

**PARKS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES**

MONDAY, APRIL 27 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair McDowall-Seyko called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Committee Members present: Scott Marotz, Denise McDowall-Seyko via teleconference, Doug Peterson, Laura Talvitie via teleconference, and Scott Zettervall. Committee Members absent: Jason Brevig, and Shane Fisher.

Also present: Recreation and Communication Coordinator Corrie Scott, Streets and Parks Superintendent Nick Abel, and Public Works Director Layne Otteson.

3. ADOPT AGENDA

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

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Committee Member Peterson motioned to accept the February 24, 2020 Parks Advisory Committee minutes as presented. Seconded by Committee Member Talvitie, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

5. BUSINESS

5A. CODE REVISION TASK FORCE

Scott reviewed that the Big Lake Community Development is creating a Code Revision Task Force in an effort to proactively discuss and recommend reasonable and necessary changes to the City Code.

Amy Barthel, City Planner, will be leading the Code Revision Task Force. Amy plans to bring her recommendations to the Code Revision Task Force for discussion. From there, she will be looking to obtain a solid recommendation from the Task Force to bring to the Planning Commission. At this time, Staff is looking for each Board to select a Member to join.

Committee Member Talvitie motioned to recommend Doug Peterson as a Member of the Code Revision Task Force. Seconded by Committee Member Marotz, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

5B. DOGS AT LAKESIDE PARK DISCUSSION

Scott reviewed that a Big Lake Resident recently asked staff why dogs aren't allowed at Lakeside Park. Scott reviewed a list of pros and cons that staff put together and outlined in the Parks packet. Staff is asking that the Parks Advisory Committee review the current rules about dogs at Lakeside Park and make a recommendation to City Council on whether to make changes.

Abel stated that he would prefer to keep the rules as they are. He stated that Public Works spends at least 3 hours daily in the summer cleaning the park and this would add a significant amount of time to their maintenance during the summer season. Abel also commented that this could be a sanitation issue.

Zettervall asked if other parks in Big Lake allow dogs. Abel stated that all parks with the exception of Lakeside Park are dog friendly as long as the dogs are leashed. Peterson asked why the rule of no dogs at Lakeside was originally put into place. McDowall and Marotz stated that dogs have never been allowed at Lakeside Park. Peterson stated that with all other parks being dog-friendly he feels that the need for dog-owners to have the ability to visit local parks is being met.

Marotz stated that if dogs are allowed at Lakeside Park it is likely that there will be a significant increase of dog owners visiting the park, especially for events such as Music in the Park, which makes it more likely for dog fights. McDowall stated that other trails and parks in Big Lake that allow dogs have a significant amount of dog waste.

Committee Member Marotz motioned that the Parks Committee recommend to Council that Lakeside Park continues to not allow dogs. Seconded by Committee Member Peterson, unanimous ayes, motion carried.

5C. LAKESIDE PARK PARKING KIOSK UPDATE

Abel reviewed that staff has been researching the viability of having an automated gate system installed at Lakeside Park which would help alleviate on-site staffing problems and capture lost revenue year round. While looking at options, a remote pay station was determined to be the best option. On April 17, staff found that there was a cost savings opportunity if the unit was purchased before May 1st. At the April 22nd City Council workshop, Administrator Wilfahrt presented information to the Council and requested approval to move forward with purchase and determine logistics. Council discussed and directed staff to move forward with purchase and installation this summer.

McDowall asked if traffic congestion would be an issue without having a gate or park attendant on-site. Abel explained that he plans to have arrows painted in the parking lot to direct traffic and alleviate traffic congestion. Peterson asked about boat staging without having a park attendant present. Abel stated that there will be additional signage and painted arrows specifically for boat trailers. Marotz asked about enforcement for those that park without paying. Scott stated that the police will have the ability to use software on their phones/computers to check if stalls are paid for and that they will also regularly enforce the parking in person at Lakeside Park.

Talvitie asked if season passes can be purchased at the kiosk. Otteson stated that season passes will be available at City Hall and Lake Liquors for purchase. It is easier to offer these for sale at City Hall and Lake Liquors so that clerks can check for proof of residency for those requesting a discounted resident pass. Talvitie reviewed her experience with a parking kiosk at Taylor's Falls and stated that their system worked very well and had various options for day passes and season passes.

McDowall asked if there will be staff or police enforcement on site to prevent hostility issues between lake-goers. Abel stated that Lakeside Park will be self-governed mostly, but that officers will be regularly visiting the park throughout the season. Otteson stated that the initial month of implementation as well as during peak times including holidays there will be staff on-site to ensure that everything goes smoothly. As the new system catches on, there will be less staff needed. Marotz commented that he thinks this will be a great way to cut costs and that after a few years of savings, there is a potential to give deeper discounts to residents.

Peterson asked about special events where the overflow lot is used and if there will be issues. Scott stated that the overflow lot is mainly used during special events like Music in the Park where there aren't fees to park or park attendants on-site. During these events volunteers direct vehicles to the overflow lot. Because of this, there shouldn't be any issue with lost revenue. Otteson stated that an additional benefit to the kiosk is the ability to take in parking fees year round and to discourage loitering.

