

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, January 13, 2015

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

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Paul Hoffmann, Robin Kennicker, Ken Klinge, Kate Lydon, Karen Lyness and David Schlueter

STAFF

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

MINUTES
APPROVED;
VOTE:

It was moved by Blocker, seconded by Kennicker, to approve the minutes of the December 9, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PETS IN PARKS
ORDINANCE
RECOMMEN-
DATION; VOTES:

Commissioner Hoffmann made a motion to retain the ordinance as passed by City Council in August 2013 and it was seconded by Lyness; discussion was held.

Commissioner Hoffmann feels enforcement will be too difficult, especially with the four open full time positions in the Park Division. He is not ready to have pets in parks on an unlimited basis, maybe continue as is for two years to be sure we don't have liability and if there are problems they get taken care of.

Commissioner Blocker asked how much further review do we need? For how long? The majority of the citizens seem to want pets in parks. Commissioner Lyness said the people in favor and opposed seemed to be pretty equal but the last few months she has had a lot of comments from people saying they would not go to the parks anymore if dogs are allowed.

Commissioner Kennicker asked if it is the City Council that decides or does the Park and Recreation Commission get involved in liability issues? The problem for a lot of the people opposed is that dogs would be running loose but dogs run loose in neighborhoods and citizens must call Police to file a complaint for enforcement of the ordinance. The same would have to happen with pets in parks. If a citizen calls in a complaint then it has to be checked out.

Commissioner Lydon said all the poll information and online petitions that have been shared at meetings have a higher number of people in favor of pets in most parks than opposed. All other Iowa cities have done this and the city Legal Department has given the green light twice. As far as enforcement, how do you enforce underage drinking, littering, and any other ordinance the city has? A.Y. McDonald Park has been open to dogs for one and one-half years and nothing major has happened.

It was moved by Hoffmann, seconded by Lyness, to retain the current ordinance as passed by City Council in 2013 where pets are allowed in several parks on a test basis. Because this ordinance was not fully backed by our Commission in spirit with either adequate signage or proper instruction, an adequate study of compliance, clean-up or enforcement was never completed. Enforcement today has become even more challenged with budget cuts. With a large part of our citizenry very opposed to unlimited use of parks by dogs, !

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strongly feel we need an adequate amount of time to study the results on a limited basis. Passing this as an unlimited access will be the start of an immediate repeal until it is proven that owners will be compliant in the approved parks. I feel we need to give the citizens a chance to grow into our expectations and certainly the repercussions of non-compliance. The motion failed 2-5 with Hoffmann and Lyness voting yes; Blocker, Kennicker, Klinge, Lydon and Schlueter voting no.

After discussion and failure of the first motion, Commissioner Lydon made a new motion.

It was moved by Lydon, seconded by Schlueter, to recommend the proposed changed ordinance to City Council which allows pets in all parks with certain exceptions. The motion passed 4-3 with Blocker, Kennicker, Lydon and Schlueter voting yes; Hoffmann, Klinge and Lyness voting no.

Proposed changed ordinance referenced in motion may be found as part of the original minutes.

Leisure Services Manager Ware asked that all Park and Recreation Commissioners attend the City Council meeting that has amending the pets in parks ordinance on the agenda, most likely February 2nd, since this recommendation is coming from the Commission. Commissioner Kennicker asked staff to remind commissioners once meeting date was set.

Commissioner Lydon distributed two Excel spreadsheets she compiled that include all comments from the online surveys and citizen e-mails/Web QA's, both in favor and opposed. She wanted to send the information to the City Council and asked if the commissioners felt comfortable sending it officially from the group or should she send as an individual citizen. The general consensus was that it should not be sent from the commission since it was compiled by an individual Commissioner.

SLEDDING
ORDINANCE
UPDATE AND
ADDITIONAL
SITE
REQUESTS:

Manager Ware asked if commissioners had any questions on the sledding ordinance. She said there are signs up at the two approved locations; city website has a page with all the sledding background information; department has received requests to allow sledding at three other locations – Gay (5), Burden (1) and Falk (1). Staff will check the sites along with the City's insurance carrier. There will then be follow-up recommendations.

