

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, November 8, 2024

Members present: Dorothy Dybvig, Elsie Laursen, Dave Barsness, Tony Vavricka, John Gaede, Council Liaison Val Palmer

Members absent: Todd Sandell, Karry White

Staff Present: Administrator Kathy George, Public Works Director Craig Hiler

Other: Jim Larson, Heidi Bringman & Rachel Johnson (virtually)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 a.m. by Chair Dybvig.

Approve Agenda

Motion Gaede, second Laursen to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed 5-0.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion Gaede, second Laursen, to approve the minutes of the October 11, 2024 meeting. Motion passed 5-0.

New Business

Robinson Quarry Park – Phase 2 Project (Old Dam Site)

Heidi Bringman and Rachel Johnson with LHB facilitated discussion with the Park Commission regarding the Phase 2 Project; specifically, the old dam site area. She stated that surveyors are coming on-site to gather additional information and take spot elevations. The assumed ordinary high water level at this site is 962; however, Bringman will confirm that number with the DNR. She reviewed photos of the site and noted that it is in a state of disrepair, is degraded and eroded.

Bringman led the group in prioritizing the main objectives. Commissioners determined the objectives are (1) safety of users, (2) public access, (3) health of the river (which is the DNR's responsibility), and (4) historic preservation; however, memorialization of the old dam operations is desired. In discussing stewardship, it was noted that the City owns the property (land). The DNR manages the public water (Kettle River) and they regulate construction, etc., but they don't make changes or improvements. For our project, the DNR is asking the City to make the plans and then present them to the DNR (and SHPO) for review and approval/comments.

The group discussed different options for the improvements to the dam site. Access ramps were discussed; but commissioners felt these would be washed out by the river. Other ideas included creating a living/natural shoreline and adding an elevated landing. Budget concerns were also noted regarding the Phase 2 grant award.

Another question arose regarding removing the dam remnants all the way across the river, as the dam system is interconnected.

A follow up meeting was scheduled for November 22nd at 9:00 a.m. to continue the discussion.

Robinson Quarry Park – Phase 3 Discussion

Commissioners reviewed 13 different styles/examples of camper cabins that exist elsewhere. Commissioner Gaede shared information about one in South Dakota that he and his family recently visited. It was about 15x15 or 20 and had heat, air conditioning, and electricity. No water. 2 queen bed platforms on either side, with 2 twin bed platforms above. Administrator George will contact Pine Tech regarding their interest in building the camper cabins. This information will be needed for the grant application, which is due in July.

Tombstone/Marker Discussion

Jim Larson was present to discuss the old tombstone/marker that is currently stored at the Public Works Garage. He stated that it used to be near the cow tunnel, then in the second meadow, and then in the swamp in Robinson Quarry Park. He asked if the marker could be placed on the support pedestal for the old wagon bridge, with a commemorative plaque. PW Director Hiler suggested it be placed in the Mary Thorvig Memorial Tree Garden. Everyone seemed pleased with this suggestion. Hiler stated he could make a pedestal. The History Center will be asked to work on the verbiage for a plaque.

Continuing Business/Updates

Various Updates

Robinson Quarry Park

New Sign

Erin Sandell reached out and offered to help create a new entrance sign for Robinson Quarry Park. Waiting for her proposal; perhaps we can apply for a grant for the design through East Central Regional Arts Council.

Unstable Rock Section – *will be investigated this spring/summer*

Legacy Grant Projects

Phase 1 & 1(a) Project

- The pavilion is scheduled to ship and be delivered the week of November 11th
- Once the pavilion is in place, the metal roof will be installed
- The final lift on the road is done; striping the parking lot is needed
- If funds remain in the budget, perhaps we can replace the small pavilion??
- More material was added to the end of the boat ramp to assist launching boats when the water level is low.
- It was determined that the new walking trail will be kept clear/open all year

Phase 2 Project

- The State contract has been fully executed
- Heidi/LHB is working with an archeologist regarding protecting the historic elements

- A site verification/review meeting will be set up with the DNR to talk about the former dam site
- Additional survey work is needed to determine feasibility for extending electricity
- Heidi submitted a new LHB contract for the Phase 2 project
- The DNR general waters permit will be submitted once the design is further along

Miscellaneous Updates

- Sandstone Junction Trail Update:
 - The Council agreed to earmark \$53,676 towards the project
 - Pine County agreed to split the cost of the project with the City (\$79,250 each)
 - Both the County Engineer and the City Engineer reviewed all three proposals received; both recommend moving forward with the proposal from Northland Constructors of Duluth for \$158,500 (a complete mill and overlay)
 - Perhaps Sandstone and Dell Grove Townships will contribute
 - A grant will be applied for with Essentia
 - Hopefully, this project can be completed in 2025
- Dog Park Signage has been received and needs to be installed
 - Regarding winter use, it was decided to keep the entrance clear and the gates open to make the area accessible if people want to let their dogs run, but the fenced-in areas will not be plowed
 - 2 picnic table were received from St. Croix State Park; they have been painted and are up at the dog park now
 - A ribbon cutting will take place during spring clean up in April
- Eagle Scout Project Update – *no update provided*
- A pedestal sign for the MT Memorial Tree Garden has arrived;
 - Kristee Thorvig suggested more emphasis be put on the SANDSTONE MEMORIAL TREE GARDEN, because people don't realize it is intended to honor all deceased, not just Mary Thorvig; revised sign language was reviewed
 - LED signs have also arrived and need to be installed
- Billboard Opportunity
 - The City EDA is moving forward with having a billboard on I-35; the first vacant billboard going north on I-35 after the Hinckley exit. The design was created by a graphic design artist who is on the MCA board.
- Skunk Creek Trail Update
 - Parcel 45.0149.000 has officially been transferred from the DNR Bureau of Land Management to DNR Bureau of Real Estate Management
 - According to Clarissa Payne, this parcel is now part of Banning State Park

- Our trail project can continue to Pine Avenue and our Skunk Creek Trail sign can be installed (next spring)
- The stairs on the bridge are done as well
- Wayfinding signage is needed to help people find Big Spring Falls
- Soccer Field
 - Community Service Partner Sirena Samuelson, PW Director Craig Hiler and Administrator Kathy George met with Garrett Fox who is interested in starting a soccer league in Sandstone
 - We looked at the property around the softball field and think that it would work for “temporary” soccer fields while Garrett tries to create the league

Other

- Special Event Permit: Sandstone History and Art Center
 - Quarry City Christmas is on November 30th
 - Request permission to decorate the former library space ahead of time
 - Request 4th Street from Main to Commercial be blocked off
 - Request barricades, trash cans, fire pits from the City
- Special Event Permit: MN Climbers Association
 - Sandstone Ice Fest is January 10-12
 - Request permission for free winter camping
 - Request barriers, cones, port-a-potties, additional picnic tables, plowing from the City

Adjourn

Motion Vavricka, second Gaede to adjourn at 10:15 a.m. Motion passed 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator