

AUSTIN PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY BOARD MEETING  
May 4, 2022  
J.C. HORMEL NATURE CENTER  
5:15 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Nik Johnsen – Vice Chair, Chris Grev, Justin Hanson, CeCe Kroc, DeeDee Marx, and Rebecca Waller

MEMBERS ABSENT: Helen Jahr – Chairperson

OTHERS PRESENT: Randy Hofner, Luke Reese, Riley Donovan, Patti Hamilton, Tricia Branden, and Trish Wiechmann

Moved by Ms. Grev, seconded by Ms. Waller to approve the May agenda. Carried.

Moved by Ms. Marx, seconded by Ms. Grev to approve the April minutes. Carried.

Moved by Ms. Waller, seconded by Ms. Grev to approve the April bills. Carried.

Remote introductions were had with Mr. Dave Merrill, the new Parks, Recreation and Forestry Dept. Director. He stayed online for the remainder of the meeting as well.

A Thank You from the Hormel Institute for the Paint the Town Pink events was shared.

The 2021 Annual Report was reviewed and many comments were made about the information provided and the great job Tricia Branden did in gathering and putting it together.

An update on the gravel bed nursery at the Fairgrounds was given and besides a late start and muddy it will be very nice when done and The Hormel Institute gets their 80 anniversary trees put in.

The alcohol policy at the Arenas is still a work in progress however the Nature Center prefers to ask for Council permissions for special events.

The JCHNC outreach naturalist position is progressing after a meeting between Luke Reese, Craig Clark and Trish Wiechmann to potentially align this position with a naturalist as of 7/1/22 but they will have a meeting with AEA group yet and potentially a MOU regarding funding, seniority etc. stating details.

Board Reports:

Ms. Grev stated soccer has started, Mr. Hansen inquired about the playground equipment at Wildwood and asked to meet with Randy Hofner about locations and options, Ms. Kroc stated the school district has done lots of hiring, the dome is still up but not usable and Mr. Johnsen said the disc club was awarded a \$500 grant.

Staff:

Mr. Reese stated we are “into it” meaning things have geared up and busy with schools coming out for classes, trees and burning some prairies. He also spent a couple days at Ellis and did interviews for the Mentorship Program and had 29 kids participate. He attended a Sons of Norway meeting recently also and they shared interest in kick sleds and possibly fundraising for some of them for use in the department more than at the Nature Center, and a funding reimbursement for the LCCMR naturalists’ position has been submitted and they indicated it was presented very well and understandable. It was mentioned the social media team at the NC is doing a great job and Luke said COVID has changed the way they present things – which is better. Also discussed was the avian flu and he is certain we have seen it and precautions are in place to not infect ours.

Mr. Donovan shared the arena is winding down but has been good, adult leagues start this week, youth teams want fields and estimated half the online registrations options are already full. He is training the closers and concession workers at the diamonds and getting them ready as there is an All Star tourney this weekend.

Mr. Hofner said we are now having a rough spring with weather but the grass is still staying low, all fields are up & ready and they’ve mowed a couple, outdoor rinks will be out longer as it’s too wet to get in and remove

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them and the tree guys have been trying to catch back up but have been helping with fields and spring readiness. Seasonal help will be starting soon.

Moved by Ms. Marx, seconded by Ms. Waller to adjourn the meeting until June 1st, 2022 at 5:15 PM at the Nature Center. Carried.

Adjourned: 6:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Patti Hamilton