

PARKS & RECREATION  
ADVISORY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

December 18, 2023 5:45 pm  
Edgewater Bay Pavilion

**Members Present:**

Steve Ball  
Jodi Hartman  
Therese Salazar (arrived at 6:03p)  
Amy Leach  
Whitney Sauer  
Tony Segura (arrived at 5:57p)  
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio (arrived at 5:48p)

**Members Absent:**

Rich Yost

**Staff in Attendance:**

Cathy Malakowsky, Community Engagement and Enrichment Director  
Bob Furland, Recreation Manager  
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 5:45pm.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Jodi Hartman made the motion to approve the agenda for tonight's meeting and Whitney Sauer seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

**Approval of the Minutes:**

Amy Leach made the motion to approve the minutes from the October 16, 2023 meeting and Jodi Hartman seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Motion declared passed.

**Public Items:**

Pickleball club mailed letter; Board discussed the need for the club to submit a project application

**Action/Discussion Items:**

- **Advisory Board Meeting Dates**
  - Due to holiday conflicts, the January 2024 meeting will be held on Monday, January 29<sup>th</sup> and the February meeting will be held on Monday, February 26<sup>th</sup>.

- The board voted to change the meeting start time to 6p to accommodate board member work schedules. Beginning in 2024, meetings will begin at 6p. Amy Leach motioned to approve, seconded by Therese Salazar. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0. Motion declared passed.
- **Chair and Vice-Chair Positions**
  - Whitney Sauer made the motion to elect Steve Ball to his second term as chair and Jodi Hartman to her second term as vice-chair. Amy Leach seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0. Motion declared passed.
- **Review open bottle ban and park rules**
  - The City Council passed the open bottle ban 5-2 at the last council meeting. The park rules however failed due to the language regarding no alcohol being allowed without a liquor license. There was discussion and feedback from the community that small family gatherings or people fishing by the lake should be allowed to have a beverage or more if there is no affect on others. This type of violation is hard to control and is not likely to be ticketed, however there is concern that if it was in the ordinance that people would not be comfortable going against it. The board asked if staff are able to set specific rules that are not in the ordinance and the answer is no. Staff are unsure what the next step should be and the board would like more information on what other cities have for their park rules regarding alcohol usage.
  - Here is the information staff provided the board regarding other community’s park rules:

<b>City of Waseca, MN</b>	Liquors and beer - No person shall possess, display or consume intoxicating liquors or non-intoxicating malt liquors on any beaches iwthint City parks. The possession or consumption of intoxicating or non-intoxicating liquor is allowed in Maplewood Park only upon issuance of a permit by the City.
<b>City of Hastings, MN</b>	Intoxicating malt liquor, wine, or 3.2% malt liquor is allowed in City Parks between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. At Veterans Athletic Complex, wine or intoxicating malt liquor is allowed between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 p.m. It is unlawful for any person to consume or be in possession of intoxicating liquor in any City park at any time.
<b>City of Owatonna, MN</b>	Liquor in Parks and Beaches: No person or persons shall display, consume, or possess any intoxicating liquor, non-intoxicating malt beverage or intoxicating malt beverage within parking areas, roadways, sidewalks abutting or the grounds in general of Central Park, Cashman Park, or Kaplan’s Woods Parkway in the City of Owatonna.  Permit Required for Large Container of Alcoholic Beverages: Except in parks listed in previous statement, alcoholic beverages may be carried into any park for consumption, providing that for such purpose no container of greater than two quart capacity shall be allowed without permit from the office of the Director of Parks and Recreation.
<b>City of Mankato, MN</b>	It shall be unlawful to possess or consume any intoxicating beverages, other than beer, wine or beverages containing more than 7% alcohol by weight, in any park or recreation area, except that no intoxicating beverage, including beer, may be possessed or consumed in Class V and VI parks, unless prior written approval is obtained from the City Manager or designee in accordance with Section 14.10
<b>City of Rochester, MN</b>	City Ordinance #45b.17 states: “It is unlawful for any person to bring upon, or to possess or consume in, a park the contents of a container of an alcoholic beverage that contains or has a capacity of two or more gallons.” NO KEGS! No alcohol allowed at Bear Creek, Central, Foster-Arend, Kutzky, Mayo or Slatterly Parks without a special use permit
<b>City of Austin, MN</b>	Permits are required for kegs in the parks. Permits are available in the Park and Recreation Office. There is a two week waiting period and a \$10 fee. Cans are allowed without a permit. Please NO glass.
<b>City of Red Wing, MN</b>	The park hours are 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. If you want to stay after hours or if you are going to be serving alcohol after hours you will need written documentation that a City of Red Wing Police Officer or Reserve Officer will be on-site. This document must be submitted to the Public Works Director for final approval. For more information on providing a Security Officer call 651-267-2613. Alcohol may be served during park hours from 8 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. but may not be sold in the park.
<b>City of Fairmont, MN</b>	a. Alcohol is allowed in the parks during the hours of 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. b. Intoxicating and nonintoxicating beverages in a keg are only allowed with written permission from the Park Director or City Administrator. c. Alcohol or other beverages should not be brought into the parks in glass bottles.