Ms. Ware asked if commissioners would be willing to hold a special meeting to consider any additional sledding site requests and then if sites were approved, it could go on the February commission agenda to recommend adding the sites to the sledding ordinance. All commissioners said yes, staff will schedule a special meeting.

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Mr. Hoffman asked if we can approach the legislature to get them working on the issue. Ms. Ware said any of the commissioners as individual citizens could contact their legislators on any issue. Ms. Kennicker asked if anyone knew when the next Dubuque Crackerbarrel was scheduled since it is the Chamber of Commerce legislative forum. She asked if a forum was coming soon, should commissioners attend or should the commission invite Pam Jochum to attend a commission meeting. Mr. Hoffmann suggested just contacting Pam Jochum and asking her to make this legislation a top priority. Ms. Kennicker volunteered to contact Jochum.

FISCAL YEAR
2016 POOL
FEES
RECOMMEN-
DATION; VOTE:

Recreation Division Manager Dan Kroger told commissioners that staff is recommending raising pool daily admission and season pass fees as a part of the budget process. A copy of proposed increases may be found as part of the original minutes. The swimming pools were built in 1990 and 1991 and as they get older more general maintenance is needed and it is very important to keep up with that maintenance. Raising pool fees would generate more revenue and help offset maintenance costs and other rising costs.

Pool fees have not been raised since Fiscal Year 1995 when the youth rate went from \$1.00 to \$1.25. Iowa Park and Recreation Association recently completed a survey on pool rates for the cities in Iowa. Our current youth rates are the second lowest in the state and our adult \$3.00 fee is the cheapest in the state. The state average for a youth daily admission is \$3.62 and we are proposing an increase from \$1.25 to \$2.00 which is still \$1.62 lower than the state average. The state average for an adult is \$4.42 and we are proposing an increase from \$3.00 to \$4.00 which is still .42 below the average. The state average for season passes is \$60.00 for youth, \$76.39 for adult and \$146.53 for family. Staff is proposing increasing youth from \$34.00 to \$44.00; adult from \$60.00 to \$76.00; and family from \$94.00 to \$120; all still below the state average.

The potential additional revenue from increased fees for daily admissions and season passes is \$59,525.

Ms. Kennicker asked if the fee increases were based on cities the same size as Dubuque and whether there would be some type of discount on daily admission for low income. Mr. Kroger said the increases were based on a percentage increase and staff is looking at some way in the future to give discount for daily admission to those that need assistance. There are already low income rates for season passes.

It was moved by Lydon, seconded by Hoffmann, to approve recommended swimming daily admission and season pass rates as proposed by staff. The motion passed unanimously.

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SECURITY
TRAINING:

As part of the agenda packet Commissioners were sent information on Security Training for board and commission members; a copy may be found as part of the original minutes. Manager Ware explained that the training being offered by the Police Department is not mandatory but being offered to those involved in a public forum to learn best skills and practices for situations that could happen at a public meeting. Commissioners Blocker and Klinge said to register them for the February 12th session. The other commissioners will think about and get back to Lead Secretary if they wish to register.

PARK DIVISION
REPORT:

Park Division Manager Steve Fehsal updated Commissioners:

- ◆ The **EAB** Readiness Plan was approved by the City Council so staff is moving forward and training some department and Public Works staff. We will be working through the winter on the next step, which is to present a plan on how to manage the problem.
- ◆ **Reservation software** for the marina and campground is in the works; contract went to Legal Department for review.
- ◆ It has been cold enough to flood ice rinks but due to staff shortages this year, only Allison-Henderson will be flooded.
- ◆ Staff is catching up on snow removal / cleanup.
- ◆ Mark Meyer was hired as a **new Maintenance Worker** and started January 5th. There are still four full time positions not being filled due to the hiring freeze.
- ◆ Staff is working on the usual winter projects.

