

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
September 24, 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Members Present: Keith Kern, Mike Almond, Brittany Berrens-Markgren, Gene Rosburg, Nick Ledin

Also Present: Linda Cadotte (Director of Parks, Recreation & Forestry), Russ Behlings (Parks, Recreation & Forestry Superintendent), Caitlin Knoll (Summer Playground Program Coordinator), Hailey Gronquist (Customer Service, Events, and Volunteer Coordinator), Shelley Nelson (Superior Telegram), and Heather Holmes (North Shore SUP)

Meeting called to order at 4:02 p.m.

1. Introductions
2. Approve the minutes of the May 28, 2020 meeting.

MOTION by Rosburg, second by Ledin and carried to approve the minutes from the May 28, 2020 meeting.

3. Volunteer and Events Seasonal Re-Cap

Hailey Gronquist - There was a good turn out over the summer for Adopt Program events. We had several new adoptions this year including: seven parks, one garden, four trails, two boat launches, and for the first time ever one ballfield. There is still one adoption renewal that should be completed soon. There are also a few other renewals or adoptions that are in consideration for the next year. Around 335 hours were worked for adoption services. This has saved \$5,000 to \$8,000 in labor costs. Allouez, Barker's Festival Park, Hammond Park and a few rinks, gardens and trails are still available for adoption. We were able to collect about 311 volunteer hours, not including work done on the Superior Municipal Forest disc golf course or any of the recent rotary clean ups. These hours have saved an estimated \$4,665 to \$7,464 on labor costs. The biggest hit taken this summer was in Special Events Permits. Many events were cancelled due to COVID. We saw a small reduction in park reservations.

Gronquist also worked on helping to organize the Webster Dream Park ribbon cutting as well as work at the Children's Memorial Garden in Billings Park. She was able to find companies to sandblast bricks for next year as well as a masonry company to help finalize the pathway.

Another big difference this year was the number of youth sports in the area needing spaces to practice outside due to many inside gyms being closed. Both t-ball and soccer for the Douglas County YMCA were hosted at Central Park and they will also be using Gouge Park this fall for their football skills camp. Sterling Silver Studio held two recitals at Barker's Island Festival Pavilion. Two Superior High School Cross Country meets in the Superior Municipal Forest. Stone House Marshall Arts used Central Park to host their youth karate classes outside. Some local elementary schools will be using some of our park spaces this fall

for students as a way to get them outside and spread out.

Volunteer hours for a bike trail building off the Millennium Trail were 105 hours. This concept was originally brought to the Parks Commission as a senior project. They completed as much as they were able to without needing additional support from the Parks crew to build the timber crossings.

MOTION by Rosburg, second by Ledin and carried to receive and file the Volunteer and Events Seasonal Re-Cap.

4. Summer Playground Program Re-Cap

Caitlin Knoll – The program was shortened to 6 weeks and ran July 6th – August 14th Monday through Friday, 11:30 am to 4:30 pm. The school district was still able to provide daily lunch and snacks for all participants. The major change was that there were no field trips or guest visits. Programming still involved the things that would normally be done with staff. Pre-planned activities were also made for the staff to help keep kids busy and active. All of the equipment was used as in the past; and there was more cleaning and sanitizing instituted after each use. Staff and kids were encouraged to use hand sanitizer often. Registrations were down fairly significantly across the board. COVID concerns as well as the lack of field trips may have contributed to this. The cancellation of summer school may have also affected registrations as in previous years, many kids would go to summer school in the morning and then to the playground program in the afternoon. Average attendance was also down, accordingly. The most significant drop was at Wade Bowl where they sometimes had no participants.

There were a total of 206 registered participants this year compared to 477 in 2019. Program expenses were down due to not needing bussing, or YMCA services, as well as staffing needs being less due to a shorter program. Per child expense was up this year due to staff salaries as staff was still needed for the kids that did show up. The program was fully staffed this year, which has been hard to do in the past couple of years. There were more fees for extra cleanings for portable toilets due to COVID.

Parent feedback was solicited at the end of the program. Parents felt spending time with other kids was the leading reason for having their children participate. Most frequently children were attending 2-3 times per week. The parents also felt they would like to stay the same or increase the length of the program in future years. There was a lot of positive feedback.

Knoll offered some suggestions for next year including adding some staff, resuming YMCA services and field trips as possible. She also hopes to go back to the 10 week schedule.

MOTION by Rosburg, second by Ledin and carried to receive and file the Summer Playground Program Re-Cap.

5. “Makwa Ziibiins Miikana - Bear Creek Trail” Naming

The name for the trail being constructed would be “Makwa Ziibiins Miikana - Bear Creek Trail”, a dual name in Ojibwe and English. The final segment is being finalized in late October/early November. Per the Parks and Recreation Naming Policy, park and recreation areas can be named after a geographic, geologic or historically significant features in the area. Director Cadotte is working with Fond du Lac who would like to research to see if the creek was historically known as Bear Creek or if there was a historic Ojibwe name for the creek. In the case that there was, they would then recommend that the trail naming to be adjusted accordingly. Waiting on a final word on that. The policy says that the name has to be published and open for public comment for 60 days. If the committee agrees with the naming, a recommendation could be made now and if changes are needed, they could be brought to the next meeting. If a name is found to be drastically different from “Makwa Ziibiins Miikana - Bear Creek Trail”, then there would likely need to be another 60 day window of comment. If it is slightly different, it would be up to the Commission to decide if it was close enough that it would not require another 60 day notice.