- **Review of progress on top 5 board priority projects**
  - Restroom by Splash Pad: There has been an overwhelming response of support for the North lot/Splash Pad bathrooms. This project was added to the Rec Facilities project.
  - Union Pacific Rail to Trail: The County is working on a RFP for the trail from Front St to Hwy 13 to Manchester. The City and County plan to meet on Jan 2 to review proposals.
  - Snyder Field Upgrade: Fencing is almost complete and work has started on the dugouts. Drainage, scoreboards and water to the fields is complete.
  - Rec facilities Project: Open house will take place on Jan 4 at the City Arena. Looking for council to vote in January on how to proceed.
- **Priorities for 2024**
  - Continue work on top 5 projects

**Staff Reports:**

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

- Apex Facility Solutions has had contractors at the City Arena, Aquatic Center, and Marion Ross Theater to work on pricing and plans for renovations
- Bob helped with the Holiday Bazaar December 7
- Dani is working on Santa letters. An additional Santa mailbox was added at City Hall along with the one we have at the Recreation Office/City Arena. Letters should be posted by Dec 14.
- Ugly Sweater themed skate was held on December 17
- Dani is working on warming house orientation for staff; once the weather allows staff will be ready to begin working the outdoor skating parks
- Rock on Ice will be held on December 29 7-9p - DJ Kessel will once again be the DJ
- Bob and Dani have ordered and received Archery Tag; they will work on getting programs going using that equipment
- Learn to Skate Session 2 ended on December 3; Session 3 will run January 7-February 11

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

- Work continues on Snyder project – dugout concrete slabs are complete and dugout roofs are being worked on
- Christmas decorations along Broadway, Splash Pad and Central park are complete
- Outdoor hockey rinks are up; weather will now determine when flooding can begin
- Valley playground equipment replacement is complete
- Edgewater Bay Pavilion breezeway doors are done.
- Academy Park building had a new furnace installed.
- Electronic lock installed at Lakeview Park public bathroom
- Truck 91 will have a new plow & sander installed
- Staff are trimming oak & elm trees at Edgewater Park
- Continued maintenance on equipment
- Building maintenance
- Aeration signs will be put on Fountain Lake soon

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

- **Facility update –**
  - Continue to work with Apex to plan for Arena updates
  - Bleachers are completed in both arenas.
- **Events -**
  - Hockey tournaments
    - December 8-10 U10/U12 Girls 16 teams (Albert Lea, Sioux Falls, Dodge County, Minneapolis, Mankato, New Ulm, Omaha, Roseville, Windom)
    - December 15-17 A/B Peewee 14 teams (Albert Lea, Fremont NE, Sioux falls, Sioux City, Window, Fairmont, Des Moines, Minneapolis area, Omaha and Mankato)
  - Waldorf Games
    - Dec 1-2 hosted Midland Warriors from Fremont, NE
  - High School Games
    - Hosted four home HS games so far this season
- **Programs –**
  - Mites In-House Hockey and Learn To Skate are going well.

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

- None

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

- Senior Center Christmas party was held at the Edgewater Bay Pavilion on December 8
- **Trips -**
  - None
- **Programs –**
  - Forever Fit Wednesdays at 9:00am
  - Memory Café second Thursday each month.
  - Coffee with a Cop first Wednesday each month
  - Senior defensive driving December 15

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

- **ACT Plays** -A Christmas Carol - Dec 13-16
- Comedian Michael Palascak January 6 at 7:30p
- Gregg Hall – A Tribute to Neal Young January 19

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

- **Apex projects:** City staff have added a few Capital Improvement Projects to the proposal, including public restrooms at the Splash Pad. The council is scheduled to vote on the scope of projects and funding options at its Jan. 8, 2024 meeting. The Mayor has asked for public input. Please reach out to city councilors with your thoughts. You can find their contact info and project information at <https://cityofalbertlea.org/council/>.
- **Park rules:** At its Dec. 11 meeting, the Albert Lea City Council voted down the proposed park rules over opposition to the no alcohol rule. However, the Council voted 5-2 to approve the final

reading of the open bottle law. The prohibition on open containers of alcoholic and cannabis drinks on public property INCLUDES all the parks. But the council wants to find a way to allow some consumption in the parks, so voted down the park rules. City staff are discussing how to respond to this request, and the Board is welcome to make recommendations.

- **Union Pacific rail to trail:** Freeborn County Engineer Phil Wacholz issued an RFP for the preliminary engineering work to develop the trail from Fountain Street in Albert Lea to CSAH 25 (255th Street) in Manchester. A group of County and City representatives will meet Jan. 2 to review the proposals.

**\*\* 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 –

- City-County work group is set to meet Jan 2 to review proposals received for the preliminary engineering work

Develop an off-season field house –

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

Upgrade Snyder Fields –

- Much progress made with future improvements planned; currently working on dugouts

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

- See Cathy’s update under Rec Facility Projects

**Board Member Items:**

- Steve Ball –
  - Inquired about the soccer nets that are still up at Troy-Hammer. Staff stated that the nets are the soccer associations but Mike will look into storing them for the winter if they are not taken down.
- Jason Howland –
  - Shared that the City Council will review the Apex Scope of projects for the Rec facilities and urges the board to attend the open house on Jan 4<sup>th</sup> at the City Arena from 4-6p.

**Adjournment:** Amy Leach made a motion to adjourn the Park Board meeting, and Tony Segura seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 6-0. 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