

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, June 10, 2014

4:30 p.m., Bennett Pavilion, Murphy Park

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Robin Kennicker, Kate Lydon, Karen Lyness, Evelyn Nadeau and David Schlueter

ABSENT: Ken Klinge

STAFF PRESENT: Marie Ware, Steve Fehsal, Dan Kroger and Eileen Trimble

MINUTES APPROVED; VOTE: It was moved by Kennicker, seconded by Lydon, to approve the minutes of the May 13, 2014, meeting with two corrections (page 2, paragraph 2: Ms. Nadeau would be open to "one designated park as tobacco and smoke free if there was a designated smoking area included and where it mentioned Ms. Lydon, change to Ms. Lyness). The motion passed unanimously.

HILLCREST FAMILY SERVICES PARKING LICENSE AGREEMENT; VOTE: Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware told Commissioners that the agreement is the same as last year except for date changes and updated insurance requirements. When the agreement was renewed last year, the rate was increased. Commissioner Nadeau asked if there have been any issues or problems. Ms. Ware said once in a while and if there was, a phone call corrected the problem.

It was moved by Schlueter, seconded by Lyness, to approve the Parking License Agreement with Hillcrest Family Services for 30 stalls in a parking lot at Flora Park. The motion passed unanimously.

HILLCREST FAMILY SERVICES AGREEMENT FOR USE OF MURPHY PARK; VOTE: This agreement is the same as past years except for date changes and updated insurance requirements. Hillcrest comes in after the park season ends and sets up all their displays. It is a really big fundraiser for them and has been very successful. Commissioner Blocker said this past winter the entire park looked spectacular – all the snow made the displays even prettier.

It was moved by Nadeau, seconded by Kennicker, to approve the Usage Agreement with Hillcrest Family Services for *Reflections in the Park* at Murphy Park. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK DIVISION REPORT: Park Division Manager Steve Fehsal told Commissioners:

■ officially finished planting all **flowers** yesterday and all the hanging flower **baskets** are up. ■ There were 467 cars admitted to Eagle Point Park free on **Kids to Parks Day**. ■ Staff is working at **Miller Riverview** park since the river is semi cooperating – scraping mud and hope to open for July 4th holiday. ■ **Irrigation** project at All Veterans' Memorial is almost complete – irrigation is in and sod is all down; looks really nice. ■ Dates have been set for **Civil Service tests** for the Assistant Horticulturist and Maintenance Worker. We are working on the Horticulturist and Park Ranger tests and dates. ■ Crews are working hard to stay on top of the grass cutting but we are behind on **mowing** and **weeding**.

Commissioners had questions for Mr. Fehsal on the following: • **Chaplain Schmitt Island planning** open house: Commissioner **Nadeau** heard comments about not having any emergency shelter at Miller Riverview Park. Mr. Fehsal

said campers are allowed to go to Mystique Casino but Ms. Nadeau said she didn't think their pets were allowed; Mr. Fehsal will check. Commissioner **Kennicker** heard comments about environmental and dredging issues and if condos are built on some of the property will the general public be able to take their dogs there? • Commissioner **Blocker** asked if there was any progress on catching the people that vandalized **Eagle Point Park**, and will they pay any restitution? Mr. Fehsal said nothing is publicized yet but there are four people that will be paying something. The structure has been repaired and he will do an article in the Telegraph Herald thanking volunteers for time and donations.

• Mr. **Blocker** asked about the status of an office building at the **campground**. Mr. Fehsal said he is looking at a portable building / structure. Mr. Blocker also asked if money used for the campground cleanup would have to come out of the funds for hard surfacing campsites and would it be possible to fill some of the low spots in the middle of the campground with gravel.

RECREATION
DIVISION
REPORT:

Recreation Division Manager Dan Kroger told Commissioners:

■ One of the goals for the department is to **increase web marketing**. Comparing last three brochures, registrations are up to 48% from the same three brochures last year, a lot of which has to do with this year's summer brochure. In 2014 there were 1,900 online registrations the first week of summer registration compared to 600 in 2013 for the same period. ■ **Golf** course broke a record for the most sales in one weekend over the Memorial Day holiday weekend – over \$31,000. ■ **Summer recreation programs** begin June 16th but we are already working on programming for fall. ■ **Marina** gates were closed for most of May. The Rock the Dock event had 40 boats that paid for a three-hour time frame. ■ City started an **audit** process for **internal money handling** procedures so staff will be meeting with Finance staff and visiting/monitoring each site that handles money. There is also a risk management assessment in place to see what equipment, etc. is in place to minimize potential accidents.

