

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, May 8, 2020**

This meeting took place via Zoom Video Conference

Members present: Dave Barsness, Dorothy Dybvig, Eric Sturtz, David Chasson, Karry White, Oliver Dykstra

Members absent: Tony Vavricka

Staff Present: Administrator Kathy George, Streets & Parks Supervisor Craige Hiler

Other: Council Liaison Val Palmer

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chair Dybvig.

Approve Agenda

Motion Barsness, second Sturtz, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion Dykstra, second White, to approve the minutes from the April 10, 2020, April 15, 2020, and April 16, 2020 meetings. Motion passed 6-0.

New Business

Garden Club: Service Contract Request – City Administrator George heard that the Garden Club was unsure of receiving the typical amount of donations this year due to COVID-19. They anticipate a shortage of \$300-\$500 for the cost of flowers. The Garden Club takes care of the gardens in front of the Post Office and the Evangelical Free Church, along with the Veteran's Memorial gardens. They also plant all of the barrels in the downtown area.

The City is not allowed by Statute to make donations of this type; however, the City is allowed to enter into service contracts, which is what we do with OSAC. The Garden Club certainly provides a service to the City of Sandstone. The Commission reviewed a proposed Service Contract wherein the City would agree to pay \$500 to the Sandstone Flower and Garden Club in exchange for the services they provide.

Motion Barsness, second White, to recommend the City Council enter into the Service Contract with the Sandstone Flower and Garden Club for \$500. Motion passed 6-0.

Review Proposals for Cultural Landscape Report - A Request for Proposals for a Cultural Landscape Report regarding Robinson Park went out to over 30 firms during the month of April. Proposals were due May 7th at 4:30 p.m. Two proposals were received:

LHB - Duluth, MN	\$89,000
106 Group – St. Paul, MN	\$91,450

Administrator George plans to submit an application for funding to the Minnesota Historical Society. Pre-applications are due May 29th, with the full application due July 31st.

Commissioners asked about the timing of this work as it relates to the engineering for the Phase 1 Robinson Park project. George stated that if the Historical Society grant is awarded, funds can't be expended until January, 2021. For the Phase 1 Robinson Park project, it is unknown if the Legislature will pass a bonding bill due to the COVID-19 situation. If they did, grant documents would have to be fully executed before work can begin. So, the timing would work out well if that were the case. If the Legislature doesn't pass a bonding bill, the grant may be put on hold. In that case, the Cultural Landscape Report could continue to move forward so that when grant funds are available for the Phase 1 project the cultural portion will be done.

Commissioners asked George to put together a letter to Senator Rarick and Representative Nelson asking for their assistance to help move the Robinson Park Phase 1 project forward.

Motion Dybvig, second Barsness, to recommend the City Council accept the proposal from LHB for the Cultural Landscape Report in the amount of \$89,000. Motion passed 6-0.

Continuing Business

Lions Hill – project for this year includes painting inside and out, running water to the building, and addressing the sanitary sewer situation. The handyman stopped in and the painting is on his schedule.

KREEC Site – David Chasson provided an update. He and Commissioner Dykstra did some brush cutting on the trail. The area behind the building needs to be mowed. There are 3 main areas where board walk is needed. One is approximately 100 yards, should be technically easy to put in place at a cost of \$800 to \$1,500. The other two are at or close to Skunk Creek and will require permitting and a higher level of expertise in design and materials. Chasson will gather more information on how to approach the boardwalks and come up with a budget.

The trail itself is approximately 1.5 miles long from end to end (Military Rd to Pine Ave). There is a tremendous amount of plant diversity which is very noticeable. Different habitats include an open meadow, birch and aspen forest, wetlands, Skunk Creek and one of its tributaries, mixed Hardwood/Oak and Pine forests and recently clear cut. There are also a couple of Sandstone bluff features. Dykstra stated that bird watching is also a possibility, along with mapping of the various trail connections and species.

