

CHISAGO COUNTY PARK BOARD OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, January 16, 2020

At 3:00 pm, Thursday, January 16, 2020, Chairman Storm called the meeting of the Chisago County Park Board of Directors with the following members present: Frank Storm, Dan Kaiser, Gregg Carlson, Jill Sicheneder, and Jolene Wille. Also present: Joe Tart; Park Director, Diane Sander; Support Specialist, Kurt Schneider; Environmental Services Director, County Commissioner Mike Robinson, Jane Wachutka and Linda Heavirland; Parks and Trail Foundation, and Mark Johnson; Wild River Snowmobile Club.

Meeting Summary:

- Unanimously the Board approved Dan Kaiser as Park Board Chair.
- Unanimously the Board approved Jolene Wille as Park Board Vice Chair.
- Unanimously the Board approved the amended agenda.
- Unanimously the Board approved November 21, 2019 meeting minutes.
- Unanimously the Board tabled agreement and Friends Group discussion until Chisago County Parks and Trail Foundation could review and comment on documents.
- Unanimously the Board approved a \$300 Tournament/Large Event User Fee with \$500 refundable damage deposit.
- Unanimously the Board approved the Chisago County Park Reservation Policy with \$10/per person (County Resident) and \$15/per person (Non-County Resident) athletic field user fee.
- Unanimously the Board approved the Field Operations and Standards.
- Unanimously the Board approved the addition of the athletic field reservation request to the County Reservation Online System and website.
- Unanimously the Board approved the Memorandum of Agreement.
- Unanimously the Board approved distributing the letter to affected user groups and posting information on the Park's Department website.
- Unanimously the Board approved the 2020 Park Board meeting schedule, meetings will start at 3:00 pm, and located at the HRA-EDA Office in North Branch.

Meeting was called to order.

Organization of Officers

A call for nominations for the Chair position was announced. Gregg Carlson nominated Dan Kaiser for Chair. Upon multiple calls, there were no other nominations. Second by Dan Kaiser and carried unanimously.

A call for nominations for the Vice Chair position was announced. Gregg Carlson nominated Jolene Wille for Vice Chair. Upon multiple calls, there were no other nominations. Second by Dan Kaiser and carried unanimously.

Meeting was called to order by Chair Dan Kaiser.

Motion by Frank Storm to approve the amended meeting agenda. Guest Speakers: Jane Wachutka and Mark Johnson and MOA – Field Maintenance Agreement User Group were added to the agenda. Second by Jill Sicheneder and carried unanimously.

Motion by Gregg Carlson to approve the November 21, 2019 minutes. Second by Frank Storm and carried unanimously.

Chisago County Parks and Trails Foundation

Jane Wachutka, Chisago County Parks and Trails Foundation (PTF) provided history on the Foundation and vision to augment funds for projects. Jane discussed working with the Park Board on developing Friends Groups for specific parks and specific trail segments. Jane provided details on the Wild River State Park Friends Group. The Wild River Friends Group is collecting funds to build a new amphitheater, sponsor an annual 5K run, and help support Wild River State Park.

Director Tart provided an overview of the Adopt-a-Trail Program. Discussion continued on Friends Groups and utilizing Parks and Trails Commission information to develop our model. It seems the PTF is a broader group that could help raise and distribute funds, Park Board is the governmental unit, and Friends Groups are focused for individual projects. The PTF and Park Board agreed adding Friends Groups would be a benefit and would continue to work on the specifics.

Wild River Snowmobile Club

Mark Johnson, Wild River Snowmobile Club provided club history and background on maintaining 120 miles of snowmobile trails in the county. The county has three snowmobile clubs: Wild River, Sno-Drifters in North Branch, and Rush City Sno Bugs. Mark explained sustaining snowmobile trails are challenging due to: new landowners unfamiliar with the trail system, new uses of land such as solar gardens, or warmer temperatures creating the need for bridges. Discussion was held on the North Shore State Trail that has a snowmobile trail and bike trail that coexist side by side. Mark indicated Wild River would be open to working with the county as hiking trails or even highway projects expand to allow for a multiple use trail like the North Shore State Trail. Commissioner Mike Robinson reported he has received a lot of calls this winter due to snowmobilers not staying on the trail and riding on private property.

Hunting Update

Director Tart reported six hunters had registered to hunt in the North Sunrise Park Reserve. Signs have been developed and will be posted for the 2020 hunting season to help with enforcement of nonregistered Park Reserve hunters.

Memorandum of Agreement

Director Tart reviewed the draft agreement between Parks Department and PTF. The agreement defines responsibilities for each group. The County Attorney has reviewed the agreement. Jane Wachutka requested an electronic copy of the agreement and Adopt-a-Trail information. Jane will forward the information to additional PTF members to collect their comments. **Motion by** Frank Storm to table the agreement between Chisago County Parks Department and Chisago County Parks and Trails Foundation, to allow PTF members time for review and provide comments. Second by Dan Kaiser. Motion carried unanimously.

