DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
City Hall Council Chambers
Thursday, April 16, 2026 – 5:00 PM

1. **Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions** – Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. Present - *Gaard, Putnam, Bakken, Fuhrmann, Klocke* were all in attendance. *Marc Holtey*, Parks and Recreation Director, *Cody Whittle*, City Council Member (At-Large) were present.

2. **Visitors/Public Comment –** *No Public Comment.*

3. **Consider Approval of Minutes for March 19, 2026 Meeting** – *Putnam* made a motion to approve. *Fuhrmann* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

4. **Department Reports**
   - **Campground**
     Improvements to Hideaway – Concrete Pad on Site #303. Template for additional sites.
     Additional section of floor and two showers re-finished on Pulpit Rock side.
     Rip rap along stream placed for bank stabilization.
     Reservations and site use are picking up.
     Water has been tested and is turned on.
   - **Parks**
     Whalen Cabin Picnic Tables – Assembled and ready for use. Prairie Lakes Church volunteers sanded and re-painted the boards, frames were sandblasted and painted at a body shop, Prairie Lakes Church volunteers reassembled tables.
     Stonework Projects – Pulpit Rock Trail/Stairs and Phelps Trail (below the Park Shop) stone repair on bridge. Questers $1,000 donation towards stonework at Pulpit Rock.
     Options for small barrier at Dunning's Spring – safety and protect the waterfall/stream.
     Tree Work – Airport tree work finished. Downed trees throughout the system.
     Will Baker Field Work – Aerated in early April.
     Diamond #2 Building – Disassembled and stored. Dug Outs – Transported to Park Shop.
     Dunning's Springs steps – another section complete.
     Community Prairie Burn on Friday, April 10.
     Piloting On-Line Shelter Reservations at Will Baker Park and Mary Christopher Park through Sportsman (Parks and Recreation Office – Support)
     Turning water on at facilities this week. Fountains next week.
   - **Swimming Pool**
     Met with Carrico for Pre-Season, Short-Term and "5 Year Plan."
     Passes opened for purchase on Monday, April 6th.
     Kathy Guyer Lifeguard classes: April 17th-19th at Luther College.
     Brian Freilinger and Kathy Guyer are starting pool maintenance prep.
     Lifeguard numbers and preparation are about on pace for the 2026 season.
     About 60 passes sold (since April 6th) - Good community feedback on the credit received from 2025.
   - **Recreation**
     Rec Summer Staff Recruitment
     Easter Egg Hunt Recap

Youth Soccer Leagues – First week Cancelled Due to Weather – April 4. April 11 – 1st Session.
Pee Wee Soccer Leagues - Begins April 18th
DUSC Soccer – Started on Monday, March 30th
HUGE Shout Out to JB Holland for doing all the field GPS work!
Pickleball Courts at Wayside – Set Up and Scheduling this Week.
Friday Night Open Adult Soccer at Will Baker Athletic Fields
Active in the Outdoors - Began Tuesday, April 7th
Earth Day Festival April 25th
Summer Brochure - Registration is May 1st
Active conversations on what baseball/ softball will look like this summer – Update – Little League Baseball in Collaboration with Luther College.
Youth Tennis will be at Luther College this Summer.
Live Healthy Iowa Track meet is currently scheduled for May 19th.
Putnam shared her appreciation of the programming and work of the departments.

- **Director**
  REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection) Assembly – Mid-Late June. Hosting the five-county assembly in collaboration with Winneshiek County, DNR, IDALS and stakeholders. Showcasing projects in Decorah that received funding and support through state programs and grants.
  Trail Town Designation/Recognition
  Wild Driftless Adventure Race Update – 2027
  Upper Explorerland – Bike Initiatives – April/May
  Update and Maintenance Needs on Palisades Park Loop – *Holtey* shared that the loop would be closed until the maintenance issues on the road could be addressed. Shared options including a mill and overlay ($250,000) for the entire loop. Also talked about hot mix patching areas as needed for a short-term solution and re-surfacing sections. The hot mix plant will be open in Waukon in late April. The Board shared input. *Klocke* shared this is one of the few accessible overlooks for people with mobility issues. Fuhrmann shared that a possible solution would be to close it to vehicle traffic as a hiking/biking loop. Also shared different surface solutions, such as Staylock. *Gaard* shared he didn't want to close the road. Added to look into clearance along the side of the road (i.e., vegetation). *Putnam* asked if Hotel-Motel funds could be used for this. *Holtey* shared funds could be used for the maintenance needs. *Klocke* asked about fundraising and grants. *Holtey* shared these could be possibilities. *Holtey* shared that one way is a special project option through the Community Foundation.