The Ojibwe language was added as the permit process went through a significant architectural process with cultural sites being noted along the way. This also showed some significance to the Ojibwe culture in the area. It started to be called “Bear Creek Trail” internally because it is along Bear Creek and starts close to the Bear Creek Park.

MOTION by Markgren, second by Rosburg and carried to approve the dual-language of the trail name “Makwa Ziibiins Miikana - Bear Creek Trail” and start the 60 day process for the naming period.

6. Stand-Up Paddle Boarding Agreement

North Shore SUP desires to extend their agreement by 10 years and add additional permanent storage on site. They first asked about a shipping container, however the zoning on Barker’s Island does not allow for a shipping container so it would need to be a moveable, portable shed matching the adjacent buildings. It was recommended to start with a new five-year agreement instead of the ten. Director Cadotte would like to bring any support given by the Parks and Recreation Commission to the City Council when she brings the agreement to them for approval.

Heather Holmes, North Shore SUP, gave an update on the season. They had the busiest season they have ever had. They anticipated sending about 1,500 paddlers out on the water and they sent over 2,000. For kid programming, they had a regular weekly Kids SUP Club. They also did regular weekly ice cream socials for younger kids and that filled every week. They started the Superior Paddle Program, which received very good feedback from families and the community. That program is what the recreational grant supported. It ran for 4 weeks Monday through Friday. Kids could come down and go out and paddle on their own. There were boards set aside for this. This program was specifically for kids that had paddled with North Shore SUP before. All kids are taught water safety before being allowed to go out on a paddle board.

For the 2021 season and moving forward, they would like to put a moveable building on Barker's Island. They had hoped to use a shipping container, as mentioned, but will be looking into a different structure or consider changing the zoning. Director Cadotte has asked the Planning Director, Jason Serck, what it would take to change the zoning and has not heard what that process is.

MOTION by Kern, second by Rosburg and carried to support the contract renewal with North Shore SUP.

7. Director's Report/Update

- a. Tremendous amount of positive feedback from the community on things the department has been working on. If you have not seen Kelly Park lately, please take a look at the remodel, new equipment and re-surfacing. This is our first park with musical instruments. Also recommend commissioners check out the new Webster Dream Park if they have not already. There is a plan there to move forward with a sensory garden next year at that park.
- b. We have received the St. Louis River Water Trail Maps and they are available at a variety of locations in Superior as well as the Park's office.
- c. The Save Our Great Lakes Grant that covers the Barker's Island Inn and the green space, which is park space, in between the Inn and the Marina and connecting trail loops, better water treatment was received. Part of that design originally included the boat launch, but due to the ability to fund everything, the launch was cut out. The first project meeting made us aware that there may be some challenges with the design ending from one parking lot going into the next. The Council approved to move forward with the redesign of the public boat launch parking lot as well. The survey work, the relocation of trails and how the parking flows can now be designed as a whole.
- d. At the next meeting we will be looking at all of the capital improvement projects and the prioritization of those projects for next year. There are a few things that, due to COVID and other delays, have been moved from this summer to next spring for completion. The Bear Creek restroom may not be installed until next spring. Hammond Park restroom will be moved to next year as well.

Originally, the desire was for the Bear Creek restroom to be a plumbed restroom. However, when they built the animal shelter, it was connected to the sewer underneath Highway 2 and it was determined to be too large of an expense. The Public Works suggested a vault restroom. Vault toilets can function year round if we add chemicals to them to stop the freezing. We would not be able to pump them in the winter, but depending on usage we could keep them open as long as possible before they absolutely have to be shut down. The restroom at Hammond Park will be tied into water and sewer. One idea is to have that restroom be double stalled, but use one,

which would not be plumbed, as a storage room for the playground program so that there does not need to be a separate storage shed.

Chair Kern commended the work done on the new disc golf course. Due to these improvements, we have seen a significant decrease in the amount of illegal dumping in that parking area.

- e. There was press release that went out about the Pokegama Boat Launch upgrades. The NOAA grant was secured and that will be for another vault toilet, parking area, and dock, with improved access to the Pokegama River in the Superior Municipal Forest. Bids will go out later this winter and the work will happen in 2021. We are already contributing around \$50,000 for that project with the match for the toilet, garbage and recycling.

Rosburg asked about the progress at Woodstock Bay. Director Cadotte has been talking with Wisconsin Coastal Management (WCM). We got one of the largest grants a couple of years ago for Wisconsin Point. WCM would be comfortable with a small grant application. The project is \$1.3 million so she will be looking at this closely with an engineer to see if there are pieces that can be parceled out to be able to apply for that grant and then allocate some City match funding.

Berrens-Markgren asked about the new City CIP budget in regards to Parks and Recreation. The Council did support an additional labor position for the department beginning in 2021. Three seasonal positions will be eliminated and an additional full-time position added. This will allow us to have 8 on the crew full-time, year round instead of 7. Part of adding that extra crew person will eventually be to help with some new sidewalk snow removal plans in the City being proposed.

8. Next Meeting, November 19, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

We could do a site visit somewhere in October if the members are interested.

Kern announced the meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.

The next regular Parks & Recreation Commission meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Minutes submitted to the Council Meeting of October 20, 2020.