

BRAINERD PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT
Special Park Board Meeting
April 22, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.
WebEx Teleconference Meeting
Toll-free 844-992-4726 Access Code – 268 764 710

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, the special meeting of the
Parks and Recreation Board was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Board President Schaefer.

Upon roll call, the following members were noted as present: Boeder, Parks, Rushmeyer, Yeager and Schaefer. Director Sailer, City Administrator Bergman and Mayor Badeaux were also noted as present.

ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

A. Fishing Pier

The Rice Lake fishing pier has been left in place in the winter for the past 12 years or so and was slightly damaged by shifting ice this year. Staff reported it was repaired with a \$53 piece of angle iron. The Boom Lake and Mississippi River piers are not moved for the winter. Ongoing maintenance of the three fishing piers is to be expected. Years back the Rice Lake pier was moved into the bay each winter and was damaged by ice one time there also. The DNR no longer provides a boat to help move the pier, and it takes at least two boats to move it. There is a sandbar that needs to be avoided or the pier can become hung up. A Minnesota DNR representative said most fishing piers throughout the state are left in the water due to the size of the piers and/or lack of a place to put them. Board members discussed options to possibly move the pier into the bay and requested staff to contact the Ski Loons and the DNR for assistance. Liability concerns would need to be explored if personal property is used. Item tabled.

B. Summer Programs

Staff is requesting guidance on summer programming and facility rentals. The director provided detailed information about park facilities and program considerations. By order of the governor, all campgrounds and outdoor public restrooms in the state are closed until further notice and team activities are not permitted. Lum Park Campground and park facilities can be opened quickly if the governor lifts the closures. Team sports provide a bigger challenge to get up and running. It takes time to hire approximately 60 temporary seasonal workers, recruit volunteer coaches, process background checks and schedule games, to list a few. The competitive youth baseball and softball teams need at least a couple of weeks to practice before their seasons begin. The adult teams have all been notified and understand that we must follow what the governor says. The summer intern no longer needs the internship to graduate but is still on board to come and work. His wage will still be paid by SourceWell. The sanctioning body for the baseball tournaments has not decided on anything after May 15. We currently have 54 teams registered for the June tournaments, five of which are Brainerd/Baxter teams.

The Joint Powers Board that oversees Brainerd Community Education met on April 14 and recommended cancelling its summer programs. The ISD 181 School Board voted 3-3 on the recommendation, meaning no action was taken. The Baxter City Council met April 21 and determined it was too early to make a decision regarding its summer programs, though Community Education has suspended registrations at this time.

Mr. Yeager suggested to look at each program and work backwards from the last possible date of the activity. For example, for a program to complete a full season and end on such and such a date, what is the latest date it can start? If that date passes, either offer an abbreviated schedule for the program or cancel it. Program fees could be tiered accordingly. The Board would have to lean on the director and recreation coordinator to come up with dates and put together a plan. Mayor Badeaux suggested offering alternatives such as skills clinics if full or abbreviated seasons are not possible. Mr. Rushmeyer said it would be good to have a specific plan and thought this would be a very good approach. Mr. Parks asked if the director and recreation coordinator would have enough time to put a plan together for discussion at

Tuesday's regular Park Board meeting. Mr. Sailer responded they would have Thursday and Friday, and Saturday/Sunday if necessary. Deadline dates will need to be reconsidered also.

The Chair recognized Ms. Bergman. The City Administrator wanted to share the City Council's recommendation to the Park Board, which is to keep programs open and available as much as possible.

Ms. Schaefer requested to have the activity plan added to Tuesday's agenda and asked about summer staffing. Mr. Sailer reiterated the department is waiting to hire seasonal workers depending on what happens with programming. Maintenance staffing needs could also change depending on what facilities and programs are open. Ms. Schaefer asked what the director and recreation coordinator will be doing if programs are cancelled, and if they would want to go through each park to make evaluations. Mr. Sailer responded there are many projects he and the recreation coordinator would be working on if programs are cancelled. They have been researching national and state recreation associations looking for ideas for doing some virtual programming to get kids outside such as bird-watching and gardening. The recreation coordinator would also have more time to conduct tree inspections throughout the city.

Discussion tabled to next meeting.

C. Community Garden

Staff is recommending the Lakes Area Community Garden remain open for the season. The MRPA has suggested, and staff recommends, having gardeners with even-numbered plots use the garden on even-numbered days, and those with odd-numbered plots use the garden on odd-numbered days. Plots are 5' X 24' with 4' between plots, so social distancing guidelines could be followed. Signage would be placed at the garden with the same COVID-19 information and CDC/MDH guidelines that are posted at other park facilities. It was noted that many gardeners have two plots that are adjacent, which means fewer gardeners accessing the facility. Ms. Schubert added that the garden will not be tilled until mid-May. Department staff processes garden applications and assigns plots. Checks are payable to the Brainerd FFA Alumni, and gardeners are the volunteers that make up the Community Garden Committee. Mr. Parks made a motion to approve opening the Community Garden for the season. Mr. Yeager seconded. Upon roll call, members Boeder, Parks, Rushmeyer, Yeager and Schaefer voted "aye". No member voted "nay". The Chair declared the motion carried.

D. Park Evaluations

A park evaluation form created by board member Yeager was distributed for consideration. Ms. Schaefer indicated previously that perhaps this would be something that the director and recreation coordinator could work on if programs were cancelled for the summer. Mr. Yeager expressed his thoughts that he would like to see each board member do a physical walk-through evaluation at each of the parks to let staff know what they see. Mr. Rushmeyer agreed. Following discussion, it was agreed that Mr. Yeager and the director will propose a schedule of two or more parks each week (depending on the size of the parks), which will take approximately six weeks. Mr. Sailer will distribute the schedule to board members and Mr. Yeager will compile the evaluations. The Chair did not call for a motion.

E. Open Meeting Law

Mr. Sailer reminded board members that if an e-mail is sent out to the Park Board, that members must not "Reply All", as that is a violation of the Open Meeting Law.

PUBLIC FORUM

The chair recognized City Council President Gabe Johnson. Mr. Johnson stated he loved the park evaluation idea. He shared that he has been using the Buffalo Hills Trail and asked if the Board has considered placing any benches along the trail. Mr. Sailer reported that Crow Wing Energized provided grant money last year for three benches and distance markers that will be installed along the trail this spring.

NEXT MEETING

Tuesday, April 28, 2020, at 4:00 p.m. WebEx teleconference meeting information will be posted.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made at 5:25 p.m. by Mr. Boeder and seconded by Mr. Yeager. Upon roll call, members Boeder, Rushmeyer, Parks, Yeager and Schaefer voted "aye". No member voted "nay". The Chair declared the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Kim Finch, Administrative Specialist