Commissioners had questions for Mr. Kroger on the following: • Commissioner **Lyness** asked how the **pools** were doing and Mr. Kroger said they had 500 or 600 swimmers for the Memorial Holiday weekend. • Commissioner **Blocker** asked about the **boat sale**. Mr. Kroger said it had to be canceled but we are working on rescheduling. Mr. Blocker said April, May or June are the best months to sell boats. • Commissioner **Lydon** asked about information on the boat parade. Mr. Kroger said the lighted boat parade is scheduled for August 2nd. There will be judging and awards, events, vendors and bands. We are partnering with the Museum.

MANAGER
REPORT:

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware told Commissioners:

■ **E.B. Lyons project**. The City worked with the DNR, Friends of Mines of Spain and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation on the E.B. Lyons Addition project. The bid specifications are ready to go out to bid and will be on the City Council June 9th agenda. Work will be started this year with some completed and then finished next spring. Trees were planted when all the state park directors were in Dubuque for their conference. The DNR is also bidding out for construction of

their new maintenance building because it has to be done before the parking lot can be completed. Ms. Ware said kudos to Laura Carstens and the Planning Services Department, Wayne Buchholtz, Park Ranger at Mines of Spain and Jon Dienst from Engineering for all their work on this project.

■ **AmeriCorps** Director applications are being accepted. ■ **Washington** Neighborhood **block party** had great participation. ■ **Music in the park** last Sunday at Jackson Park had 150 attendees. ■ Manager Ware met with state representative for the **VISTA compliance visit**. ■ Ms. Ware was asked by City Manager to be on panel for the **Fire Chief** applicant interviews. ■ Ms. Ware gave kudos to all department staff at this crazy time. Everybody is working hard and there are a lot of new team members, thanks to all the people that cover the office. Other department heads have come to Ms. Ware and shared stories about the great managers hired. ■ Reminder that a few of the **commission terms expire** June 30th. Ms. Kennicker said she had reapplied. Ms. Nadeau said she had decided not to reapply. She has enjoyed serving on the Commission. Chairperson Schlueter thanked her for her years of service.

Commissioners had questions for Ms. Ware on the following: • Commissioner **Nadeau** asked if with everything going on right now, would hiring the MFC Director be put on hold. Ms. Ware said she was working on hiring the AmeriCorps Director first since there was no Assistant. • Commissioner **Lyness** asked what the construction was by the proposed pet park site by the East Dubuque bridge. Mr. Fehsal said Spahn and Rose is moving to that area and the construction is related to their relocation.

DISCUSS
CHANGING CITY
ORDINANCE TO
ALLOW LEASHED
AND LICENSED
PETS IN PARKS:

Commissioner Kate Lydon asked to place this item on the June agenda. Ms. Lydon sent commissioners a copy of current ordinance that was approved in August 2013; that ordinance marked with her suggested changes; and a draft of her proposed ordinance because she thought it would be easier and save time if everyone had her suggestions and proposal printed. All documents may be found as a part of the original minutes. Commissioner Schlueter thanked Ms. Lydon for her work in putting together the documents.

Ms. **Lydon** said pets have been banned since 1969 but nobody can find the information as to why. Citizens have tried to change that but some of the fears are child safety, dog bites and pet waste. There were two unofficial online surveys last time ordinance was proposed to be changed and both were 60 to 70% in favor of allowing pets in parks. Ms. Ware said we did not do a city survey because at the time we were getting so much other correspondence and calls that the Commission said it wasn't needed.

Lydon's proposal would allow pets on leashes in all parks and on trails with the exception of Bunker Hill Golf Course, Arboretum, Sutton and Flora swimming pools, McAleece Complex, tennis courts, basketball courts or skate parks. Animals must be licensed with the city in which they reside; on a leash at all times, no longer than 6'. References to owners being responsible for the actions of their pet and picking up/disposing of pet waste did not change. She said it is the bare bones – what most cities do.

