DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING Minutes
City Hall Council Chambers
Thursday, July 17, 2025 – 5:00 PM

1. **Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions –** *Gaard* called the meeting to order at 5:00 PM. *Gaard, Nichols, Bakken, Fuhrmann,* Kerndt were in attendance. *Travis Goedken* (City Manager) and *Marc Holtey* (Parks and Recreation Director) were in attendance.

2. **Visitors/Public Comment**
   Erin Shaw shared her appreciation for the Decorah Parks and Recreation trail system. As an ultra-long-distance runner, the trails in Decorah are where she trains. The trail system was a draw for Erin and her husband to move to Decorah. Erin (on behalf of DHPT) shared an update on the Two for the Trails Grant "Bridging Connection: Safer Trails, Stronger Community." Larson's Loop Bridge 1 was replaced. Larson's Loop Bridge 2 was removed. Instead of replacing the bridge, the trail was re-routed and vetted for a safer alternate for all users. She also shared on the next couple of areas to focus on with the grant in Van Peenen (i.e., potential bridge on Public Television).
   Mary Lewis, who has dedicated 20+ years of work to Garlic Mustard invasive removal and control, requested more dedicated maintenance next year from the Park Department. Furthered by shared that this needs to be strategic and pre-planned. *Mary* shared that the Garlic Mustard has a 10-year seed bank. Doesn't want to lose ground on the effort, especially when she is not able to put in the number of hours required to keep it at bay.

3. **Consider Approval of Minutes for June 19, 2025 (Regular Meeting) and June 30, 2025 (Special Meeting) –** *Nichols made a motion to approve. Bakken – 2nd.* Ayes: 4; Nays: 0

4. **Department Reports –** *Holtey* provided the report.
   RECREATION
   <u>Coming to Close</u>
   - Summer Prairie Festival
     - Rescheduled due to weather conditions/extreme heat
     - Attendance was low, but still had 12 attend
   - Various Summer Youth Programs
     - Morning Rec Camps
     - Pee/Wee Tots
   - Summer Swim Lessons
     - Finishing the end of July
   - G2G at the Fair
     - 20 G2G participants pre-registered, 15 attended (despite the rain)
     - Roughly 27 total with support staff
   - Fair Fun Run
     - 69 pre-registered runners
     - 18 "day of event" registrations
   - Overall, very good programs led by staff!
     - All ball leagues (Tee ball, softball, baseball).
     - Tennis

- Morning Rec Camps: Golf Camp, Outposts, etc. P.S. Thanks to Coach Gaard for volunteering for golf camp!!
- Pee Wee and Tots wrapping up this week

Ongoing

- Adult Slow Pitch (Wednesday Nights)
  - 7 Teams
- Youth Volleyball Camp (July14-18)

Coming Up:

- Drama Show Camp July 20th-24th
- 1st Grade Baseball/Softball Camp July 21-30 (Mon/Wed)
- Movie in the Park night in collaboration with Library is August 8th (July 11th Weather Cancellation)
- Fall Brochure Release August 15th

POOL

- Overall, pool mechanics and plumbing are going great!
- Staff diligence with daily operations.
- The Pool Inspector will be coming out soon.
- Huge "Thank You" to Kathy Guyer and Brian Jones! Have really dialed in the daily operations!
- Active Save on July 3rd – 1st Year Lifeguard responded.
- 4th of July Pool Carnival. HUGE Success! Lots of fun and community really enjoyed.
- July 5th – Over 500 people at the Pool.
- Movie at the Pool Night on 7/5 – Moved to 7/6 Due to the Weather – Success!
- 4/8 Pool Parties completed for 2025
- Last session on swimming lessons started 7/14

CAMPGROUND

- 4th of July Weekend went smoothly.
- A big family reunion (59 years running) at the campground this week. The family has made several donations. 50 people here for a reunion.
- Nordic Fest – preparation. Will Baker Park will be overflow.
- On going boiler issues.
- Potential seal coating on Pulpit side in fall.
- New camera installed.
- Waiting on equipment from vendor – fire pits, tables and new trash cans.
- New log splitter with trade in.
- Eagle Rock Sculpture Dedication on Thursday, June 26.

PARKS

- Ice Cave – Improvements.
- Restoration Projects – Planting areas, trails and native plantings.
- Palisades – Trail corridors and the "old park" road.
- Stihl Electric Mower – Getting ready to order with trade-in.
- Equipment Replacement – New Tractor with more power to handle tasks without overheating.
- Nordic Fest Support and Preparation
- Whalen Cabin Improvement Projects – Continued with re-roofing and refining picnic tables.

