



**Minutes
Minnetonka Park Board
Wednesday, December 2, 2020**

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Park Board Members Present: Elliot Berman, James Durbin, Nelson Evenrud, David Ingraham, Ben Jacobs and Chris Walick.

Excused: Elena Imaretska.

Staff members in attendance: Jeff Dulac, Jessica Benoy, Ann Davy, Bonnie Hanna-Powers, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea and Sara Woeste.

Evenrud called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

3. Reports from Staff

Recreation Director, Kelly O'Dea informed park board members that the January 6, 2021 meeting will be a virtual meeting. The city will determine if the meeting will be virtual on a month to month basis.

4. Approval of Minutes

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of October 7, 2020 as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Walick moved, Jacobs seconded a motion to approve the meeting minutes of November 4, 2020 as submitted. Ingraham abstained. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

5. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

There were none.

6. Business Items

A. Review of 2020 Farmers Market Operations and Recommendations for 2021

O'Dea introduced Farmers Market Manager, Bonnie Hanna-Powers.

Hanna-Powers gave the staff report.

Evenrud thanked Hanna-Powers for the presentation. Evenrud mentioned that there was great weather and he was not surprised the numbers were up. He was able to go a couple of times and really enjoyed it. Evenrud thinks it was great that we were able to continue to have it as well as other recreation programs during COVID-19.

Walick thought it was awesome what Hanna-Powers did this year. He asked for some examples of activities that were in the rec boxes.

Recreation Superintendent, Ann Davy replied that our Youth Recreation Program Manager, Becca Sytsma puts them together and they have a different theme each month. There is a variety of both indoor and outdoor art projects. Fourth of July there was a yarn star project and she has done some nature hikes and scavenger hunts.

Durbin loved how Hanna-Powers said to stay flexible. Staying flexible is going to continue the success as you adapt to whatever is thrown at you. He congratulated her for such a wonderful farmers market this year. Durbin asked if there is the possibility of introducing other touchless types of payment such as PayPal or Venmo.

Hanna-Powers responded that she has seen that adapted a little bit by vendors over the winter market. Some vendors have it as an option but it is on a vendor by vendor basis. Hanna-Powers agrees that having a touchless payment system is beneficial especially during a pandemic. As far as the city offering Venmo, that would have to be discussed with our finance department to see if they are willing to do that.

Durbin replied that he hopes with the knowledge that she gained from this year's pandemic that she would be able to include food trucks and potentially more vendors. Durbin thinks the year 2021 will be another great year for the farmers market. People are going to be eager to get out of their houses and go support local farmers and other vendors. He thinks more is better as long as you can do it safely.

Berman isn't sure of the timeline of the new Ridgedale Park but he asked if staff is considering hosting a farmers market in that new location in 2021. It could maybe open up the new park to regular farmer market customers.

Hanna-Powers answered that she believes the new park at Ridgedale won't be opening next year so that wouldn't be possible. However, she thinks it is a possibility in the future.

O'Dea added that staff is hoping to construct that park next year. It would be an ideal location but maybe in 2022 when the park is open. Regarding Durbin's question about touchless payments, he thinks it is perfect for vendors. Staff has contacted the finance department and of course it is not as easy as it seems for government agencies to have that, however, staff is looking into it.

B. Items Related to Shady Oak Beach

i. 2020 Shady Oak Beach Operations Report

Aquatics and Inclusion Services Recreation Program Manager, Jessica Benoy gave the staff report.

Evenrud thanked Benoy for the report. He said it was a crazy year and just getting through it and staying flexible is a common theme. He thinks it is definitely a huge accomplishment and suggested to keep trying to have programs for the people that need it. Evenrud was glad that they didn't stay closed all year and that there was a report.

Walick asked how the lifeguards felt with their position and being surrounded by people at the beach, in terms of being vulnerable to COVID-19. He asked if the lifeguards expressed any concerns.

Benoy responded that most of the employees would speak up if they didn't like something. An example is that we didn't know how to give ventilations without any of their air particles coming into contact directly with their mouths. They brought that concern to her and said they do not feel comfortable. At that point, staff changed their whole procedure and how they did things. We kind of adapted as they brought up their concerns. Mask wearing was also implemented in the lifeguard shack. Interactions between all the staff was also minimized.