5. **Consider Approval of Proposed 2026 Soft-Trail Projects** – *Jes Ryerson* (DHPT) shared the proposed natural surface project proposal for 2026. Projects will be simple and related to erosion issues at a couple of locations. On IPTV, a short re-route is proposed for safety and erosion at the trailhead along Quarry Hill Road. On Smeby's trail, a project would involve re-benching an eroded area and removing old shoring. One the focus of DHPT is at Carlson Park and the new trail development project. There will be volunteer sessions ahead for that project. The Board asked for clarification on other projects and initiatives. *Ryerson* responded about continued response to trees down and other things that come up, as well. Shared that DHPT has reached out to *Holtey* for additional help at Twin Springs Park, etc. *Putnam* made a motion to approve, *Klocke* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays; 0.

6. **Discussion on Archery Only Deer Hunting in the Parks** – *Holtey* shared an overview of the program with 15 participating in the program this past season. Also identified the procedures

document and the surveys that were sent out along with a response from one hunter (Ryan Timmerman) who wrote a Master thesis on the City Deer Hunting program and perceptions in Duluth, MN (as a part of his degree in Environmental Education). and that *Klocke* – Temporary Signs. *Putnam* shared that it would be beneficial to provide more outreach and education on the program. *Fuhrmann* shared that it seems like a program that isn't invasive to other activities. *Klocke* asked about the comments on the survey response about incorporating bow hunting during the special "shotgun" season. *Putnam* clarified that season through the DNR website. *Putnam* shared that it would be good to get more information on the survey responses. *Klocke* asked about the park areas where hunting was allowed. *Holtey* shared the list. *Klocke* talked about the list being fringe areas. *Holtey* shared about connecting with the DNR prior to the season and the alignment with the DNR rules and regulations. *Holtey* also shared feedback and input from a Parks staff with some other ideas on how to improve the program. *Jes Ryerson* asked Gaard if he could ask a question. He asked if field dressing is allowed in parks and addressed in the rules and regulations. *Holtey* shared it was addressed and that the policy states that the deer must be removed from the park and dressed elsewhere.

7. **Additional Discussion on Phelps Park Holiday Lighting Proposal** – *Holtey* gave an overview of the proposal and short review of the feedback from the meeting in March. Concerns from neighbors about "light pollution", increased traffic and precedent for future request. *Holtey* shared he was looking for additional discussion from the Board on ideas for the donor. Referenced the current Memorial Program, as well. Also shared he had received positive feedback on the proposal, as well. *Putnam* commented on feedback about the additional traffic and light pollution. *Bakken* commented on two conversations with donor. He emphasized the scope of this project is light, subtle LEDs on a few oak trees. *Klocke* read a letter to be submitted to the record from Tim and Adrienne Schlapp (907 Vernon Street) who raised concerns about the proposal. *Mark Stumme*, 901 Vernon Street, was in attendance related to this topic. *Gaard* granted permission for *Stumme* to provide comment. *Stumme* appreciated the proposal to honor a loved one. Shared some considerations about the proposal, as well. *Putnam* and *Klocke* offered to be a part of the follow up meeting with the donor. *Gaard* suggested tabling the discussion. *Putnam* made a motion to table the discussion. *Fuhrmann* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

8. **Project Updates**
   - Decorah Athletic Complex (Rowley Sports Complex) – *Holtey* provided an update on the project. Shared that the silt fence is up, equipment mobilized and control points are in. Skyline is looking for a weather window to get things rolling. Provided a recap of the prefabricated building meeting with ISG. Holtey also shared that Pay App #1 from Skyline is in the queue for materials at the sight. Asked for action to approve Pay App #1. *Klocke* made a motion to approve. *Putnam* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.
   - Carlson Park Gateway Trail Project (1A and 1B) – *Holtey* provided an update on the Carlson Park project including the plan for tree planting, additional seeding and installing the project sign/banner on-site. Also shared about the prairie restoration area burn. Slow burn that addressed the brome grass and some piles of honeysuckle. Also shared that the Rotary sign is in place at the Binzebo and looks good.
   - Twin Springs Park – *Holtey* provided an update on Twin Springs. Abutments and bridges are in place. The Board commented it looked good. *Holtey* also shared that additional work is still needed for cleaning up and removing a big pile of timber from the storms.