Grant Updates

Director Tart provided an update on the SIRT bids. Peterson Companies won the bid and County Board approved the bid on December 18, 2019. A preconstruction meeting will be held to introduce the contractor to project members, discuss the bridge, and review tree removal. The Board reviewed the trail alignment map within Interstate Park and Taylors Falls. A drawing of the Taylors Falls Trailhead was reviewed which displayed: informational kiosk, bike repair station, parking, benches, drinking fountain, and portable restrooms. City of Taylors Falls will provide maintenance and utilities. An agreement has been approved and signed between the Chisago County Parks Department and City of Taylors Falls for the project. One challenge to the project will be the trap rock and removal to maintain grade.

Director Tart reported the State Auditor reviewed the project file. The review went well with no additional requests for documentation. Director Tart reviewed the greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission Grant Funding. Slides identified funding levels throughout the state and specifically in District 4, which includes Chisago County. The SPRT and SIRT applications did not get funded. Recommendations to improve future ranking scores on applications included: obtaining regional park status, identify future trailhead locations, and increasing funding match.

Ki-Chi-Saga Park

Director Tart reviewed surrounding shelter/pavilion rental rates. Chisago County shelter rates are within the same price range. Director Tart introduced User Fees and the usage for the fees. User fees can help expand park goals, provide facilities upgrade and maintenance, and increase funding to improve attendance, safety, and overall visitor experience. Director Tart provided greater detail for facility upgrades, maintenance, user attendance, and park goals. An overview of organizations impacted by user fees, user fee amounts from surrounding communities was reviewed and discussed. Board members discussed field usage at Ki-Chi-Saga and the goal to enhance park amenities. **Motion by** Jolene Wille to approve a \$300 Tournament/Large Event User Fee. Second by Frank Storm. **Motion to amend by** Jolene Wille to approve a \$300 Tournament/Large Event User Fee with a \$500 refundable damage deposit. Second by Frank Storm. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Tart indicated that all documents have been reviewed by the County Attorney. County Attorney made some suggestions that have been incorporated into the documents. The Reservation Policy document was reviewed that included completing an annual application for athletic field use and user fee per person. Minor grammatical changes were suggested. **Motion by** Frank Storm to approve the Chisago County Park Reservation Policy with \$10/per person (County Resident) and \$15/per person (Non-County Resident) athletic field user fee. Second by Jolene Wille. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Tart reviewed the Field Operations and Standards document. The document outlines expectations and responsibilities for the County Park Department and User Group for general field use and tournament use. **Motion by** Frank Storm to approve the Field Operations and Standards. Second by Jolene Wille. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Tart reviewed the online reservation request for shelters and indicated this could be done for athletic field use. The County's website provides a calendar indicating when a shelter has been reserved. It appears the reservation system could do the same for athletic field rental at Ki-Chi-Saga. **Motion by** Frank Storm to the addition of the athletic field reservation request to the County Online Reservation System and website. Second by Jolene Wille. Motion carried unanimously.

Director Tart reviewed a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with User Groups and draft letter to be distributed to local organizations using Chisago County Parks. The MOA outlined terms of agreement, responsibilities for both User Group and Parks Department for the entire season, and point of contact for User Group with contact information. Dan Kaiser recommended adding the softball fields need to be dragged following each use. Discussion continued on field maintenance and safety. Board members inquired if LARA had provided a site plan and detailed building plan information for the covered dugouts and storage shed. Director Tart indicated LARA has not provided that information for the Park Board to review and act on. **Motion by** Gregg Carlson to approve the Memorandum of Agreement. Second by Frank Storm. Motion carried unanimously. Board discussed the draft letter that will be distributed to affected user groups. Board concluded it was important to provide the information for impacted user groups and the general public. It is important to gather feedback for County Board review. **Motion by** Dan Kaiser to distribute the letter to impacted user groups and posting the information on the Park's Department website. Second by Frank Storm. Motion carried unanimously.

Organizational Discussion

Director Tart reviewed the 2020 Park Board meeting schedule. **Motion by** Dan Kaiser to approve the 2020 Park Board meeting schedule with a start time of 3:00 pm at the HRA-EDA Office in North Branch. Second by Gregg Carson. Motion carried unanimously.

Staff Report

Parks and Trail Maintenance – Trailheads and portion of the parking lots have been plowed. Director Tart reviewed the Snowmobile Trail & Winter Maintenance Policy. Board discussed the damage studded snowmobile tracks have on the trail crossover. Enhanced signage has been placed along the trail corridor reminding riders that no studded tracks are allowed. The new playground set has been ordered for Checkerboard Park. The set will be in earth tone colors and include: two decks, one climber, and three slides designed for 2-5 year old age group. Dependent on funds, additional spring rockers will be installed near playground set. The maintenance shop has been reorganized, additional attic insulation has been installed, new security system has been installed, and staff is in the process of completing Safety Data Sheets (STS) forms. Minor body repair has been completed on the truck with replacement of transmission lines. Plows have been inspected and spots have been repaired, repainted along with replacement of hydraulic lines.

Adjourn – Motion by Jolene Wille to adjourn the meeting. Second by Gregg Carlson and carried unanimously.