5D. UPDATE FOR LAKESIDE PARK PARKING POLICY

Abel stated that concerns were raised regarding a potential influx of Lakeside Park users due to park and boat launch closures in other communities due to COVID-19. This would likely have a negative effect on Park users on busiest days. Staff responded and provided information with a recommendation at the April 22 City Council workshop.

Council discussed and directed staff to develop a policy using Option 1 outlined in the April Parks Packet and bring back to the May 13th City Council meeting for adoption. A change in operations utilizing Option 1 would only happen if needed.

Talvitie asked if Council is considering closing Lakeside Park altogether due to COVID-19. Zettervall stated that City Council has not considered closing Lakeside Park as of April 27. Scott reiterated that the first action taken by Council will be to change parking to Option 1 in outlined in the April Parks Packet. Marotz asked how many parking spaces with Option 1 will be set aside for seasonal pass holders versus daily pass holders. Otteson stated that staff recommends starting with 98 seasonal and 68 daily pass parking spaces, but this is subject to change.

5E. STAFF UPDATES

Summer Programming

Farmers Market: The March winter market and Community Fair joint event was cancelled due to the School shutting down all events in March. Because the State of Minnesota considers farmers markets an essential service, we were able to host the April market with a few changes to our usual operations. The City moved the market outdoors, encouraged social distancing, canceled music and kid's activities, provided a handwashing station, gloves, and hand sanitizer for customers and vendors to use, banned sampling and onsite food consumption, and provided barriers to place in front of vendor booths to discourage customers from touching the product displays. Most customers practiced social distancing and many wore masks, but there was some crowding around booths during peak times and a few customers that leaned over the barriers and touched displays. The April 2020 market was the most successful winter market to date with the highest number of customers and highest overall vendor sales. The summer market season will begin on Wednesday, June 3, 2020. Staff has scheduled music, food trucks, and activities as usual, but will alter these programs if needed to abide by CDC requirements.

Library & 4-H Programming in the Park: July and August events potentially will need to cancel or reschedule. Library has decided not to advertise for summer events, but are still allowing the use of their online registration software.

Movie in the Park: June and September events are fully funded. Staff will continue to advertise unless Stay at Home Order is extended. There is a potential to host a drive-in style event with the Cable Commission's equipment.

Community Gardens: Six additional plots will be added to the Community Garden site in 2020 expanding the total number of plots from 12 to 18. Tom has notified his waitlist and plans to have the full 18 plots filled by opening day on May 1st. The Gardening 101 Series will continue, but instead of an in person workshop series where registrants maintain the same plot, they will participate in monthly Zoom calls where the Master Gardeners will focus on a specific gardening topic and be available for questions. All current registrants have their own gardens at home and have expressed great interest in continuing with the new layout this year.

Music in the Park: The Legacy Foundation has been seeking ways to continue with their Music in the Park series this summer. Keep an eye out for updates on the Legacy Foundation Facebook page in May.

Park Rx Meeting

Gina Hugo and Janine Foggia met with Melissa from CentraCare and Brad from Wright Co. Parks and decided to push the informational meeting back. At this time, they do not have a date set, however, they do want to partner and make it a multi-county effort. They are currently working to secure one champion practitioner to attend the meeting and will keep the Parks Advisory Committee updated as the date for a meeting is confirmed. There is also a chance that this project will be postponed until further notice due to recent restrictions regarding COVID-19.

Rebranding Project

Como Lakes Marketing was officially chosen by Council and EDA to be the consultant to lead a Rebranding Project for the City of Big Lake in 2020. The City will be provided with a new logo, tagline, marketing videos, photos for the website, and templates for a variety of items including business cards, PowerPoint presentations, social media posts, the City newsletter, etc... This project originally was to be delivered in-full by Como Lakes Marketing by the end of June 2020, but due to recent restrictions regarding COVID-19, the project has been postponed until further notice.

Scott also reported that there are currently 31 City lampposts on Highway 10. Only 30 banners were purchased last year, so there is one lamppost that is without a banner. The lamppost without a banner does have a bracket installed. Scott intends to ask Spud Fest if they are willing to sponsor the final banner. If they are unable or uninterested, she will ask the Finance Department if there is any funding in the Public Works or Recreation budget to use to purchase the two banners. Marotz asked if money from the Park Dedication fund can be used for this. Scott stated that she will look into this as a possibility.

6. OTHER

Talvitie asked about Spud Fest and when a final decision needs to be made to cancel the event. McDowall stated that most of the vendors, aside from the fireworks vendor, have been open minded on when a decision needs to be made. She stated that there is a Spud Fest Meeting on April 28 where the Board plans to make their final decision.

Abel stated that residents will soon have the ability to pick up a key and permit for the Lake Mitchell boat launch. This should become available to the public by Memorial Day 2020. Once the keys are available, Scott will post updates on the City website and Facebook.

7. ADJOURN

Committee Member Talvitie motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:36 p.m. Seconded by Committee Member Peterson, unanimous ayes, meeting adjourned.