- Swimming Pool Playground – *Holtey* provided an update on the sand removal and restoration for the old playground area, wood chip replacement for the new playground.
- Trout Run Trail – *Holtey* provided an update on the re-surfacing on the TRT segment through the Campground. Key area that connects the TRT to 5th Avenue and Dug Road and has amenities near the entrance, Bike Air/Repair Station and Restrooms, as well as a trail kiosk.

9. **Consider Approval of Change Orders for Carlson Park Trail Development Project** – *Holtey* provided an overview of Change Orders (#1-#5). *Klocke* comment on how the CO's changed the bottom line of the budget. *Holtey* shared that it was mainly due to removing one bridge from the project (in the Southeast Zone). *Putnam* made a motion to approve. *Klocke* – 2nd. 4:0; 1 abstention.

10. **Consider Transfer of Fund Balance for Skate Park Fund (009) to General Fund (001)** – Holtey shared an overview of the reason to transfer the remaining funds to the General Fund in the amount of $112.94. Overall, reducing the number of accounts for Parks and Recreation. Gaard wanted to make sure if people wanted to give specifically to the Skate Park they would have that option. shared that contributions could go into the Memorial Fund, in a column identified as "Skate Park." *Klocke* made a motion to approve. *Putnam* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

11. **Consider Transfer of Funds for Robotic Vacuum from Swimming Pool Equipment Fund (010) to General (001)** – *Holtey* shared that the cost of the Robotic Pool Vacuum ($15,693.33) was taken out of the General instead of the Pool Equipment fund as intended. The transfer was to correct that error. *Klocke* asked for clarification on the fund. The account is (005) instead of (010) for the Swimming Pool Equipment Fund. *Holtey* acknowledged that correction. Putnam made a motion to approve. *Fuhrmann* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

12. **Consider Use of Quasi-Funds for Carl Selland Wayside Park "Diamond #2" Building** – *Holtey* provided the balance of the Quasi-Endowment fund. Shared a cost estimate for the concrete pad, utilities and building materials to re-site the "Diamond #2" building to Wayside. *Klocke* asked if it would replace the current warming room. *Holtey* shared that the building would replace the existing buildings. It would serve as the restrooms, warming room and equipment storage. Also noted that the $50,000 (estimated) funds would not impact other funding with attached designations. *Fuhrmann* made a motion to approve. *Putnam* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

13. **Budget FY'26, Community Foundation and Grant Updates**
Holtey shared the FY'26 amendment process and pointed out how things are balanced out within the departments and for Parks and Recreation. Provided the board with up-to-date numbers on the Community Foundation accounts. *Gaard* commented on how the Judy Syverson "Everybody Plays" Fund has grown. *Holtey* shared his appreciation for Judy establishing that account to remove financial barriers for programs.

14. **Other Business** – *Holtey* shared other volunteer work (Garlic Mustard – Mary Lewis) and a volunteer session on Saturday. Highlighted the Earth Day event on Saturday, April 25 and the Community Prairie/Butterly Garden letter from Miriam sharing the kickoff date and events booked to date. *Putnam* – shared about the Our Town Trail Town episode on KVIK – 19:45. Also shared the feature on Decorah which is posted on the DHPT website. Talked about an IMBA Women's event which is being confirmed and open to all abilities. *Klocke* – shared about Nordheim Park proposed ideas – Basketball Court and Clean Up. Placement and water flow are key to that area. DIRT practices start on Monday – 5:30-7 PM at Swimming Pool/ Luther

Grass area. Over 50 participants this year. *Gaard* asked about what practices entail. *Klocke* and *Fuhrmann* explained the practices. Safety and proper gear are important parts of the first practice. *Gaard* expressed his appreciation to get the Pickleball Courts set up. A collaboration with Parks and Recreation and the Decorah Pickleball group volunteers.

15. **Adjourn** – Next Park Board Meeting – Thursday, May 21st. *Gaard* made a motion to adjourn. *Putnam* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marc Holtey, Parks and Recreation Director