Mr. **Schlueter** said a lot of citizens are against pets in parks, some because they are just generally afraid of dogs. The Park and Recreation Commission worked for nine months on ordinance changes last time and gave a couple proposals to the City Council. He feels that if we try to present Ms. Lydon's proposal he doesn't think the City Council will accept it because this proposal is even more inclusive than the first draft that Commission sent to Council last time. Schlueter thinks it will waste a lot of time going through this process and asking for more than what the Council approved last year. He said he attended an event where other park and recreation officials participated and he heard a lot of comments to the effect that we don't know how good we have it by not allowing pets in parks. Mr. Schlueter is for keeping the ordinance as it currently stands.

Commissioner **Nadeau** said some of the changes put in the ordinance that was approved by Council were to appease those that really do not want pets in parks, for example the trial period. She thinks it is a good idea to take out the "domestic" language because cats and dogs are domestic. Can we just say any other animal except dogs and cats? Manager Ware said that is covered in another area of City Ordinance Code and you would just reference that other section. Nadeau said Dubuque wants to attract young couples to move here and one thing that would help is allowing pets in parks. Ms. Nadeau is open to taking Eagle Point Park off the list of parks where pets are NOT allowed. At Marshall Park the Arboretum leases the majority of the park so she didn't know if that one should be removed.

Commission **Blocker** said city after city in Iowa does not have a problem with pets in parks so why does Dubuque? He would toss out all the previous ordinance changes and allow pets in all parks so there is no confusion for the public. Right now it is ok in some areas and not in others and it is way too confusing. He said you can't let a small number of people that are afraid of pets dictate to everybody else. Mr. Blocker said let's allow pets in all parks because there is no need to have exceptions. He could support Ms. Lydon's proposed ordinance.

Commissioner **Lyness** said if she proposed an ordinance she would say allow all pets but pet owners have to be responsible for their pet's actions. We need to simplify the ordinance because people don't know where pets are ok and where they are not.

Commissioner **Kennicker** said we need to keep it as simple as possible. She has heard comments that you come to Dubuque and you can't go out of your hotel and walk your dog across the street. Ms. Kennicker said let's do all or nothing.

Questions came up about the part of Marshall Park that is not leased by the Arboretum and also about pets going into Eagle Point. Ms. Lydon asked why can't we define the area in Marshall Park that is NOT leased by Arboretum so people with pets can take them into a city-funded park? In reference to Eagle Point, she suggested that if fee collector sees a pet in car entering the park they

could ask the pet owner if they have a leash and tell them the pet must be on leash at all times in the park.

Mr. Schlueter asked what was the experience of the three managers in their previous jobs before Dubuque. Mr. **Fehsal** said in Nevada pets were not allowed in parks but he worked for the county and they did not have any trails or a pet park. Mr. **Kroger** said the only place pets were NOT allowed was where sporting events were going on. Glyn Ellyn had a large dog park and if staff saw pets unleashed and running free in areas where they were not supposed to be, citizen received a fine.

Manager Ware said the notice for this meeting may not have been noticed by people and in fairness we need to get the word out to people. It needs to be out to the community to allow public feedback. Ware said there were petitions and lots of phone calls and e-mails on both sides of the issue when the commission was working on this last year.

Ware also suggested that a few commissioners consider having a meeting with the Arboretum Board and the All Veterans' Memorial Board because they are our partners and were both very vocal last year when changes were being proposed. The meeting could be a couple representatives from both citizen groups and a couple commissioners. Ms. Lydon said it would make sense to tell them this is what we are proposing and ask for their concerns and feedback, so is it ok as a group to have a couple Commissioners approach the Veterans' and Arboretum boards to set up a meeting and let them know what the Commission is considering? The general consensus was that it would be a good idea to meet with representatives of the two groups.

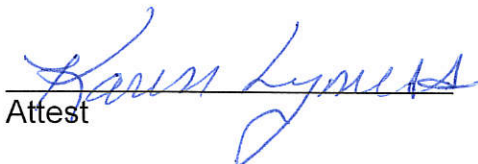
Lyness, Lydon and Blocker volunteered to attend a meeting. Lydon will set up the meeting with the two groups to have a discussion and show them the potential rough draft to get their concerns and gather feedback. Lydon asked if Mr. Fehsal could get a map or something that shows the area in Marshall Park leased by the Arboretum before the meeting with Arboretum representatives.

Ms. Ware said if the Commission goes down the path of proposing ordinance changes, Legal Department would have to review also.

ADJOURN;
VOTE:

It was moved by Blocker, seconded by Lyness, that the meeting be adjourned at 6:00 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.


Chairperson


Attest