Ingraham asked what the protocol was if someone needed to have CPR.

Benoy answered that they implemented bag valve masks. It is a mask that goes over your mouth and there is an external bag that provides the oxygen. We switched to just using that and not our normal resuscitation masks.

Durbin thanked Benoy for explaining why there weren't lifeguards there when the beach first opened. That was his question and the risk that he saw with opening it. Hindsight, it was probably the nicest thing that the city did for the residents and the teenage kid population. The fact that the city lost money on it and did it for free was really nice; it was a way of giving back. He knows opening it was controversial but looking back, he thinks it was a good idea. People needed something to do this summer and many chose to go there.

Evenrud asked what the future of the high dive is.

Benoy answered that it is getting inspected this upcoming year. They will inspect the stability of it and see what the engineers suggest to do with it.

Durbin noted that the water is still really high and asked for an update on the milfoil drainage system.

O'Dea answered that our Public Works Director, Will Manchester is looking at that right now. They are working with multiple agencies such as the DNR and the Watershed District. They are still looking at reducing the levels of the lake but he is not positive if that is going to happen before next summer.

Evenrud commented that a nice thing about these presentations is thinking about the future and hoping for a normal season at Shady Oak Beach in the upcoming year.

Benoy added that a big reason for her Wibit purchase this year was due to thinking about what would attract kids if we don't have the big dock. We purchased some equipment that is going to be more towards the deep end and that will hopefully intrigue the teenagers once we can't have the dock anymore.

O'Dea thanked Benoy and Davy for their work with the beach this year and thinks they did a great job. He added that Durbin mentioned being flexible. O'Dea remembers sitting in meetings talking about opening or closing the beach, then three weeks later

the direction of the state changed. Staff is always thinking about the safety of our patrons and he was glad they were able to provide some services at the beach this year.

ii. 2021 Shady Oak Beach Fee Adjustments

Benoy gave the staff report.

Walick thinks it is nice that you are making it easier and collapsing it into one. He wondered when most people purchase their season passes. He asked if most purchases are pre-season, during the season or after August 1.

Benoy replied about 50 percent purchased passes before the season and about 44 percent purchased them during the season until July 31.

Ingraham asked how many people purchased three or more passes. If you look at the numbers staff shared, a good portion is getting a lower price as long as they are not frequent users.

Benoy was not sure how many households purchased three or more passes.

Berman added that from his experience a lot of the users go to Hopkins High School. Most of the Minnetonka High School kids go to Lake Minnetonka beaches. In Hopkins High School, most of the West Junior High kids are primarily Minnetonka residents and get the resident rate. Then the North Junior High kids who are primarily out of the city of Minnetonka get the nonresident rate. Berman asked if there is a way to give all Hopkins High School attendees the resident rate since both schools are in Minnetonka. Those are the kids that use it all season.

Benoy said she doesn't know the history on resident verses nonresident.

Durbin asked if there is a relationship between Shady Oak Beach and the city of Minnetonka and the city of Hopkins.

O'Dea answered that there is a relationship between Hopkins and Minnetonka and both cities received the resident rate.

Durbin asked Berman to confirm if he is talking about the kids that are going to Hopkins High School that don't actually live in Hopkins or Minnetonka.

Berman responded that is correct and the area extends to St. Louis Park or Golden Valley.

Durbin added that Hopkins School District is overwhelmingly big. He said showing a Hopkins student ID to get a resident rate is an interesting proposal.

Berman commented that when you travel there in a group it is kind of weird to have one person paying \$13 and the other person paying \$26.

Benoy said we can discuss it for next year.

Gabler commented that if you are going to do school districts, Minnetonka School District includes students from surrounding cities. Very little of Minnetonka is in that school district so he thinks a can of worms could be opened when you talk about school districts. Gabler asked to confirm that the passes being discussed are the season passes and not the daily pass.

Benoy confirmed they were discussing season passes.

Durbin agreed with Gabler that it would open a can of worms with both school districts.

O'Dea said it is a great idea, however, it does get more involved having school districts that contain students from multiple cities. Staff won't be able to do anything for 2021 but looking into the future maybe a student rate could be considered. Since the city of Minnetonka and the city of Hopkins own it, preference may be preferred to only Hopkins or Minnetonka residents.

Walick moved, Gabler seconded a motion to approve the proposed changes to the season pass rates for 2021. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

7. Park Board Member Reports

Jacobs commented that the new mountain bike trail has been getting a lot of great feedback and people love it. He has been out there the last couple of days checking them out and they are just great. He complimented staff and said they did such a nice job designing them.

Evenrud added that he has walked by them and he can't wait to see them when leaves are on the trees.

Durbin biked the trail the first week it was open and it was uphill in every direction he went. It was new so it was bumpy but he was told it would be like that because it had to get worked in. The trail was constructed extremely well. There were a couple people walking it while people were biking it. The trail was a very controversial topic and when he was out there he saw that it fits perfectly into a park. It was quiet and there was nature all around and nobody was disturbing the nature. It is really popular and he is very glad that we did this. The parking lots weren't filled and it is such a large park that can handle that additional traffic. The trail is wide enough for walking and nobody is running over anyone. He gives it two thumbs up for the quality. It is a little harder than some expected but people were pleasantly surprised that it was challenging enough to come back.

Ingraham has walked and jogged on the trail and thought it was spectacular. He has heard comments from people too and they all thought it was wonderful. Ingraham has spent a lot of time in the woods at Lone Lake Park before there were official trails; he thinks the trails opens up a lot of the park now. The trail goes in places that he was never able to get to before because of the undergrowth. He found humor with the "no parking anytime" sign that was in the middle of the woods. Ingraham thinks the trail is great and it is a great addition to

the city. Ingraham wasn't able to participate in the Jidana restoration effort around the burr oaks but he went by afterwards and thinks all the work staff and volunteers did around mulching the base of the trees was great. Ingraham noted that it is nice to see that the water level has receded at Kinsel Park; he is guessing the drainage they did at the far end of the lake must have been successful.

8. Information Items

COVID-19

O'Dea gave the report.

Park Board Terming

O'Dea mentioned that chair Evenrud terms out at the end of January, 2021. Also, our vice chair decided not to be reappointed to the park board. The next meeting is when we appoint our chair and vice chair so we will be looking for two new people to fill those positions. Also, the city is starting a sustainability commission. The sustainability commission is looking for two members of current boards. They are going to ask one park board member and one planning commission member to be on both boards. That won't likely be at the next meeting but will be addressed in the near future. As we get into February, hopefully we will have two new park board members.

Gabler asked if there were any COVID cases traced back to Williston.

O'Dea replied that staff is not aware of any. We heard of people who had been to the facility but we haven't traced it from a facility.

Gabler added with some of the research that has been done with health clubs and really the low spread rate among health clubs, has the city thought about pushing back a little bit on some of the restrictions specifically regarded to Williston. Gabler also asked if there will be any outdoor ice this winter.

O'Dea responded that we have not pushed back yet and that Williston Fitness Center is probably a smaller health club. Lifetime Fitness and those folks are pushing pretty hard and he thinks that is good for us. Regarding the winter ice, we are planning to have outdoor ice at both Minnetonka and Hopkins. The scheduled date to start flooding is December 19. Staff might do some different things with the warming houses though. We might close those and having roving attendants.

Evenrud was going to ask about the warming houses too. He thinks communicating with the public about what they should do such as getting ready at home would be useful. Just the fact that we are having outdoor rinks is a great thing. Evenrud also asked if the membership fees at Williston Fitness Center were taken away if we closed or will they be charged again.

O'Dea answered that the Williston Fitness Center closed at the end of November. We did not give any refunds for that last week in November but we did not charge anybody for December. Hopefully we will be able to reopen in December and kind of gain that week back.

Evenrud thanked O'Dea and said it was nice to have the Williston Fitness Center opened while it could be but it is also good to be safe.

Durbin is very happy the city will be able to do the outdoor ice. He thinks people are going to look forward to that especially if the indoor ice is closed. Whatever we can do to make hockey and ice skating happen during this winter will be great. Durbin requested that if O'Dea gets more information about the sustainability commission to send it out. He thinks it sounds interesting.

9. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

O'Dea reported.

10. Adjournment

Gabler moved, Walick seconded a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Kline

Kathy Kline
Recreation Administrative Coordinator