order by Steve Ball at 6:00pm.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Therese Salazar made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Wende Taylor seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Wende Taylor made the motion to approve the minutes from the January 27, 2025 meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

**Public Items:**

None

**Action/Discussion Items:**

None

**Staff Report Discussion:**

- Tour of the City Arena – Rec facilities project progress
  - Retro fit lights throughout the whole building, new ref room for Nystrom rink, E-Ceiling on Colstrup rink, water conservation upgrades
- Updates by staff:
  - Rec facility projects
  - Splash Pad/North Lott bathroom project
    - City Council approved for City staff to complete the project; electrical, plumbing and foundation work will be contracted out and City staff will run water/sewer to the building and pour the cement around the building
  - Snyder Field project
    - Youth baseball and softball provided responses to questions regarding needs of the concessions/bathroom building; staff are currently working with a design team
  - Lakeview Blvd. pedestrian sidewalk curb access into Edgewater Park
    - City Engineer reviewed and has put this item on an action list going forward

**Staff Updates:****Recreation:** Report provided by Bob Furland and Afton Wacholz;

- Learn to Skate had their last class of the current session on Sunday, February 9
  - Plans for next season will be made once we know more specifically on when fall ice will be in.
- Outdoor ice rinks and warming houses are still going strong despite temporary breaks due to warm temperatures and now too cold temperatures.
- Special Olympics Young Athletes program will have their last class on February 25. It had 18 participants and was held at United Pre-School on Tuesday evenings. Two Special Olympics Young Athlete instructors, volunteers from the National Honor Society, and other high school-age students operated the program.
- Winter Candle Light Walk scheduled at Myre-Big Island State Park Feb 15 was cancelled due to the potential of strong wind and wind chill temperatures.
- Community dock and garden renewal letters will be mailed out by February 26.
  - Community docks will go open to the public on Friday, April 11 at 6am.
  - Community gardens will go open to the public on Tuesday, April 1 at 8am.
- Summer recreation job opportunities have now been posted on the City's website.
  - Aquatic Center lifeguards and attendants
  - Recreation neighborhood park leaders and recreation assistants

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

- EAB treatment list is done.
- Working on tree take downs & trimming.
- Alex, Ben & Mike V went to shade tree short course for training.
- Ordered new playground equipment for Ginkel & Lakeview Parks.
- Working on breezeway ceiling at Edgewater Bay Pavilion.
- Edgewater Bay Pavilion was shut down for two weeks for annual maintenance.
- Working on equipment maintenance.
- Working on building maintenance.

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

- Facility updates –
  - A low-E ceiling has been installed in the Colstrup rink. The Low-Emissivity Ceiling is suspended over the ice surface, acting as a radiant barrier between a warm roof and the ice below it, reducing energy costs to cool the ice.
  - LED Arena Lighting has been installed over both ice rinks. The lights will save energy and improve visibility. The contractor also installs and upgrades LED lights in the building's rooms.
  - The Council unanimously voted to accept a \$250,000 donation from the Albert Lea Hockey Association for the lobby expansion at the City Arena.
  - The Council also unanimously approved the low bid for remodeling the City Arena and Aquatic Center and a construction management agreement with Apex Facility Solutions.
- Events -
  - Youth Hockey
    - Albert Lea Hockey Day 2025 January 25; 19-year tradition with 17 games played throughout the day and 6,000 visitors
    - U8 Boys and Girls Tournament February 1 and 2
    - C Bantam Tournament February 8 and 9
    - A Bantam District Tournament February 14-16
  - Waldorf
    - Season is now completed
  - High School
    - Hosted the Section semifinal game on February 25 for HS Girls Hockey and will be hosting the Section quarterfinal game on February 20 for HS Boys Hockey
  - Figure Skating
    - Annual show "Candyland" March 1 at 7pm and March 2 at 2pm
- Other events –
  - In January, the City Arena had 33,000 visits and 11,400 different visitors. (per Placer data)
  - Ice will go out in the Colstrup rink on February 24 with the help of the parks department

**Aquatic Center:** Report provided by Bob Furland/Josh Heilman;

- No new report

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

- Trips -
  - none
- Programs/Events –
  - March 5th: Coffee with a cop
  - March 10<sup>th</sup> Memory Café
  - March 12<sup>th</sup> Board meeting
  - March 18<sup>th</sup> Country Concert

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

- **Facility Updates –**
  - Nothing new to report
- **Upcoming events -**
  - The upcoming Community Theatre performance of “All My Sons” will be held on March 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, and 22, 2025.

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

For the trail on the former UP rail corridor, the City of Albert Lea has applied for a DNR grant to replace the rail bridge between Fountain Street and Shoff Park while Freeborn County has applied for a DNR grant to replace the bridges between Albert Lea and Manchester. If successful, the City and County will need to provide matching funds. These grants would cover all the bridges along the proposed trail.

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

Restrooms by Splash Pad –

- See staff updates

Develop the Union Pacific rail to trail –

- See update under Cathy’s report

Develop an off-season field house –

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

Upgrade Snyder Fields –

- Discussion during staff updates

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

- See staff updates

**Board Member Items:**

None

**Adjournment:** Wende Taylor made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting and Kent Rahn seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. 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