

PARKS & RECREATION
ADVISORY BOARD
MEETING MINUTES

July 17, 2023 5:45 pm
City Arena

Members Present:

Steve Ball
Jodi Hartman
Amy Leach
Whitney Sauer
Rich Yost (arrived at 5:47pm)

Members Absent:

Therese Saindon
Tony Segura
Jason Howland, Ex-Officio

Staff in Attendance:

Kristi Brutlag, Finance Director
Cathy Malakowsky, Community Engagement and Enrichment Director
Bob Furland, Recreation Manager
Ryan Hajek, Assistant Director of Public Works
Mike Westney, Parks Superintendent
Josh Heilman, Arena/Aquatic Center Foreman
Dani Bakken, Recreation Coordinator
Emma Barclay, Arena/Aquatic Center Technician
Afton Wacholz, Recreation Administrative Assistant

Others in Attendance:

Marco Hunt – Apex
Rob Krukoski – Apex
Cody Capra - Apex
Kelly Peterson – Albert Lea Figure Skating Club Representative
Todd Ulve – Albert Lea Youth Hockey Board President
Abby Leach – Albert Lea Youth Hockey Representative
Paul Durbahn – Albert Lea Area Schools Representative
Ty Prater – Waldorf University Men’s Hockey Associate Head Coach

Call to Order:

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

Adopt Agenda:

Amy Leach 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. Rich Yost was absent for the vote. Motion declared passed.

Approval of the Minutes:

Jodi Hartman made the motion to approve the minutes from the May 15, 2023 meeting and Amy Leach seconded the motion. The board voted in favor of said motion 4-0. Rich Yost was absent for the vote. Motion declared passed.

Public Items:

Action/Discussion Items:

Presentation of Apex proposal for Recreational Facilities and Solar Systems

Slides from the presentation included in the agenda packet

Cathy Malakowsky discussed the why and purpose for the proposal prior to introducing the Apex team.

Purpose:

- Ensure long term viability
- Decrease energy use
- Enhance safety of users
- Meet building codes

Goal of presentation:

- Learn the details about the proposal
- Answer questions regarding the proposal
- Receive input
- Board vote on recommendation of projects to pursue

Apex is an energy services company that helps leverage energy savings through new equipment. Apex staff presented on the current conditions of the facilities (City Arena, Aquatic Center, Marion Ross Theater) specifically the aging equipment, energy efficiency, and infrastructure limitations with the goal of avoiding catastrophic failure. The Apex team also discussed the potential incentives for this project.

Presentation feedback from user groups:

Kelly Peterson (Figure skating) – felt the structural beam repair was a priority as well as getting the practice ice (Colstrup Arena) repaired.

Todd Ulve (Youth Hockey Association) – would like to see the summer ice issue resolved as both youth and high school hockey would like to stay local for summer ice usage and right now we are barely able to make it to late June on Colstrup. Todd would also like to see the development of a dryland area. There was also discussion on an outdoor rink option at the City Arena in the future.

Ty Prater (Waldorf University) – also expressed interest in the summer ice option as for Waldorf.

Abbey Schumacher (Youth Hockey Association) – felt that the upgrades to the high school and youth locker rooms could come later and did not believe that there was a need to make the 2nd level ADA accessible by putting in an elevator.

Steve Ball (Park and Recreation Advisory Board Chair) – feels very strongly that we don't want to just catch up and that we need to do what we can to get to get beyond where we need to be with our facilities.

Staff Reports:

Recreation: Report provided by Bob Furland and Dani Bakken;

- Thursdays on Fountain have been well attended, with more than 500 people at most concerts.
- Albert Lea Pride was held on June 17. Hundreds of people attended the event. The event went very well, with food trucks and seven resources for attendees.
- Staff is Preparing the 2024 budget.
- Play parks
 - Play Parks have been going well and we have heard good feedback with the collaboration with Community Education
 - As of June 29
 - Academy-310
 - Hawthorne- 329
 - Lakeview-251
 - I have not met with Scott yet to get the final numbers for Hayek park
 - Play parks will be going to the aquatic center on July 13, this is free for anyone who rides the bus from the play parks
 - Play parks close for the season on July 27
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Parks: Report provided by Ryan Hayek and Mike Westney;

- Working on Sondergaard basketball court.
- Tree removals.
- Watering trees planted in last 3 years.
- Installed landscape materials at the new food truck plaza.
- Freeborn Mower, Utilities Dept, & Park dept straightened light poles at Snyder fields.
- Fence repairs at dog park; a large branch landed on the fence.
- Minor repairs at Lakeview Park bathroom due to vandalism.
- Repairs at the beach & Pioneer Park due to vandalism.
- Routine maintenance & repairs.
- Snyder Field Ad for bids - Fence
- Snyder Field RFQ – Cement and Roofs
- EAB – Ryan submitted the last update for our grant.
- Budgets

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

- The last day of ice was June 30. Ice has been removed, and compressors shut off.
- Rink Tech will be coming on July 11 to repair the small leaks in the Nystrom Arena floor.
- The Nystrom Arena had 3 dry floor event rentals for quinceaneras last month.

