

**PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING MINUTES**

**MONDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2021**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chair Talvitie called the meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL**

Committee Members present: Scott Creighton, Ken Halverson, Jack Merwin, Doug Peterson via teleconference, and Laura Talvitie. Committee Members absent: Scott Marotz.

Also present: Recreation and Communication Coordinator Corrie Scott, and Streets, Parks, and Fleet Superintendent Norm Michels.

**3. ADOPT AGENDA**

Committee Member Merwin motioned to approve the agenda as presented. Seconded by Committee Member Creighton, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Committee Member Creighton motioned to accept the January 25, 2021 Parks Advisory Committee minutes as presented. Seconded by Committee Member Merwin, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

**5. BUSINESS**

**5A. CHAMBER PARKS CHALLENGE DISCUSSION**

Gloria VandeBrake reviewed that Sherburne County Area United Way is working with 3 Chambers (Big Lake, Elk River and Princeton) to encourage all young adults, senior citizens, families, dog owners, etc. to participate in exploring local parks. They are asking individuals to take photos of themselves in the park they are visiting and submit it to the Sherburne County Area United Way FB page with the #BigLakeParksChallenge2021 hashtag. Each park they visit allows them additional opportunities to submit a photo and more chances to win prizes. All photo entries are also eligible for the Grand Prize.

The Big Lake Chamber is currently in the process of requesting weekly prizes valued at \$20 to give away in a drawing to citizens who submit photos in the Big Lake, and they are

requesting support from the City and its Park Advisory Committee to help promote the event and offer any ideas or suggestions. At this time the City of Big Lake approved a donation of two Lakeside Park passes to this program and has agreed to advertise the program on all media platforms including the City Newsletter.

The Chamber is looking for additional feedback on whether there are specific parks that should be prioritized for area citizens to visit. For example, Elk River with their 40 parks is considering limiting it to their top 10 or more. It is important to consider prioritizing parks with parking and bathrooms and excluding parks that have damage or that won't be accessible during the month of April due to weather, construction or any other factors. Suggestions on how to advertise and bring in weekly prizes are also welcomed.

Halverson asked why Becker isn't included in the program. VandeBrake stated that Becker isn't included in the Sherburne County Area United Way boundaries. Creighton and Talvitie stated they support the program. VandeBrake asked Michels if he has any concerns or suggestions. Michels stated that depending on the weather, some of the parks might be in better conditions than others during the program. VandeBrake stated that there is an opportunity for those visiting parks to help clean up and receive additional entries. Creighton asked how the City can help with marketing the program. Scott stated she will post the advertisements on all of the City's marketing platforms including the City Newsletter.

#### **5B. CANDIDATE INTERVIEWS FOR VACANT SEAT**

Scott reviewed that at its November 23, 2020 Parks Advisory Committee meeting, the PAC directed staff to publish notice for the PAC vacancy and accept letters of interest/resumes from individuals who are residents of the City of Big Lake. Due to a lack of applicants, staff extended the deadline by one month on two occasions. Staff received one (1) submittal by the most recent February 16, 2021 deadline from Kristi DeCamillis. The Committee interviewed the applicant using a set of standardized questions.

Committee Member Creighton motioned to recommend to Council the appointment of Kristi DeCamillis to the current vacancy on the Parks Advisory Committee. Seconded by Committee Member Merwin, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

#### **5C. FAIRY HOUSE EVENT**

Scott reviewed a proposed flyer for Fairy House Week with details on how the event could be carried out. Staff is asking for any suggested edits before it is posted on Facebook and the City's website. Things to consider are time/length of event, prize donations, registration procedure, and judging procedure.

Halverson asked if the community could do the judging. Scott stated that this is an option where individuals can enter into the contest online and the City can share a survey link with all contestants that area residents can vote on. Talvitie asked if we could have another

group such as the girl scouts do the judging. Scott recommended having the Ambassadors host the event. Talvitie offered to reach out to the Ambassadors and report back to the Committee in March on whether or not they are interested.

