MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING
7:00pm, Thursday, June 16, 2022, Whalen Cabin at Phelps Park

Board Chair Rich Gaard called the meeting to order at 7:00pm, all board members were present; Kathy Bakken, Benji Nichols, Brian Fuhrmann and Zach Kerndt and Director Andy Nimrod. Visitors included Doug Smith, Mark Stockdale, Ray Koshatka, Terry Gaumer, David Bakken, Kirsten Olson, Dennis Magnusson, Greg LaHue, Peter van der Linden and Mark Vilardo.

Public comment:

- *Kirsten Olson commented that he would like to see a canoe livery business reopen in Decorah and would like the park board to consider leasing land near the Will Baker landing area to a prospective operator. Olson met with city officials and the previous livery operator recently to look at the location and he felt something could work out, but probably not until next year. The lease would be similar to leasing out a concession stand.*
- *Kerndt shared that he had been approached by people in the Downing Addition who would like to see a park in that neighborhood.*
- *Nimrod reported that Ruth Berger had requested that parking be improved at the Van Peenen Park access across from the rock quarry. She requested a paved parking area, but added that any improvement would help.*
- *Nichols reported that the Crater Run held in early June had gone well and was a great event.*
- *Nichols shared that Oliver Bollinger and Garrett Willie are becoming some of the top ranked high school mountain bike riders in the state, both of them are from Decorah and regularly ride the off-road trail system.*

K. Bakken motioned to approve the minutes of the May 19, 2022 meeting, Nichols seconded, all approved.

Decorah Veteran's Association members were on hand to give an update on the memorial project at Mary Christopher Park. Koshatka reported that the light poles were in the process of being installed and that the flag poles would be next. They also expected the first round of monuments to arrive this summer. Doug Smith reported that the list of names going on the monuments had exceeded 6,000, and it is expected that the total list of names will be around 10,000. Smith encouraged everyone to double check the names of family, friends and loved ones that served to help ensure everyone is accounted for and accurate represented. The earliest veteran recorded was from the War of 1812. Stockdale reported that the community's response to the group's fundraiser was overwhelming and that they felt very good about their financial plans.

Terry Gaumer shared the different ways the Community Foundation can be helpful. She reported information about the three current funds DPR has with the community foundation, and the advantages of each type of fund. She reported that donations to the permanent endowment qualify for a 25% Iowa State tax credit, however the annual limit of donations qualifying for that tax credit had already been

reached for 2022. Gaumer offered her assistance to any donor who wanted to explore different donation options. Gaard mentioned that the Board had discussed trying to find an annual event that would help bring awareness to the funds and to potential park projects.

Nimrod shared information from recent annual budgeting planning to help the Board prepare for some upcoming grant opportunities. The information included potential match money to use for grants as well as potential capital improvement projects that have been recently discussed.

Nichols and Fuhrmann gave an update on the Gateway Trail planning at Carlson Park. Jeffrey L Bruce company has produced graphics from their masterplan that will be used for fundraising. Fuhrmann shared some cost estimates that he had put together. Fuhrmann, Nichols and Nimrod had a conference call with a representative from Destination Iowa, a potential large grant source, to see if they thought the Gateway Trail project would be a viable application. The representative thought that it would make an excellent application, and suggested thinking even larger scale as there is currently great potential with this grant opportunity. The difficult part will be coming up with match money, in this case 60%. Not only the amount but also the timing. Fuhrmann asked about exploring different budgeting ways to help leverage more grant money.

Bird Scooters: Nimrod shared information from the recent City Councill discussion, and shared the MOU that the city had entered with Bird Scooters. Nimrod told the Board after discussion this evening he would be gauging the Park-Rec Board's interest and would be asking the Board if they had consensus on their thoughts about the e-scooters being allowed on the trails. There was lots of discussion:

- *Dennis Magnuson said that scooters have been around in Europe longer than the U.S.A., and that lots of questions were coming up. Magnuson shared that he is not in favor of scooters.*
- *Peter Van der Linden spoke against allowing them on the trail.*
- *K. Bakken shared that she had many concerns about scooters after dealing with them in her neighborhood last summer in her neighborhood. K. Bakken was especially concerned about safety.*
- *Gaard asked if the City or specifically Park-Rec should have liability concerns.*
- *Mark Vilardo came as an avid scooter user, but he was not in favor of allowing scooters on the trails due to too many inexperienced riders that he believed would create unsafe situations.*
- *There were also many questions regarding drop off points, age requirements, helmet requirements, costs and usage on sidewalks.*
- *Councilman Olson reported that he had voted against the MOU and was not in favor of allowing scooters on the trail, however he thought some of the questions people were asking could be addressed when officials met.*
- *Fuhrmann spoke in favor of scooters as a viable transportation method and thought that concerns could be worked through, he suggested allowing scooters on the hard surfaced trails, Kerndt supported this concept but no one else did.*
- *The Board discussed when e-bikes were being considered and how the state became involved when it classified pedal assist e-bikes as bicycles. Fuhrmann asked if there would be more*

support from the Board to allow them on the hard surfaced trails if the state would classify e-scooters as nonmotorized vehicles and if DPR would discourage the use of e-scooters, there was not consensus.

- *D. Bakken spoke against e-scooters from a safety standpoint and also noted that he understood that some of the original grants for the Trout Run Trail didn't allow for motorized vehicles. He also added that after leaving a question for the City Attorney he viewed an e-scooter as a motorized vehicle.*
- *Nichols asked for more information on the Board's responsibility and more information from the City Attorney and his assessment.*
- *K. Bakken noted her opposition to allowing e-scooters. She supported prohibiting them on the Trout Run Trail, Gaard was also in favor of prohibiting e-scooters on the Trout Run Trail, but there wasn't any other support. Nichols asked about County input and how that worked. Nimrod said that the 28E Trails Committee would be meeting the following week and would be taking up the discussion.*

The Board asked for a quick update from Nimrod before ending the meeting. Nimrod reported that staff would be finishing up installation of the new high dive at the pool. He also reported that the staff have been exceptional through an extremely busy couple of months, some challenging situations have made things ore stressful than usual.

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Nimrod
Director
Decorah Parks and Recreation