

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, January 8, 2013

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

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Chuck Harris, Paul Hoffmann, Karen Lyness, Evelyn Nadeau and David Schlueter

ABSENT Ken Klinge

STAFF PRESENT: Marie Ware and Eileen Trimble

MINUTES APPROVED; VOTE: It was moved by Nadeau, seconded by Harris, to approve the minutes of the December 18, 2012, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

WELCOME NEW PARK DIVISION MANAGER: Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware introduced Stephen Fehsal as the new Park Division Manager. Steve and his family moved to Dubuque from Nevada and he began work on December 27th.

PARK DIVISION REPORT: Park Division Manager Steve Fehsal updated commissioners:

- Crews are busy following up on snow cleanup from the storm. Tree crew is wrapping up on the more than 90 calls after the storm.
- Bids have been advertised for a small dump truck, rubbish truck and two mowers.
- Crew started flooding ice rinks last Monday but now we are going into a thaw so will probably lose Comiskey and Flora but trying to save Allison-Henderson;
- Started seeding flowers for spring;
- Staff is working on repairing picnic tables and building new ones

SLEDDING ORDINANCE RECOMMENDATION TABLED; VOTE: Manager Ware told commissioners there is a lot of discussion among cities regarding sledding, the increased liability and lawsuit settlements. There are a few states with governmental immunity for sledding accidents but Iowa is not one of them. Ware checked with other cities and they have at least added an ordinance about where you cannot sled. Here, Bunker Hill and Allison-Henderson are used a lot. A draft ordinance was included as part of the agenda packet. It included that you can't sled on city park property anywhere except those two areas, and no inner tubes. Also included in the packet was a draft of a sign to put up at actual sledding sites. One city placed really big signs so people could not say they didn't see the sign. The wording of the sign was so youth would also understand.

There can be a three-part approach. The Commissioners can let legislators know of the concerns and for now, pass an ordinance related to sledding and educate the public about sledding, sledding safety and where sledding is allowed. The ordinance helps us manage our risk but still allow sledding.

General discussion from commissioners included:

- Commissioner **Blocker** asked about cross country skiers, they could get hurt too. How would you post that it's ok to sled in one spot but not another? What

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will happen if there is a night party? Manager Ware said the signage would allow us to tell people they have to leave and police could tell them to leave because time is posted. He feels the wording should be expanded to include inflatable rafts, etc.

- Commissioner **Nadeau** asked if it's not a park and there isn't a sign (for instance the Medical Associates Greenbelt), would that open the city up to lawsuits. Ware said a big part of the success of passing/enforcing the ordinance will be education of the public through news releases, information on website regarding sledding safety, etc.
- Commissioner **Harris** asked if there were any other areas that were used frequently where people would be upset if all of sudden they can't use the area? Ware said the golf course and Allison-Henderson Park are our two major areas currently used by sledders.
- Commissioner **Schlueter** asked if this was a new ordinance or one that was being revised. Manager Ware said it is a totally new ordinance, the first time sledding is being called out.
- Commissioner **Hoffmann** felt commissioners should think about it a little longer and discuss it again next month.
- Commissioner **Lyness** asked if children were sledding at a place that would be prohibited by ordinance, is somebody going to stop them and tell them to leave? She would not want the ordinance to be so rigid that kids can't have fun and can't do it in a particular park.
- Ware said that when one city passed their ordinance they set an infraction and fine structure at the same time but they shared it was difficult to enforce and is a fine line because some young children are by themselves without parents at the site.
- Commissioner **Blocker** said we should start next winter because we are already in mid-January. Ware said if commissioners recommended the ordinance at this meeting, it will go to next City Council meeting on January 22nd. Mr. **Hoffmann** repeated that the discussion should be continued at the next commission meeting so members could think about it some more.

It was moved by Harris, seconded by Hoffmann, to table the sledding ordinance discussion to the February meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

MANAGER
REPORT:

AQUATIC COMMITTEE UPDATE

Manager Ware reviewed the history of the committee for commissioners. Leisure Services Department was asked to work with the schools to look into an indoor aquatic facility. This was identified as a priority of the Council. A ten-person committee has been meeting and put together an **RFP for an indoor**

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aquatic center. The study will look at: **minimal needs and pool use schedules** (who gets what times); look at similar centers and how they run; **conceptual facility; financial impact** including C.I.P. to build, operating costs, maintenance costs, other partners, etc. It will include community engagement to see what the public thinks and gather information. A **site analysis** would be done including six potential sites because various sites affect cost. A **needs analysis** will be included. The committee has defined the basic needs but if other partners have needs and wants, they will also need to be able to help financially including operating costs. The School's Facility Committee approved the RFP; it is being presented to Commission today and to the School Board at their next meeting, then it will go to the City Council. The committee hopes to hire someone and have the summer and fall to do all their work and gather information on the study. The Dubuque Community School District is the lead agency on this project.

Ms. Ware told commissioners if they had no concerns on the RFP, it will move forward to the City Council; no concerns were expressed.

PERSONNEL

- Ware shared Steve Fehsal was hired as the Park Division Manager.
- Steve Kiebel, Program Supervisor, retired December 31st. Janna Beau and Tony Elskamp, the other two full time Program Supervisors have divided the duties and are overseeing a temporary helper.
- Hope to hire the Recreation Division Manager first so that person can be involved in hiring the FT Program Supervisor job.
- Interview committee has interviewed the last of the MFC candidates today.

3RD GRADE READING

The 3rd Grade Reading initiative committee had the opportunity to go after a grant to get VISTA'S to work 40 hours per week. Manager Ware applied for and received funding for four people – 1 for summer learning, 1 for school attendance, 1 for school readiness and 1 for keeping track of date and numbers. We will begin recruiting soon for individuals to start in April and work one year. Funding can be reapplied for three years after the first grant award. This initiative is a priority listed on the City Council goals. The VISTA position for summer learning loss will be supervised by Leisure Services Manager and the other three will be supervised by DCSD.

- Commissioner Hoffmann continues to question why the Recreation Division should be involved in reading. He has done some investigating and childhood obesity is a bigger problem than the reading issue. There are more obese children than illiterate children. He feels Recreation Division should be concentrating on recreation and exercise and getting kids active. If the DCSD can't address the reading problem with their multi-million dollar budget, how do they think a recreation class is going to be able to? He doesn't want to see our efforts and resources spent on reading; it should be on recreation and exercise.

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- Commissioner Blocker agrees somewhat with Hoffmann, that it is out of our league for the reading.
- Commissioner Nadeau asked if we would offer less of our usual recreation and physical activity programs if we assist with the 3rd grade reading or will it be additional programming? Ware said that current plan would be for additional programming.

Ms. Ware said we would work in our area of expertise and will be connecting with community partners. She has scheduled Eric Dregne from the Community Foundation to make a presentation at the February commission meeting and explain the different parts of the concept and program

OTHER
BUSINESS:

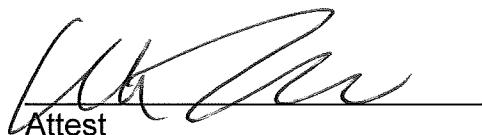
- February 12th commission meeting will be at the Port of Dubuque Marina building.
- Reminder of department's budget hearing on February 25th. Commissioners need to let staff know whether or not they will attend the meal before budget hearing so we can notify City Manager's office.

ADJOURN;
VOTE:

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



Robert J. Blocker
Chairperson



Attest