

**MINUTES - UNAPPROVED
OWATONNA PARK AND RECREATION
REGULAR PARK BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
4:30 PM**

Members Present: Gina McGuire, Sara Baird, Greg Posch, Angie Malo, Jon Thiel, Jonathan Douglas, David Christianson

Staff Present: Jenna Tuma: Senior Director of Parks and Recreation, Eric Anderson: Recreation Manager, Mary Jo Knudson: Administrative Specialist and Tricia Fisher: Administrative Tech.

OPENING BUSINESS

- A. Call to Order
- B. Roll Call: Greg Posch – Present, Angie Malo – Present, David Christianson – Present, Jonathan Douglas – Present, Jon Thiel – Present, Sara Baird – Present, Gina McGuire – Present

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Greg Posch asked to add an agenda item regarding pickle ball courts at Brown Park for discussion.

Motion by David Christianson, second by Jon Thiel to approve the September 13, 2021 Park Board Meeting Agenda with the additional item under New Business C. All members voted aye for approval.

APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 9, 2021 MINUTES

Motion by David Christianson to approve the August 9, 2021 Park Board Meeting Minutes and second by Jonathan Douglas. All members voted aye for approval.

PERSONS WISHING TO APPEAR

No public in attendance.

PARK PERMITS

No park permits were submitted.

MEMORIALS AND DONATIONS

Park Memorials for the month of August were provided in the packet, no further discussion.

OLD BUSINESS

None to report

NEW BUSINESS

Staff provided an update on upcoming fall programming with the Great Pumpkin Swim at the Middle School and a GPS Pumpkin Find. The Great Pumpkin Swim is a new program that is similar to the popular Egg Hunt swim program held in past years and the GPS Pumpkin search is a new activity utilizing GPS units like Geocaching activity. Both events are for all abilities for individuals and families.

One of the goals of the Park and Recreation Department is not to duplicate programs or services, it was determined there's several Trick or Treat programs offered by churches and local businesses. Staff decided not to offer the Trick or Treat Trail event as in previous years. The event takes many staff hours to setup/take down, seek donations, and promote. This year staff have committed to the Lowe's Community Grant project with the install of the play area which is due by October 31.

Angie Malo understands the reason for not hosting the Trick or Treat Trail event this year, and yet anticipates that the public will miss the event and be disappointed it's not offered.

This meeting included a tour of Kaplan's Woods trail connection, Mary Jo Knudson provided a background of the DNR Trail Connection grant the City received and shared information on the project status and next steps. The proposed trail alignment was rough cut for the Board to walk to see how the alignment works with connecting the trails to the parking lot, street, and railroad tracks. Knudson shared the trail will be 10 foot wide with an additional 10 foot "turf" edge to support a winter cross country ski trail/track.

Greg Posch shared information he collected since the last meeting regarding the use of pickle ball courts. He feels if the Pickle Ball Association wants additional courts or lights they should fundraise for their need and not ask that the tennis courts become multi-use. He talked with the Tennis Association members and they support that statement 100%. Posch mentioned other associations have raised funds to be used for park improvements to benefit their interests. He mentioned he did an unofficial survey by driving by the courts over the past month and noted the courts, in his opinion, are under used and there's opportunity at the pickle ball courts. Specifically, Posch recommends:

- The Pickleball Association put their own lights on the City owned pickleball courts
- Have conversation with the High School for indoor space at the old high school once the new high school is built.
- Build their own indoor facility with their own funds.

Malo, noted she has a response to Posch's suggestions, but will email in her comments for the record.

Tuma noted, pickle ball is one of the hottest and one of the most popular activities the park and recreation field has seen in a long time. The idea of increasing the number of pickleball courts isn't to put one association against another or against a user group, rather more about maximizing the use of amenities and serving the greatest number of users. Staff would like to offer pickle ball programming and have courts available across the city to support the activity.

Tuma noted if we get to point where the highest fundraiser group gets the amenities, many people will lose out. It is the purpose of the park and recreation department to serve the community, provide spaces for everyone, provide introduction to activities to keep people active. If a group provides a donation to improve a park amenity it doesn't give them exclusive use or ownership of that amenity, it is a viable means to improve that amenity for everyone's use. The City is responsible for the fair and efficient management of these amenities, and many times it means having multiple user groups using the amenity. For example, trails have runners, bikers, dog walkers, wheelchairs, rollerbladers, kids in strollers as well as cross country skiers, hikers and people using snow shoes. Ballfields share the space with football, soccer, softball, ultimate frisbee or other groups.

COMMUNICATION

a. Director's Report:

Tuma noted the report was shared in the packet and asked if anyone had questions on the items in the report. A question was asked about what is Regional Significance and why was it important? The background was shared regarding the Owatonna Parks System Master Plan and the recommendation to move towards a status of Regional Significance of a larger park that draws more regional users. Opportunities for additional funding from the state for maintenance and development is created by having a Regional Significance status. To achieve Regional Significance an application process happens, as part of the application process a Park Master plan is provided showing the purpose and connection of how the park is/can be a regional park.

b. Staff Report:

Division staff reports for Maintenance and Recreation were provided in the packet. There were no additional questions

c. Board Member Report:

Greg Posch: None

Angie Malo: Asked staff to do the due process in the next steps with the golf course, suggesting Jenna to speak to current members.

Jon Thiel: None

Gina McGuire: Noted the Equity article in the packet was cut off.

Sara Baird: None

Jon Douglas: None

David Christianson: asked why we don't have a recycle can next to a trash can throughout the city? Staff will provide an update at next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Jonathon Douglas and second by Jon Theil to adjourn the Park Board Meeting. All members present voted aye for approval.

The next board meeting will be on October 11, 2021 at 4:30 pm at City Hall.