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

- As of July 3rd we have had 8,486 people visit the aquatic center.
- Aquatic Center will close on August 13 for the season.
- We sold 180 passes this year.
- Swim lessons
 - Session 1 ended on June 23
 - Session 2 started July 10
 - 180 people are registered

- We are offering the Children’s Center lessons once again this year at their own time so it does not take up spots for the general public
- **Movie in the park**
 - We cancelled movie in the park on July 7 due to the weather
 - We have rescheduled it for July 28
 - August movie in the park is being sponsored by Leland Reality and will be held on August 18
- **Mermaid/pirate day**
 - We held our first mermaid/pirate day at the aquatic center on July 8
 - Mermaid Analise came and she was a huge hit with the kids
 - We had about 40 people attend the event
- **Upcoming Special events:**
 - July 19- Pop up play park at Sondergaard
 - July 21- Third Lair at Skate park
 - July 25- holidays at the pool- Santa will be there from 1-3 and the grinch will be there from 6:30-8
 - July 26- Pop up play park at Valley
 - July 28- Movie in the park
 - September 19- Safety Day

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

- Senior Center Board will meet on July 12 at 3:00 PM
- Senior Defensive driving will be held on July 14

Marion Ross Theater: Report provided by Bob Furland;

- ACT is holding a theatre camp for kids July 10 – 14. - Theatre Kids Camp is a summer program for children ages 8-13 to learn and improve their theatre skills, including teamwork, annunciation, and confidence.

Other: Report provided by Cathy Malakowsky;

- **Inclusive Playground:** I am sad and disappointed that the DNR has turned down the City’s application again for \$300,000 in the funding for the Inclusive Playground. See their response below. City staff will meet with the All Together group soon to brainstorm on how to move forward.

Hi Cathy,

The main issue is that we do not have enough funding available to reach all the projects. This program is very competitive. Your application was well written and included all the requested information.

There were some concerns by the reviewers related to the roadway separating the play areas and pavilion facility. The parking lots together hold 100+ vehicles, suggesting a great amount of traffic on this road, even if a low-speed limit is posted. Also, some question that separation of two play areas may segregate children of differing abilities. Overall, some additional priority is given to redevelopment of facilities to address safety and/or access concerns.

Audrey

Audrey Mularie

Grants Specialist Coordinator | Division of Parks and Trails

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

500 Lafayette Road

St. Paul, MN 55155

- UP Rail to Trail: The Albert Lea City Council accepted the Parks and Rec Board recommendation and adopted the plan for developing a trail along 15 miles of former Union Pacific rail corridor. City and County elected officials and staff will meet July 13 to plan the next steps for seeking grant money to start developing the trail.
<https://cityofalbertlea.org/wp-content/uploads/TrailActionPlan.pdf>
- Blue Zones: As part of its “Passport to 9 Weeks of Summer” program, Blue Zones Albert Lea is promoting play parks, the Aquatic Center and other Albert Lea Recreational offerings. For each activity completed, a resident can enter a weekly drawing for prizes.
[Blue-Zones-passport-web.pdf \(cityofalbertlea.org\)](#)

**** Top 5 Project Updates:**

Restrooms by Splash Pad –

- No update

Develop the Union Pacific rail to trail –

- See Cathy’s update on the Trail Action Plan.

Develop an off-season field house –

- No update

Upgrade Snyder Fields –

- See Parks department updates.

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

- Apex is presenting at this month’s board meeting.

Board Member Items:

- Amy Leach –
 - Has been assisting Ryan and the Parks staff with camera footage from her home due to the increased vandalism at Lakeview Park bathrooms across the street.

- Would like to see increased advertising for the Summer Play Park programming to increase the number of participants.
- Rich Yost –
 - 11 year old baseball State Tournament will be hosted at Snyder Field the weekend of July 21-23.
- Whitney Sauer –
 - Shout out to the Mermaid and Pirate event at the Aquatic Center.

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 5-0. Motion declared passed. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Afton Wacholz
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board Secretary

Approved:

Steve Ball
Park & Recreation Advisory Board Chairman