

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, September 18, 2012

4:30 p.m., Snack Bar, Bunker Hill Golf Course

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Chuck Harris, Karen Lyness, Evelyn Nadeau and Dave Schlueter.

ABSENT: Paul Hoffmann and Ken Klinge

OTHERS: Staff present: Marie Ware and Eileen Trimble

MINUTES APPROVED;  
VOTE: It was moved by Harris, seconded by Lyness, to approve the minutes of the August 14, 2012, meeting, with one correction – last sentence on page one should be Commissioner Nadeau responded to Blocker's question saying "many **formal** events **such as weddings** are held at Eagle Point Park." The motion passed unanimously.

RECEIVE AND FILE REQUEST FROM M & M RANCH LLC TO HAVE PONY RIDES IN THE PARKS; VOTE: Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware told commissioners that Mareth Ellsworth had called to request permission to provide pony rides in the parks for birthday parties, company picnics, et cetera. She would like to advertise her services in Dubuque and would like permission so she does not have to come back to the commission every time someone hires her to do the pony rides. The current ordinance says any horse-related activities must be approved by the commission. At the last meeting we talked about domestic animals in the parks and horse would be included. If the ordinance is changed there should probably be language included that is all inclusive. Ms. Ware said she would need to talk to the city's insurance carrier and risk management firm about this request.

Commissioner Lyness remembered someone having this request before but it was for an individual person, not a blanket approval to have ponies in the parks, and the person did not end up having that many events. Commissioner Nadeau asked if there was any rule about commercial ventures in the parks. Her concern for this particular request is how the animals are treated; would they be covered as a business and have to adhere to rules so animals were not abused? She is worried about extremely hot days and what maximum weight the ponies could handle – who would control it and check it out? Commissioner Blocker said he hoped the owner of the business who has money invested would take good care of the animals.

It was moved by Lyness, seconded by Harris, to receive and file the request from M & M Ranch, LLC for pony rides in the parks. The motion passed unanimously.

INDOOR AQUATIC CENTER: Manager Ware told Commissioners that the Dubuque Community School District sent a letter to the Mayor and City Council asking if they would be interested in exploring the possibility of partnering on a stand-alone aquatic center. As the school district started to explore options for the aging Hempstead High School Pool, it became obvious that even if they did repairs and a facelift to the pool at a cost of approximately \$2 million, it would be like

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putting a Band-Aid on the pool. The City Council referred it to staff to study the idea of partnering with DCSD on this facility. Both sides put five staff members on a committee.

Commissioner Schlueter said there is no really modern up-to-date water facility in Dubuque – everything is old. He feels it would be a great project for the city to potentially partner in and the facility would be well used.

**COUNCIL GOAL SETTING REVIEW:** A copy of the 2012 City Council Goals & Priorities was sent to commissioners in agenda packet, and may be found as part of the original minutes. Manager Ware said there are many topics on the list with a number related to Leisure Services, some relative to the items the Commission gave to the City Council.

**SKATEBOARD MEETING:** Skateboarders, parents and grandparents have been talking to City Council members about getting more and better skate parks in Dubuque and it was referred to staff. The City Manager asked Manager Ware to work on a long range plan for skate parks. There was a lot of different input so the best way to pull all the people together was to have a meeting so we set a date for public meeting and then sent notice to all those who had communicated through city website WebQA; put on website event calendar; and sent news releases out through Notify Me. 140 people attended the meeting and it was a great group.

The meeting was set up so groups of participants could work at tables. Each group answered questions like: why do you like skateboarding; what is good about the sport; list the good and bad things at McAleece skate park; list the good and bad things about Comiskey skate park; what about bikers – should they be included in this process or should bikers and skateboarders be in two separate parks?

Commissioner Harris asked if it could possibly tie in with the Comiskey re-vamping.

**C.I.P. BUDGET:** Capital Improvement budget for Fiscal Year 2014 through 2018 is due by October 5th. Manager Ware met with staff to discuss projects that may need to be moved up due to priority and projects they would like to add to the five-year plan. She also plans to add back some of the projects that were cut last year during the budget process.

Ware asked commissioners for help in clarifying one of the priorities that was listed on the memo that went to City Council, about basketball courts. The memo just said more outdoor basketball courts and she was wondering what area that was. Did they want staff to look toward adding new courts in the south and west parts of town? Commissioner Schlueter said there are a lot of courts included on public school property but they are really beat up and not in good shape. Maybe we can do more renovation, not necessarily new. Ware said we could look at the schools and check into surfacing on our existing courts in the south and western parts of town.

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Comments regarding other projects that were on the memo include: • as playground areas are modernized don't forget things that were very popular like swings – seems like all swings are getting removed. • put projects back in that were cut last year regarding continued improvement at Eagle Point Park. • parking areas for Bee Branch; • request rest rooms in Jackson Park again; • parking lot for Usha Park and sidewalk to playground area; • try moving forward the multi-use green space – maybe ask for \$15,000 to research and see what cost would be to get land/develop/construct, et cetera; • bring back other projects that were cut last year.

**HILLCREST  
REQUEST TO  
USE MURPHY  
PARK FOR  
HOLIDAY LIGHT  
DISPLAY; VOTE:**

Hillcrest Family Services has requested to use Murphy Park from October 30, 2012 through January 10, 2013 for their annual Christmas light display, *Reflections in the Park*. The request is the same as in past years and the agreement was reviewed by Legal Department.

It was moved by Nadeau, seconded by Schlueter, to approve the Agreement with Hillcrest Family Services for usage of Murphy Park for their *Reflections in the Park* program. The motion passed unanimously.

**DEPARTMENT  
REPORT:**

• **Hiring update.** Committee has interviewed three of four candidates so far for the Natural Areas and Sustainable Practices Specialist; today is the deadline for twenty-three Recreation Division Manager applicants to return a questionnaire; Gerald Lange was hired for the Golf Course Supervisor position, which now opens up his Maintenance Worker job; four Park Division Manager interviews are scheduled for next week.

• **House by Murphy Park entrance.** Part of the agreement when purchasing the house next to the Murphy Park entrance was to try and move the house and re-use but the cost for moving the house and all associated costs would bring the total cost to approximately \$125,000 so the house will be deconstructed.

**OTHER  
BUSINESS:**

◆ Commissioner Blocker asked if the **marina** would be fully operational in time for the 2013 season and would it fall under the Leisure Services Department. Manager Ware said she hopes to have a management firm operate the facility. Blocker also asked about 2013 **camping reservation policy** – he knows people will be asking him about the policy when they see him at the park over Halloween.

◆ Commissioner Harris said there is a **light out** above the playground area in **Comiskey Park**, NE corner by 25th and Jackson Streets; staff will get it taken care of. Harris also asked who sets the times for the gate to be opened and closed at **Marshall Park**. Ms. Ware said it is spelled out in the lease agreement with the Arboretum. Commissioner Nadeau said there should be signage if they are closing earlier than other parks.

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ADJOURN;  
VOTE:

It was moved by Harris, seconded by Nadeau, that the meeting be adjourned at 5:55 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



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Karen Lyons

Chairperson

Attest

