

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, March 12, 2021

This meeting took place via Zoom Video Conference

Members present: Dorothy Dybvig, David Chasson, Karry White, Dave Barsness, Oliver Dykstra, John Gaede

Members absent: Tony Vavricka

Staff Present: Administrator Kathy George, Streets & Parks Supervisor Craig 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 White, second Chasson, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed 6-0.

Approve Meeting Minutes

A correction was suggested that “and community members” be removed from the Ice Climbing Day discussion during the February 12, 2021 meeting. **Motion White, second Chasson, to approve the minutes from the February 12, 2021 meeting, with the noted change. Motion passed 6-0.**

New Business

2021 Events – The Commission discussed the following events for 2021:

- Park Clean Up - April 22 Earth Day: Commissioner Dykstra stated that his employer, Nemadji, encourages participation and he will see if he can get some co-workers interested. East Central School Counselor Cassie Gaede had previously expressed interest of the National Honor Society students being involved. This was confirmed during the meeting. Alana Tyson usually organizes the Girl Scouts. The Minnesota Climbers Association has supported Robinson Park in the past; perhaps they can join in.

Commissioners suggested a list be created for tasks to accomplish in each park. Each Commissioner agreed to check on their assigned park and come up with the list. Dates were also discussed. It was thought that people/groups have different days of the week available. Therefore, this year’s event will take place April 23rd (Friday) and April 24th (Saturday). An invitation will be created for the community at large to get involved, which will be placed in the *Pine County Courier*, the *Evergreen*, the City website, and Facebook.

- Arts in the Park
 - June 1
 - June 8
 - June 15
 - June 22
 - June 29

The Commission agreed that we should prepare for Arts in the Park again this year. Administrator George will contact the food vendors and OSAC, who indicated they would like to provide art projects. Commissioner Chasson will work on scheduling other speakers/events to coincide with the music. Commissioner Vavricka will be asked to line up the music, as he has done in the past. The Commission decided to use the bandshell again this year because it allows the audience to spread out more.

- National Night Out - August 3: The Commission wants to plan for this event as well. Administrator George will start contacting speakers to get things set up.
- Quarry Days - August 13-14: The Commission would like to have an information booth this year to highlight all of the City parks. They would also like to hold a fundraiser/donation drive for the new Panther Park.
- Robinson Park Fall Clean Up: This is typically held in September/October. Coordination will take place with the climbers.
- Oktoberfest - October 2: Commissioner White stated that the musicians have been talking about it already. Meetings will take place with the band to start the planning process.

Continuing Business

Robinson Park

Ice Climbing Clinic – Was a HUGE success. 17 kids from East Central High School participated. A thank-you note was received from Strength & Conditioning Instructor Cassie Gaede. Commissioner Barsness stated that the University of Minnesota instructor was excellent. He had the required credentials and provided all of the equipment. He suggested other schools in the area might want to have an event as well. Perhaps sponsors can be found. Perhaps the School District can budget for the expenses. The climbers would like to do a Rock Climbing clinic, too, and make these both annual events. Barsness will find out what the costs would. Commissioners thought this event could be highlighted at Quarry Days as well.

Camping – There were 2 registrations for 2 days of camping in February. Staff is *still* looking into on-line registration options. Commissioner White offered to check on the system used in Moose Lake.

2nd Legacy Grant Application – The grant application was submitted 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 updated estimated cost is \$357,500 (local match of \$35,750).

The following e-mail was received from Renee Mattson with Greater MN Regional Parks & Trails:

We received the February forecast last week and the numbers are very positive. As you know, we had your grant application for the restroom and picnic shelter as an additional funding recommendation if the dollars were available, and it appears (unless something really alarming happens in the next few months) that the dollars are definitely going to be available!

I'll keep in touch with you moving through the process, but it's exciting that we can fund the items and get Sandstone Robinson Park completed.

Lions Hill – The warming house is now closed for the season.

New Playground – The Task Force met on Friday, March 5th. They reviewed the proposed layout and discussed what playground features the group would like to see. Suggestions were made, such as, merry-go-round and teeter-totters (which could be added to Johnson Park instead) and adult fitness equipment (which maybe could be added to Train Park instead). In the end, all agreed on an example of a playground in Green Bay. Administrator George was asked to check with that company and see what they could do with the space available in Panther Park.

The group would like the park to include a bathroom, picnic area, benches, drinking fountain. A 4' decorative fence would be along Commercial Avenue and the 4th and 5th Street sides, with a 6' privacy fence along the alley. Quotes are being collected to see how much all of this will cost.

Commissioners discussed a desire to save the trees, if possible. S&P Supervisor Hiler stated that the Pine tree has to be removed, along with the corner tree. But two of the trees should be saveable, depending on what is needed for the park features. New trees can also be planted in the future. Hiler stated that the existing pavilion could be used if the posts are replaced, new shingles are put on the roof, and it is painted.

The DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program is accepting applications until March 31st. New development/construction projects are eligible. The maximum grant award is \$250,000. A 50% local match is required.

The grant requires demonstrated public participation in the park planning. An Open House has been scheduled for Thursday, March 18th, from 4:30 – 7:30 to gather input. All property owners within 500 feet of the property (103 in total) have been sent a letter inviting them to the open house. The invitation will also be posted on Facebook.

Eric Sturtz has been asked to work on Panther Park logo designs for consideration.

The Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission has a Skate Park Grant Program, too. Their application deadline is March 15th. Quotes have been received for the required work to move the skatepark and make some improvements.

KREEC Site Update – The Fire Department has declined to conduct a training burn of the building. A quote was received from MPJ Enterprises to demolish the building and haul the debris and the foundation away for \$7,875.00.

MPJ Enterprises also provided a quote to build a 75x75 parking lot and driveway from the road to the lot with class V base for \$2,660.00.

Motion White, second Barsness, to recommend the City Council accept the quote from MPJ Enterprises to demolish the KREEC building and create a parking lot for a total of \$10,535. Motion passed 6-0.

Chasson reported that the Minnesota Land Trust may be interested in a conservation easement for the property on the west side of Old Military Road. He also stated that the route from Old Military Road to Pine Avenue has about 600' on DNR land. He will check to see if a trail could be established there.

Chasson then suggested the Park Commission work with Osprey Wilds to create an interpretive map of the park, identifying unique features. From this work, pamphlets, maps, and digital media could be created.

Motion Dykstra, second Barsness, to authorize an expenditure of up to \$500 for Osprey Wilds to create an interpretive map of the KREEC property. Motion passed 5-0, with Commissioner Chasson abstaining because he is on the Osprey Wilds Board of Directors.

Chasson then suggested the new name for the KREEC property could be Skunk Creek Trail.

Other

Commissioners mentioned what an amazing job the Street Crew has been doing this winter, keeping the streets clear of snow and ice.

The following Special Event Permits have been approved by Administrator George:

- Sandstone Area Farmers Market @ Train Park
 - Saturdays, July 17 through October 30
 - 9:00 a.m. – noon
- PC Cats – Jenny Crowe Group Camping @ Robinson Park
 - August 27-29
 - Estimate 12-20 in attendance

With the new COVID relief package passed by the Federal government, Commissioners wondered if any of the funds could be used for park projects.

Adjourn

Motion Gaede, second White, to adjourn at 9:45 a.m. Motion passed 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator