

MINUTES
Park & Recreation Advisory Commission
Wednesday, July 5, 2023 – 5:30 p.m.
Lower Level Conference Room

Members Present: Brad Bark, Rick Bierman, Sarah Hoeg, Pete Degabriele, Gina Othmer and Delman Kuhlers

Members Absent: Dana LaRue

Staff Present: Rich Klimes

Guests Present: Carol Webb, Megan Francis and Marc Hines

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m.

Selection of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson

Bark moved to elect Sarah Hoeg as Chairperson. Second by Degabriele. Degabriele moved to elect Gina Othmer as Vice-Chairperson. Second by Kuhlers. All ayes; motion carries.

Bark motioned to approve the minutes of the May 3, 2023 regular meeting as distributed. Seconded by Othmer. All ayes; motion carries.

Discussion – Neighborhood Revitalization Pocket Park

Staff discussed details of the proposed Neighborhood Revitalization Pocket Park at 519 Orange Street. More details will be presented at a later date along with a map of the location. A public meeting will also be held to gather citizen's input.

Discussion – Bruner Field

City Council agreed to gift Bruner Field to the Muscatine Community School District and details are being finalized now.

Discussion – Cemetery Rules and Regulations

This item was pulled from the agenda to allow for a more detailed discussion at the next meeting.

Discussion – Parks and Recreation Department Staffing Levels

Staff informed the commission that Nick Gow, Superintendent of Parks, is no longer employed with the City. Melissa Baker has been promoted to Park Maintenance Supervisor and Steve Day has been promoted to Park Maintenance Leadworker. The department will also be adding more program and maintenance staff when the indoor dome comes.

Discussion – Weed Park Festival of Lights

Staff gave brief description on the previous Weed Park Festival of Lights program. Megan Francis with Crossroads, Inc. presented a request to the commission to host Weed Park Festival of Lights this year as a fundraiser for their organization. Megan has spoken with Muscatine Power and Water who is on board with the plan. There will need to be verified mutual understanding in writing from Muscatine Power and Water in regards to the electrical support. Megan has spoken with Musco who is also on board with the plan. If approved, Crossroads, Inc., in collaboration with the company Winterland, will provide 40 light displays in the park. The displays would be in Weed Park from November 1st to mid-January. Public viewing would run nightly from 5:00 to 9:00 pm November 23rd through December 31st. Crossroads, Inc. will ask for suggested donations of \$10 per car to view the light display and will provide volunteers to collect donations and direct traffic.

Degabriele asked for details on the collaboration with Winterland. Megan stated they will lease the lights from the company for three years and switch out displays each year. However, the current request from Crossroads, Inc. is to use Weed Park for this year only. If it doesn't work out after the first year, Winterland is willing to break the lease with Crossroads, Inc.

Kuhlers asked if they are accepting monetary and food donations. Megan stated they are not accepting food donations but will ask for \$10 per car to support Crossroads, Inc. and their resources. The goal is to raise around \$75,000. Bark asked if funding has been secured yet. Megan stated they are working on that but nothing is locked in yet. Bark also asked if it is \$10 per car or just a suggested donation. Megan stated they will ask all cars for a \$10 donation. There will also be an option to purchase a ticket online. Staff said they would need to check the Weed Park Covenant to see if that is allowed.

Kuhlers asked if the City has received any complaints from neighbors in previous years during the event. Staff stated they have received no complaints to date.

Othmer motioned to endorse the request as submitted by Crossroads, Inc. for Festival of Lights in Weed Park for 2023. Seconded by Kuhlers. All ayes; motion carries.

Update – Programs and Projects Updates

Programs – Staff gave a brief update on current programs taking place within the park system.

Projects – Staff gave an update on the following projects:

- The Soccer Irrigation Project will go to City Council for approval soon and we hope to have the project complete by the April 1st opening next year.
- The Muscatine Community Foundation Southend Improvement Projects continue to make progress on the following items:
 - The trail connector from Kent Stein Park to Sunset Housing should be complete the next week.
 - We are still waiting on the restrooms to be delivered.
 - The crosswalk from Oregon Street to Earl Avenue will be poured this week.
 - The splashpad at Taylor Park is open.

- We need to wait on additional amenities at Taylor Park until we know where we stand with the restrooms and pickleball courts.
 - The playgrounds at Musser Park and Taylor Park are complete. However, we are still waiting on two playground pieces.
- The Weed Park Lagoon Project was approved and we are in the process of soliciting engineering services.
- The Sports Dome Project was also approved and we are in the process of soliciting engineering services. Bark, Othmer and Hoeg have requested to be involved in the process.
- The Cemetery Chapel Repair Project was approved and the contractor will complete the repairs in the fall once the weather has cooled off.
- Staff is still working on logistics for security cameras throughout the park system.

Update – Special Events

Current and upcoming special events were discussed. Staff invited commission to attend National Night Out at Taylor Park on August 1st.

Other Business

Commission was informed that the College Search Kickoff will not be taking place this year due to low registrations and lack of college coaches. Staff is looking at an earlier July date for next year.

A couple large bike fixtures are in the process of being made and will be placed on the riverfront for RAGBRAI. Once the event is over the donor will be asking to permanently add these fixtures to the riverfront.

Hoeg asked when the watermelon sculpture will be installed. Bark stated Hoffman Inc. and Canadian Pacific are in discussion and anticipate delivery in the early part of September now. It will be placed in the Millenium Plaza area once complete.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Rexroth
Officer Coordinator