- Recreation and Pool Support, Collaboration
- Community Prairie – Certificate of Recognition as a Monarch Waystation from Monarch Watch – Miriam Patton. Butterfly Presentation on Tuesday – Kirk Larsen.
- Conversations with DNR on Trout Run Park and Twin Springs – Improvement projects. *Nichols* asked about specifics on conversation with DNR. *Holtey* shared projects at Trout Run and shared about the proposed stream bank stabilization and getting the ponds functional again at Twin Springs.

5. Consider Approval of Additional Language for Equestrian Shared Use Rules
City of Decorah Parks and Recreation Equestrian Use Rules and Regulations

Holtey shared that the additional language is highlighted and was proposed as an addition to the Rules and Regulations approved by the Park Board on May 29, 2025.

1. Equestrian trail use opens May 1 (If Weather and Trail Conditions Permit).
2. Equestrian trail use is allowed from dawn to dust between the dates of May 1 and October 31. Dates may be adjusted depending on the weather and trail conditions as determined by the Parks and Recreation Director.
3. Trail use is prohibited during rainy or snowy days and for a period of 24 hours after the rain or snow has ceased or as conditions warrant necessity to protect the integrity of the trail as determined by the Parks and Recreation Director. "Muddy Day, Stay Away."
4. Horses are only allowed on designated shared use trails.
5. Horses are not allowed to run at large or graze in parks or on trails.
6. Horses are not to be hitched or tied to trees, shrubs or park amenities in a manner that will cause injury or damage to the plant or amenity.
7. All riders are required to keep the trail clean of droppings from their horse.
8. Horse trailer parking is only allowed in the designated parking area
9. No more than 4 Horses in a group (Groups larger than 4 horses must apply for a Special Event Permit)
10. All mucking must be taken out or removed from park premises.
11. Commercial guiding, tour operating and outfitting in public parks is prohibited.

Kerndt asked whether this was the plan for the 5 of 8 trails. *Holtey* verified it was.
Nichols motion to approve. *Fuhrmann* 2nd. Ayes: 4, Nays: 1.

6. Updates on Park Projects – *Holtey* shared updates.

- *Decorah Athletic Complex* – Pledges for Naming Rights/Sponsorship $400,000 plus in pledges. Bid Posted on July 9. Bid Opening (Thursday, July 31), Potential Award of Bid (Monday, August 4). *Holtey* shared that they are pushing out materials for a broader public campaign. *Holtey* asked the Park Board if they would be available for a Special Meeting on Thursday, July 31 to review and recommend bid. The Board decided on a Special Meeting – Thursday, July 31 at 5 PM. *Goedken* shared that there are 6 prime bidders listed on Quest CDN.
- *Carlson Park Gateway Trail Project (1A and 1B) – Holtey* shared that Pine Creek Tail Builders is working in the Northwest Zone of the project – Trails 101, 101_1, 103, 104 and 203 and he is out at the site at least once a week and completing weekly stormwater reports (SWPPP).

7. Financial – Budget, Community Foundation and Grant Updates

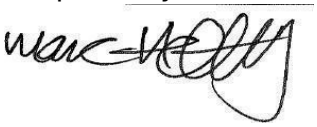
Holtey shared an overview of the budget with the June report ending FY'25. *Gaard* requested a report on the solar panel financials and use at the Pulpit Rock Campground. Notes – Solar panels at Campground. *Holtey* provided reports on the Community Foundation funds and noted that the Wayside Park Basketball Hoops special fund is closed as the funds have been

raised for that project. *Holtey* shared that the reimbursement for the WQI (and Engineer's office projects) has been submitted. Also shared an update on the IRVM (Roadside) Grant request for partial funding of a hydro seeder and the department should know whether we received that grant in a couple of weeks.

8. **Other Business –** *Holtey* shared about interest from a resident about Disc Golf, and keeping a Comprehensive Plan and Pool Assessment on the radar. Some board discussion about Disc Golf and some maintenance considerations. Park Board confirmed the following meetings: Thursday, July 31 at 5 PM – Special Meeting and Thursday, August 21 – Regular Meeting.

9. Adjourn - *Fuhrmann* made a motion to adjourn. *Kerndt 2nd*. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0. Meeting adjourned at 5:47 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Parks and Recreation Director