The beginning of the trail on Pine Avenue is approximately 50 yards south of the trails into Big Falls which easily connects those two trails and there is already a place where people are parking vehicles. The old Wagon road that parallels the river from Robinson Park also is within a few hundred yards of this location. The proposed County Regional Park from tax forfeited property is approximately 2 miles to the south.

Future To Do List:

- Remove old school building and create parking area in that space (dirt work/gravel). There was discussion about the costs to remove the building versus the cost to renovate. All agreed that it would not be feasible to renovate the building.
- Explore further the sale of the property on the west side of Military Road
- Signage – sign to restrict motorized use, (may have to come up with barriers and have a conversation with landowner to the south, mark trail, information about the trail, create a map)
- Continue work on trail development including a new name Dave B has suggested “Happy Trail
- Invite Heidi Bringman, LHB and also on the Osprey Wilds board, out to look at the property.
- Connect with the County regarding the TEP Panel
- Connect with Pine County Soil & Water Conservation

Commissioners expressed their desire to move forward with the signage as soon as possible. George suggested that a first step might be for the Park Commission to recommend that the City Council approve the plans as suggested by Chasson, before taking the step to put up signage.

Motion Barsness, second White, to recommend the City Council approve the plans as suggested by Chasson to develop trails and boardwalks through the KREEC site.

Motion passed 6-0. Chasson will prepare a report for the May 20th Council Meeting.

Robinson Park – There were 8 registrations for 10 days of camping in April.

Legacy Grant – it is still unknown whether the Legislature will approve this year’s round of Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails Commission recommendations (which includes our Phase 1 project).

In the meantime, the City is being encouraged by GMRPTC to submit an application for FY22 funding to include the items that were not allowed in the Phase 1 project – vault restroom, picnic shelter & tables, and concrete shelter plaza. Total estimated cost was \$290,000. The application portal is open now and closes July 31st. George will submit an application. The 10% match would be \$29,000.

Commercial Use Permits – The following entities have submitted their forms and fees for 2020:

- Midwest Mountain Guides \$100
- UW River Falls \$50
- Vertical Endeavors \$100
- Positive Energy Outdoors \$50
- Rapid Riders \$50
- U of M – Minneapolis Campus \$50

Group Camping – Now that the group camp sites have been up and running for a couple of years, the Commission discussed whether or not to start charging patrons. After review and discussion, **Motion Dykstra, second White, to charge \$30 per night for**

each group camp site. Motion passed 6-0. Signage will be added to the two sites to inform campers to register at the Victory station.

There was also discussion about the difficulty in using tent stakes at these sites, due to the underlying bedrock. One suggestion was to add tent pads; however, the intent of the group camp sites is to allow tents in many different locations. Perhaps more fill can be added at each location.

Train Park – Planting of Trees. The City has been contacted by the Thorvig family who would like to plant a tree in memory of Phil Kester. The Park Commission has also been talking about planting some more mature trees in Train Park to offer shade. Commissioner White contacted Happy Land Tree Farms and received the following pricing:

Autumn Blaze Maple or Sienna Glenn Maple
3" tree planted \$457
2-1/2" tree planted \$401

The Sienna Glenn has a wider canopy than the Autumn Blaze Maple. The autumn blaze canopy is more vertical. They both have beautiful colors of red/oranges. They both grow fairly quickly. These prices are based on two trees being planted.

This information has been shared with the Thorvig family. They want to check with another source for their tree.

Motion by White, second by Dykstra, to work with Happy Land Tree Farms to plant two Autumn Blaze Maple trees, 2 ½" diameter, for \$401 each in Train Park. Motion passed 6-0. The location will be worked out with Park Commissioners, the Sandstone Area Chamber of Commerce, and Streets and Parks Supervisor Hiler.

2020 Festivals / Events

Arts in the Park – Tuesdays in June. Commissioners discussed whether to move this event to a large parking lot somewhere, or provide masks for attendees. However, they decided it would be best to cancel the June dates and see if the event can be held later in the year, perhaps August.

Other – No discussion

Adjourn

Motion Barsness, second Dykstra, to adjourn at 9:30 a.m. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator