

DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

City Hall Council Chambers

Thursday, January 16, 2025 – 5:00 PM

- 1. Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions** – *Gaard, Bakken and Nichols were present. Gaard called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.*
- 2. Visitors/Public Comment** – Four visitors were in attendance. No public comment. *Marc Holtey (Parks and Recreation Director), Travis Goedken (City Manager) and City Council Member, Christopher Miculinich were in attendance. John Hjelle (City Engineer) joined the meeting on Zoom.*
- 3. Consider Approval of Minutes from December 19, 2024** – *Bakken made a motion to approve, Nichols 2nd; Ayes: 3 Nays: 0; Motion Carries.*

- 4. Department Reports** – *Holtey shared the department reports.*

CAMPGROUND

Splitting wood and working on winter projects. Looking into solutions for addressing invasive species. Getting calls for 2025 reservations. Talked about increase of \$1 per site (agenda item).

PARKS

Twin Springs and Dunning's Spring - Chloé Fandel (Geology Professor at Carleton College in Northfield, MN) – conducting a groundwater research project surveying springs across the driftless in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Illinois. January 20-24 and one more time in the summer, with undergraduate student field assistants. Provided project description, list of data to collect and survey and disinfection protocols.

Skating Rink – Open. Valve was replaced with quick response from Water Department. Testing out a new “broomboni” that Jon Geiger constructed. Working well!

Sign Loss – Inventory completed by Parks and submitted to Decorah Police Department.

Additional strategies and steps were shared. \

Tree work – Upper and Lower Phelps – Stevenson Tree Care – Parks will Clean Up.

Equestrian Trail Use – Zoom call with David Beary on Thursday, January 9 (Jon Geiger and Marc Holtey). David provided a “Share the Trail” You Tube Video link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zyb-KQkfy5U>

Equestrian Use in the Parks – Next Steps for Staff

Determine Timeline for Implementation – Phased Approach – Van Peenen Shared Use Trails First, Dunning's Spring/Ice Cave Shared Use Trails Second

Determine Infrastructure Needs, Costs and Identify Funding Sources

Determine Parameters of Equestrian Use – Rules and Best Practices, Site Visits

Determine Signage and Placement of Signs

Design Equestrian Trail Maps

Determine On-Going Maintenance Plan and Volunteer Involvement for Sustainable Trails

Phase in Trail Use

RECREATION

Coming to Close

No School Open Gyms

Lots of participation during DCSD Winter Break

NYE Bash at Luther - 615 participants Park-Rec ran the concessions this year, made \$300 after expenses. Appreciate the partnership with Luther and sponsors – Decorah Bank and Trust and Gundersen Health System.

Winter Registration Closing

Ongoing

Volleyball - Women's League (Wednesday Nights) A League- 7 Teams B League- 10 Teams; Coed League (Sunday Nights) 11 Teams

All Volleyball leagues will go through March.

Family Open Gym - Sundays 1-4pm

Outdoor Adventures with Winneshiek County Conservation - Full Class of 20 (K-4th Grade)

Wayside Ice Rink Warming Room – Staffed and Open Along with Snack Concessions

Coming Up

Winter Birding Series by Winneshiek County Conservation - January 30th, February 6th, and February 13th - Free Program, geared towards adults but youth are welcome to attend with a guardian

Biddy Basketball - January 18th – February 8th ~ 60 Pee Wee; ~ 65 Kinder

Fly Fishing Workshop - Saturday, February 1st - Free Event with Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Winneshiek County Conservation

Superhero Sunday - Sunday, February 2nd - Free Event at Carrie Lee Elementary

Winter and Nature - February 4th -25th

Middle School Bowling - February 15th -March 22nd

Spring Brochure Release on Friday, February 14th

Soccer, Easter Egg Hunt, March Madness, Live Healthy Track Meet and more.

Staff recruitment for Summer 2025.

SWIMMING POOL

Staff recruitment letters and emails going out for Summer 2025.

Plan “coming together” to cover maintenance and operations for Summer 2025.

Electrical work at the Pool a couple of weeks ago get a leg (of power) back on-line.

5. **Update on Carrico Contract for Pool** - *Holtey* shared the Carrico Contract was approved By City Council on Monday, January 6
6. **Consider Approval of Fee Increase at Pulpit Rock Campground – 2025-2027** – *Holtey* reviewed the original proposal of a \$6 increase per site (\$2 per year) over the course of three years (2023-2025). The Board approved that fee increase in 2023. Due to a projected shortfall in 2023, Fees raised \$5 per site (in 2023) and \$1 per site in 2024. The fee increase (of \$6 per site) was reached in 2024, prompting another proposal. Staff proposed an increase of \$1 per site for the next three years. *Nichols* shared that it would be wise to focus on 2025 and not lock into a three-year proposal. In addition, *Nichols* asked for clarification on whether tent sites would be included in this increase. *Nichols* made a motion to increase site fees by \$1 except for tent sites for 2025. *Gaard* made a motion to approve, *Bakken* 2nd; Ayes: 3 Nays: 0; Motion Carries.
7. **Consider Approval of Decorah Human Powered Trails “Trail Worker” Liability Release and Waiver** – *Holtey* shared that the Decorah Human Powered Trails representatives proposed a change and edit. Need more time to consider that change. Decision to move this to Move to February meeting. *Gaard* asked if other volunteer groups would be required to fill out these waivers. *Holtey* shared that would be a good idea to have other volunteer groups fill out waivers.
8. **Consider Approval of Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management Program Application** – *Holtey* refreshed the Board on the program and provided a timeline for the application process. Steps: Consideration/approval by Park Board, City Manager Review, City Council Review, Submission in late February. *Nichols* made a motion to approve, *Bakken* 2nd; Ayes: 3 Nays: 0; Motion Carries.

- 9. Additional Project Updates – Forest Stewardship Plan, Carlson Park Prairie, Pool Diving Board** – *Holtey* shared updates on the Forest Stewardship Plan – On Hold, Carlson Park Prairie – Water Quality Initiative Grant Seeding completed on 12/24, Next site for the Water Quality Initiative Grant – Old Wastewater Treatment Plant. There is a push to get the Pool Diving Board installed before the pool opens for the 2025 season.
- 10. Update and Discussion on Capital Improvement Projects** – *Holtey* shared updates.
- Carlson Park Project** – LRE (Land Resource Engineers) and Schubbe Consulting are meeting this week to finalize the manual and stamp the drawing set. After that is complete, they need to be submitted to the DOT (State Recreational Trail Grant) staff for review and approval. *Nichols* asked about getting the timeline for the DOT turn around.
- Ballfield and Pickleball Court Project** – Meeting on 1/14 – Recap – Review and input – Next in Late January/Early February – 90% Preliminary Design Meeting. Preliminary Construction Plans Updated Opinion of Probable Cost Sheet.
- 11. Discuss Fundraising and Determine Contribution Levels for Naming Rights for the Carlson Park Project and Ballfield and Pickleball Court Projects**
- Holtey* introduced this topic and that this a starting point. *Nichols* talked about work and language. Donations. How long do naming rights last? Has legal questions for Travis. *Gaard* talked about the hospital project and fundraising efforts. Different areas and rooms associated with rooms or area. Talked about Independence (IA) and names and levels of giving at the focal point (entrance) of their high school field project. Expressed the need for a corporation or lead donor and “piggyback” of off that. Town people to focus on fundraising and shared potential businesses as Stanley or Deco. Starting points. *Goedken* added, Is the Park supportive of this fundraising strategy? Talked about parameters. Naming rights of parks is lease. Threshold. 10-year lease (cost per year). Shared code specific to the Park Board and their role in this. *Nichols* shared about fundraising “one time” giving. Sponsorship interest for ballpark. *Goedken* suggested *Kerndt* weigh into sponsorship with his work within the community. Sponsoring something as a business. Regional donations. Corporate and individuals. Auctioned off certain levels – Grandstand, luxury box and addition. Other code or process to investigate. However, this process is in the Park Board purview in most cases. *Goedken* and *Holtey* shared the cost of commissions for a company to do the fundraising and the percentages they require for “warm leads.” *Gaard* shared about Pepsi. *Nichols* talked about the plan. *Gaard* feels like we can do it “in house.” Treat this as the start. Talked about the grants and what other communities are doing. Talked about other successful grants. Expressed need for a policy and organized process for the fundraising. *Nichols* shared information on communication with a point person in Waverly for a capital project fundraiser. Point person to get it moving. Timing. Various expectations and components. Long range. *Nichols* talked about potentially addressing this topic in a Special Meeting.
- 12. Financial – Budget** – *Holtey* updated the board on the next steps for the FY’26 Process (Met with Travis on 1/14 – Initial Meeting, Budget to Council on 1/17, Budget Work Session on 1/27) **and Grant Updates** (Documents – Marc and Mallory), Application for Dunning’s Spring Park Stairs (Replacing Treads – 505) – *Gaard* asked the 834,000 amount in 167 (Memorial Fund). *Holtey* will follow up with more explanation on this fund amount.
- 13. Other Business** – *Holtey* provided information on the Iowa Bike Coalition – Bike Expo and Banquet, Tree Inventory (Grant through City Forester/Public Works – Completed for Public ROW’s and Interior Parks (Smaller Acreage), as well as the Pulpit Rock Campground) – *Nichols*

mentioned the American Trails Symposium in Madison and field trips around the region. IMBA Foundations – Winona – May 7-8. *Gaard* for more details on the conference.

14. Adjourn - *Gaard* mentioned the next Board Meeting is February 20 – *Nichols* made a motion to adjourn, *Bakken* 2nd; Ayes: 3 Nays: 0; Motion Carries.

Respectfully Submitted,



Parks and Recreation Director