DECORAH PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
City Hall Council Chambers
Thursday, August 20, 2026 – 5:00 PM

1. **Welcome, Roll Call and Introductions**
   Meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM. Present – *Gaard, Putnam, Bakken and Fuhrmann*. *Klocke* joined remotely through Zoom. *Marc Holtey,* Parks and Recreation Director, was also present. After instructions, *Gaard* made a motion to move agenda item #9 up in the agenda under agenda item #5. All five board members approved of the agenda change in order.

2. **Visitors/Public Comment**
   Minutes: Mary Lewis provided follow-up from the Garlic Mustard presentation from the meeting on June 18. She shared the number of hours personally invested in this effort and the tools used to manage Garlic Mustard. She asked the board to consider additional staffing to address Garlic Mustard over a 2-month period (April-June). She suggested the goal of dedicating 2 people to 18 hours per week. Also talked about a succession plan for her personally. She acknowledged the value of the park system and appreciated the park staff maintaining it. *Thomas Johnson* shared an update on Decorah Human Powered Trails and their work on Tuesday, August 18. Thirteen DHPT volunteers volunteered a total of DHPT 24.5 volunteer hours on Smeby's Trail. Johnson shared a quote by Nick Pearch, DHPT President about the effort along with the bench cutting trail building technique to improve the sustainability of the trail. Pictures of the project and volunteers are posted on the DHPT website.

3. **Consider Approval of Minutes for July 16, 2026 Meeting**
   Bakken made a motion to approve. *Putnam – 2nd*. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

4. **Department Reports –** *Holtey* provided the reports.
   - **Campground**
     Pulpit Rock Campground Facebook Page:
     https://www.facebook.com/PulpitRockCampground/
     Ductless Mini-Split Air Conditioning for Campground Office (Installed Soon).
     Quotes for Twin Springs Loop Bathhouse Roof (Re-Roof in October).
     Pulpit Rocks Campground and Community Event – Saturday, September 5 – 5-7 PM.
   - **Parks**
     Event Support for Elvelopet (Nordic Fest) and Rotary Trail Ride.
     Hydro Seeder Demo (Corey) – Parks and Streets – Application at Various Sites.
     IRVM Roadside Management Prairie (Along Pulpit Rock Road) – Indicators – Establishing Well.
     Wayside Park – Foundation for Building and Sidewalk Work Completed.
     Dunning's Spring Stairs – Additional Work to Finish Out All the Top Rails – Gator Tread Tape.
     Rotary Trail Signs Installed.
     Logan – Assisting with Archery Classes and 3D Target Shoot Event.
     Phelps Park Pavilion (Bandshell) – Re-Roofed.
     Phelps Park Oak Wilt Treatment and Plan for 11 Trees (Contracted)
     Fuhrmann asked whether the Park department would consider doing oak wilt treatment "in-house." *Holtey* shared that they are looking into that and could bring a tree service in

from the Twin Cities to talk about the equipment and provide an overview of the training and process.

- **Swimming Pool**
  Last week of Full Pool Hours (Sunday, August 23). Exercise classes and lap swimming through Friday, September 4.
  Sand Plan for Playground.
  Pool Rentals – 14 to date.
  Pool Community Event – Wednesday, August 19 – 4-7 PM.
  Holtey shared that the plan is to give away the sand at the playground. This needs to go through a Public Hearing process prior to giving it away. *Klocke* asked about the playground at Nordheim needing sand. *Holtey* shared they can stockpile some for that purpose. *Holtey* also shared the vision for that sand area with shade, seating, a passive space that will add a needed amenities and help with operations. *Gaard* asked about how the dunk tank (part of the Pool Community Event) went. *Holtey* shared he was dunked several times, and it was a popular part of the event.
- **Recreation**
  Coming to Close
  3D Archery Event - 30 participants
  Ongoing
  Fall Registration
  Parent-Child Volleyball Program
  With Volleyball Coach Traci Marcum
  Archery Camp (August)
  Coming Up
  Movie in the Park 8/22 (Will Baker Park) - Time Bandits
  G2G Summer Celebration August 27th
  September: Monarch Butterfly Tagging, Adult Recess, Spikesters Volleyball, Flag Football
- **Director**
  Nordic Fest Involvement – Elvelopet Numbers.
  Comp Plan – RFP Process Updated (*Holtey* corrected it from RFQ) - August and September. Holtey provided the representation for the selection committee. Asked Board who would be interested in servicing on the committee. *Gaard* expressed interest, as did *Putnam*. Both shared it would depend on when scheduling. *Gaard* will be the representative and *Putnam* an alternate.
  Trout Run Trail Re-Surfacing – Two Season Project – Dug Road Additional Revetment and Re-Surfacing Bid. *Holtey* shared the need to work on another section along Dug Road prior to re-surfacing.
  Donation - $10,000 for Community Prairie and $10,000 for Dug Road.
  Equipment for Carlson Park Trail Project – On-going operational costs. *Holtey* shared they are looking into equipment to help mow and maintain the trails, especially in the NW Zone. Also shared that funds needed to be set aside for on-going maintenance and operational costs.

5. **Presentation and Discussion on Community Foundation Fund Promotion**
   Keith Christensen from the Community Foundation shared an overview of the Decorah Parks and Recreation funds (Endowment, Quasi-Endowment and Special Project Funds). Shared the role of the Community Foundation as a host foundation for these accounts and the services it provides in this partnership. Talked specifically about the Endow Iowa Tax 25% pre-tax credit for donors to the Endowment fund. Shared about the stewardship of these accounts investing

and growing the funds and investing in the future. Talked about the specific special project funds that Decorah Parks and Recreation has set up. Shared the importance of building the endowment as the 3rd leg in the stool for sustainability and tax efficient giving. Shared about how the Community Foundation team is well versed in retirement giving and options. Stressed the importance of identifying the top 50-100 people to ensure the perpetuity of these funds. Talked about the gambling tax proceeds and how they feed into the Community Foundation to counties with and without gambling. Talked about grants and shared specifically about the grant for Dunning's Spring Stairs. Christensen also referenced the health of our accounts and the minimal "grant requests" through the Quasi for projects. Shared a list of the projects funded since the inception. *Christensen* had time for questions. *Klocke* asked where the funds came from to open the fund, were they from a Memorial Fund. *Holtey* shared he didn't know that specific answer. Christensen shared the date the funds were deposited from the city.

6. **Consider Use of Quasi-Endowment Funds for Rowley Sports Complex (Moved up from Agenda Item #9 through Chair Request and Majority of Board Approving the Change in Agenda Order)**
   Holtey shared a brief introduction to the request from the Rowley Sports Complex Fundraising Team. *Mike Harman (Fundraising Team)* provided more background to the request and referenced the request letter to the Board. *Harman* shared about background with the Trout Run Trail fundraising for context and shared about other fundraising projects he has been involved with, Phelps Park Equipment, Dry Run Plaza and Water Street Park. Tied those examples into the ball diamonds and pickleball courts project and how it has grown in scope. In addition, shared how estimates have been under the reality of the bids. Provided economic impact on building additional fields and the connection to pickleball, along with complex providing important amenities for the trail and dog park. *Fuhrmann* asked for a recap of the progress in the projects and phases. *Holtey* provided a recap and an update. Also shared specifics about estimates vs. bids. A question was raised about the impact of the 4th field and how many teams the facility could host over a weekend. *Holtey* provided information along with a later clarification. *Putnam* made a motion to approve. *Klocke* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0. *Gaard* talked about recognition for the Quasi-Endowment use of the funds. *Bakken* shared about the impact of the Trout Run Trail and referenced how it started small and grew in scope, like this project.

7. **Consider Approval of Phelps Park Holiday Lighting Agreement**
   Holtey provided background on the plan presented and approved at the June 18 Park Board meeting. Shared that this agenda item was about the agreement (MOU) and has gone through the steps with the City Attorney.
   Bakken made a motion to approve. *Klocke* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0. *Klocke* shared that this will be a nice addition to community during the holiday season.

8. **Consider Approval of Plan for (Archery Only) Deer Hunting in Selected City Parks**
   Holtey shared an overview of this program and that deer management was referenced in the Sustainability plan. Also shared that he received input from a survey after last season and suggestions from *Logan Hahn*, Parks staff and outdoorsman. Shared updates in the program last season (i.e., proficiency test for hunters). Shared proposed changes this season. Talked about incentives to reduce the doe population (i.e., earn a buck). Increased signage and mapping in areas selected for hunting. Also talked about field dressing (100 yards from trail) and challenges with deer removal and asked for Board input. *Putnam* shared she would not be

in favor of that as a dog owner and trail user. *Fuhrmann* asked if a summary of the rules (i.e., no trail cameras) could be put on the card issued to hunters. *Holtey* shared that could be done. *Fuhrmann* shared that there is a noticeable amount of trail cameras at Carlson Park. *Putnam* made a motion to approve with the recommended changes (no field dressing and rules on the back of the hunter's card), *Fuhrmann – 2nd*. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0

9. Consider Approval of Additional Naming Rights/Sponsorship Levels at Rowley Sports Complex

Holtey shared the discussion about adjusting the levels for the fields at the last Fundraising Team meeting (Tuesday, August 11) to encourage more field sponsorship and make a distinction between lighted fields and non-lighted fields. Adjusted levels included $150,000/15 years of Naming Rights for Lighted Fields, $125,000/15 Years of Naming Rights for Non-Lighted Fields and $125,000/15 Years of Naming Rights for Concession Building. *Putnam* made a motion to approve. *Klocke* – 2nd. Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.

10. Project Updates

- Rowley Sports Complex
  Holtey shared about the Bid Package 2 Approval and the "bridge" financing approval until pledges are fulfilled.
- Carlson Park Trail Project (1A and 1B)
  Holtey shared about tuning up zones and details including rock placement at trail entrances ("blue" level trails). Wayfinding and signage meeting on-site with RC&D and the contractor. Estimates for Entrance and Parking area (south entrance). Looking at equipment to maintain trails along with setting aside operational costs for 10-15 years. *Holtey* also shared the need to set up a meeting with the Carlson Park Trail Coalition. *Klocke* asked if the trail wayfinding and signage plan would go to the Park Board for review. *Holtey* responded that it was a part of the bid specifications but could share it with the Park Board once established for review.

11. Budget FY'26, Community Foundation and Grant Updates

Holtey provided monthly budget reports, as well as the ending balances for special equipment funds. Also reminded the Board that the city was looking to reduce the number of accounts. *Holtey* also shared that the report was for FY 27 (first month of the fiscal year) not FY'26. *Gaard* asked for grant updates. *Holtey* shared that the fall grant cycle would be starting soon. Shared that they were awarded funding for a Harley Power Rake. *Klocke* asked if that could be used to smooth out areas. *Holtey* shared that is one purpose along with conditioning the soil.

12. Other Business

Next Park Board Meeting - Thursday, September 17.

13. Adjourn

Putnam made a motion to adjourn. *Fuhrmann – 2nd*. *Ayes: 5; Nays: 0.*
Respectfully Submitted,

Marc Holtey, Parks and Recreation Director