## 5D. ICE RINKS UPDATE

Scott reviewed the Ice Rinks Ground Lease for 2021 including details on annual payment and maintenance of the land being leased by the City of Big Lake from Mary of the Visitation Church. This agreement is reviewed each year in October.

Creighton asked Michels what his preferences would be to improve the Ice Rinks so that ice creation is easier and the rinks are easier to maintain during the winter months. Michels stated that tar would be preferred. Halverson stated that with the current agreement between the City and church, tar wouldn't be allowed. Michels stated that it would be important to have a long-term agreement with the church in order to install tar. He stated that as a short term option he would like to do a light excavation of the ground where the rinks are located. Creighton asked about using a clay base as a temporary option. Michels stated that this is not as effective as tar, but it would be an improvement from the current state of the rinks.

Creighton asked if staff could reach out to the church and see if they have interest in selling the land or agreeing to a long-term lease if the City installs tar or a clay base. Scott stated that she will look into it and bring an update to the March meeting. Halverson commented that he believes at least a three-year lease should be signed before making any improvements to the land.

## 5E. STAFF UPDATES

Scott reviewed the following:

1. **Meeting Equipment:** The City recently replaced the iPads that are kept in the Council Chambers for use at all City Commission meetings, including the Parks Advisory Committee meetings. If PAC Members would like to use this equipment during meetings to review meeting packets, it is welcomed. iPads are located at the dais in the Council Chambers and have instructions included with them. If PAC Members would like to be trained on how to use the equipment, they can set up a time with the City's Recreation and Communication Coordinator or arrive 5-10 minutes prior to the start of a PAC meeting for assistance.
2. **Parks and Trails**
  - a. **Adopt a Park:** Staff is considering putting together an Adopt a Park Program in 2021 to help the Public Works Department during spring and fall when their workload is substantial. Staff has researched area communities' programs to compare their formatting and plans to bring the proposed project structure to the Parks Committee for feedback in March.
  - b. **Brom Park Survey:** Staff is working on putting together a survey for area residents to complete that will provide feedback on their preferences for park

amenities, equipment, and surfacing. Staff will send out a draft of this survey in early March to the PAC and once finalized will start pushing this survey in Mid-March. Analysis of the survey will be presented at the April PAC meeting.

### 3. Programming

- a. **Winter Farmers Market:** The Winter Farmers Market takes place at City Hall from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. every third Saturday from November to April. Attendance was down in February and vendors/staff believe it was due to the weather. The next market takes place on March 20, 2021. If weather permits, staff will consider moving the March and April markets outdoors.
  - b. **Summer Farmers Market:** Staff is working on recruiting vendors, seeking sponsorship, and scheduling food trucks and musicians.
  - c. **Community Garden:** Applications for the Community Garden are open to the general public. On March 1, 2021 there will be an opportunity for applicants to receive additional plots if they are available. The Group Gardening Program is also open for registration at the Community Education website.
  - d. **Music in the Park:** In January staff was directed by Council to start planning for the 2021 Music in the Park series. Staff is working on securing sponsorships and food trucks, and will start actively advertising the series in March 2021. The Chamber has also agreed to put a subcommittee together to help with hosting the events during the summer. This will be helpful if the Recreation and Communication Coordinator has an emergency and cannot attend one of the concerts, and will also allow for more dates to be added to the series in future years.
4. **Rebranding:** Como Lake Marketing Team is in the process of bringing a suggested logo to the BLEDA and City Council. Once a logo is approved, they will start working on a marketing toolbox that includes PowerPoint presentations, letterheads, etc...

Michels reported that the McDowall Trail wayfinding signage will be installed and the Community Garden plots will be expanded as soon as weather allows it.

6. **COMMITTEE MEMBERS' REPORTS** – None.

7. **OTHER** – None.

8. **ADJOURN**

Committee Member Creighton motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m. Seconded by Committee Member Merwin, unanimous ayes, meeting adjourned.