Mr. Blocker asked about whether the city is receiving restitution for the vandalism that was done at Eagle Point Park. Mr. Fehsal said four individuals were identified and they are paying restitution. The Four Mounds Heart Program and a lot of companies donated time and supplies to re-build the covered bench next to the Bridge Complex.

RECREATION
DIVISION
REPORT:

Recreation Division Manager Dan Kroger updated Commissioners:

- ◆ The **golf pro** vacancy has been posted and we are getting a lot of interest.
- ◆ The **golf irrigation** project consultant has been approved and staff is now waiting for a signed contract.
- ◆ Ben Alden is working on the **Clean Marina certification** for the POD Marina and could be the first marina in Iowa to be certified. Iowa does not have a certification so the closest state with a certification is Wisconsin which is what he is working on. To become certified means you have policies and procedures on how you pump gas, how you get rid of waste, etc. to be environmentally safe.
- ◆ The Leisure Services **Facebook** page is up and running now. We posted a video of flooding ice rinks and 5,672 people viewed it. The average number of people reached per our page is 257 people. Ms. Lydon asked if people are asking questions. Mr. Kroger said right now they are just posting comments, not asking questions.
- ◆ Winter-Spring **brochure** is out to the public. Staff did a great job work working to offer new programs and include all ages, including Multicultural Family Center programs.

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MANAGER
REPORT:

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware updated Commissioners:

◆ The department has a lot of different things going on, including construction projects. ◆ The managers are all working on different pieces of the **budget** process and will be starting on the PowerPoint presentations for the budget hearing. ◆ The public **budget hearing** for Leisure Services is Monday, February 23rd at 6:30 p.m. Due to budget cuts there are no meals provided this year. ◆ Staff is currently doing prep work for some upcoming **CIP** projects so that when the good weather comes we are ready to start the projects. ◆ The **POD Marina report** for calendar year 2014 will be presented to the City Council at one of the February meetings. ◆ The first of three public input meetings for Parks to People is scheduled for January 21st from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Grand River Center. It is a collaborative effort between city / state / tourism group / economic development. Ms. Ware invited commissioners to attend.

As a point of interest, Ms. Kennicker said the Governor suggested to legislature today that he wants more opportunities for walking and biking trails and parks.

COMMISSION
COMMUNICA-
TIONS /
QUESTIONS:

ADD PUBLIC
INPUT TO
AGENDA; VOTE:

- Ms. Kennicker asked if the Marina will work with the Riverfront Museum when the Titanic exhibit comes to Dubuque in May or whatever month it is scheduled; Mr. Kroger will have to check into it.
- Mr. Blocker asked if we could get an ad published when the Marina season is ready to kick off, advertising that we have some slips available for short term periods. Staff replied this has been done in the past and will continue this upcoming season.
- Ms. Lydon asked if commissioners would be open to adding a public input session on the agenda from now on, right after the minutes of the previous meeting are approved. It would be more welcoming and give people that attend a chance to introduce themselves and speak if they wanted to regarding an item on the agenda. Mr. Hoffmann said people are free to contact Leisure Services in advance of a meeting if they want to be added to the agenda, and that is the way it has been done in the past. If public input did get added he felt it should be at the end of the meeting. Ms. Lydon said if the citizen wanted to talk to the Commission about an item on the agenda that the Commission was going to take action on, public input at the end of the meeting would be too late.

It was moved by Lydon, seconded by Blocker, to add a public input session at the beginning of the agenda right after "call to order" to allow people to introduce themselves. The motion passed 6-1 with Blocker, Kennicker, Klinge, Lydon, Lyness and Schlueter voting yes; Hoffmann voting no.

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ADJOURN;
VOTE:

It was moved by Schlueter, seconded by Kennicker, that the meeting be adjourned at 5:40 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.

Ken Long
Chairperson

Kate Gidon
Attest