

PARKS, RECREATION & FORESTRY COMMISSION

MINUTES

Monday, April 17, 2023

1. Call to order

The Watertown Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission in person on April 17, 2023. The meeting was called to order by Brian Konz. Members present were: Julie Chapman, Brad Clark, Ald. William Licht, Brian Konz, Jennifer Clayton, Emily Lessner and Kyle Krueger. Also present were: Kristine Butteris, Jeff Doyle, Steven Chesebro, Andrea Draeger, Kyle Fowler, Jacie Schmidt, Joe Juergella, Ali Nicholson, Carol Quest, Jonathan Lampe, John Kliebe, Emma Anderson, and Steve Zillmer.

2. Review and approval of minutes:

Emily Lessner motioned to approve the March 20, 2023 Parks, Recreation & Forestry Commission meeting minutes as written. Ald. William Licht seconded. Motion carried.

3. Review and approval of financial reports

There were no financial reports for 2023, as of yet, to approve.

4. Citizens to be heard

John Kliebe was present to express concerns regarding Sharp Corner Park parking lot area, food truck placement, and items left on the curb. Proper signs should be erected for park needs.

5. Business

a. Review and take possible action on Ordinance to Amend Section 410-56(A) Smoking in Prohibited Places

Carol Quest discussed an existing ordinance which is proposed to be updated to include designated areas in parks where smoking is allowed. She has worked with the city attorney and board of health for guidance. Changes would be implemented beginning in September 2023 to allow time for community education and signage. Ald. William Licht motioned to approve the Ordinance to Amend Section 410-56(A) Smoking in Prohibited Places. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

b. Review and make recommendation on Community Gardens at Lincoln Park

Kristine was asked to suggest a park area for the use of community garden plots. Raised gardens are proposed along with ADA ones (6 total). There will be a nominal rental fee of approximately \$25 and an application. Community citizen Emma Anderson was present in support of this effort and would be interested in assisting with raising funds to develop. To be started in May. There will be a contract regarding upkeep, responsibilities, etc. Brad Clark motioned to approve Lincoln Park for community garden use. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

c. Review and take possible action: Property Management Agreement between the City of Watertown and the City of Watertown Redevelopment Authority

Questions were raised regarding any unfinished contract work and current funds available. Kristine indicated the new Programming Event Coordinator would be tasked with engaging funders and sponsors. A special meeting will occur next week to appoint a person from this committee to the Town Square committee. Emily Lessner motioned to approve the agreement as written. Ald. William Licht seconded. Motion carried.



d. Review and approve Memorial Bench and Tree Donation BQ – Matt Meracle & Rod Johnson

Ald. William Licht motioned to approve a bench and two tree memorials at Brandt-Quirk Park. Brad Clark seconded. Motion carried.

e. Review and possible approval of increasing the Office Aide position wage

The department is currently evaluating seasonal and part-time wages. We will be looking to potentially increase the Office Aide position wage from 412/hr to \$14/hr. Jennifer Clayton motioned to table this item for a future meeting. Julie Chapman seconded. Motion carried.

f. Review and take possible action on Jefferson County League at Grinwald Park

The Jefferson County League utilizes Grinwald Park on Sundays; they rent equipment with fields, including portable toilets, and their facility use agreement needs to be approved for 2023. Brad Clark motioned to approve the agreement. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

g. Review and take possible action on waiving park rental fees for the American Legion 4th of July Event

Steve Zillmer spoke on behalf of the American Legion. He provided information about what they do and their current financial struggles. In the last couple of years they have attempted to increase attendance and add different features (wrestling, car show, etc.) and would like to make it more family-friendly and bring folks to the park (horseshoe/bean bag tournaments), etc. Steve came to suggest waiving half the park and equipment rental fees (roughly \$500) for this event. Brad Clark motioned to approve a \$500 park rental fee for the 2023 event. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.

6. Director's Report:

a. Project updates:

i. Aquatic Center updates

The pool has been drained and the slides are currently being repaired. The 5-year inspection will occur in June.

ii. Parks Updates –

- a. Town Square – the grand opening will occur on May 20 with bands, speakers, Kart Park, kids' activities, and a beer garden with food vendors, etc.
- b. Programming Event Coordinator – hired Steph Juhl hopefully starting May 1.
- c. Riverside Restrooms update – currently working on reducing scope with architects and back out for bid, and hoping to have permits by August to begin construction.

iii. Recreation Updates

Soccer starts this Saturday with expanded teams for Little Kickers due to popularity, due to improvements and revamp with equipment, etc. Baseball and softball starting in May. Kyle will be leaving this month; over the last year he has shown us how a consistent, reliable person can dramatically improve our programs and services.

iv. Senior & Community Center Updates

The parking lot will be redone this summer and we are working on plans for alternate parking, etc. The original entrance will also be reconstructed.

v. Forestry Updates

Arbor Day is April 29 with a tree planting ceremony and social media enrichment activities.

b. Update on programming:

i. Recreation programming

Soccer and baseball registrations are live along with new sessions of dance, fitness classes, adult softball, etc. Plans are continuing for summer programs including Kart Park, day camp, tree climbing, kickball, etc.

ii. Senior and enrichment programming

A Senior Care Fair will occur on May 10. The annual Senior Center Volunteer Recognition Event will occur May 16.

A Bright Light, Neon Night family dance party will occur May 12. Spring break activities were popular and well received. The 2023 Park Passport Program will run until May 5.

iii. Aquatics update

Ali is working on revamping and adding aquatic fitness programs. Summer swim lessons were live on April 3.

7. Adjournment – Next meeting date May 15, 2023

Brad Clark motioned to adjourn the meeting. Emily Lessner seconded. Motion carried.