MINUTES: DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING

7:00pm, Thursday, February 16, 2023, Decorah City Hall

Board Chair Rich Gaard called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm, members Brian Fuhrmann, Kathy Bakken and Benji Nichols were present. Staff present included Travis Goedken, Blake Moen, Jon Geiger and Andy Nimrod. There was no public comment. Nichols motioned to approve the minutes from the January 19, 2023, meeting, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved.

Nichols reported that there wasn't any new work completed on the Park Policy Manual and that the next step of that process will be reviewing things with City Manager Goedken on City Code involving parks.

Goedken gave an update on how current legislative work in Des Moines could affect the Decorah budget. It looks like the first budget cut would be around $80,000 to the City's general fund. There are other bills being discussed that could double or triple that amount. The city council will be scheduling a work session soon to look at options. The Board discussed a number of ideas that would help close the budget gap for the City, including using Hotel Motel Funds for operations, raising user fees at the campground, pool and recreation programming, creating a urban forestry utility and operational reductions.

The Board set a special meeting for February 21, 2023, to review and consider registration fees at Pulpit Rock Campground. The Board also discussed sending a letter, as a board, to State Senator Klimesh, State Representative Mike Bergan and Governor Reynolds. Nichols volunteered to work with Goedken and Nimrod and have something ready for the February 21 special meeting to review. The Board asked to review pool and recreation programming fees at the March meeting.

Nichols and Nimrod reported they had completed and submitted a $100,000 Wellmark grant to help connect Minowa Heights to Carlson Park. The Wellmark Grant will be undergoing some significant changes soon and Nichols thought it was good to get this application in before the change. Nimrod reported that he was working on filing a redesignation request for Iowa Great Places which could open up some additional funding.

Department reports:

- *Moen gave a quick update on winter rec programming that was wrapping up and announced the spring brochure would be coming out soon.*
- *The campground will be taking reservations beginning at 8:00am March 1.*
- *Geiger gave a quick update on the hiring process, assuming it moves along.*
- *It looks like the ice skating rink is about done for the season.*

Other:

- *Fuhrmann still working with the Iowa High School Mountain Biking organization to host a bike race June 10.*
- *The next meeting dates were confirmed as February 21 a special meeting and March 16 as the monthly meeting.*
- *Bakken motioned to adjourn, Fuhrmann seconded, all approved.*

Respectfully submitted,

Andy Nimrod
Director
Decorah Parks and Recreation