

AUSTIN PARKS, RECREATION, AND FORESTRY BOARD MEETING
JUNE 1, 2022
JAY C. HORMEL NATURE CENTER
5:15 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Helen Jahr-Chairperson, Rebecca Waller, DeeDee Marx, and Chris Grev

MEMBERS ABSENT: Nik Johnsen, Cece Kroc, and Justin Hanson

OTHERS PRESENT: Dave Merrill, Randy Hofner, Luke Reese, Riley Donovan, Gretchen Ramlo, Kim Underwood, Craig Clark, Trish Wiechmann and Tricia Branden

Moved by Ms. Marx seconded by Ms. Grev to approve the June agenda with additions. Carried.

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

Moved by Ms. Marx, seconded by Ms. Grev to approve the May bills. Carried.

Moved by Ms. Waller, seconded by Ms. Grev to accept the donation of a new 84” ski trail groomer from the Eagles Club and Friends of the Nature Center. Carried.

Gretchen Ramlo and Kim Underwood were present to give an update on the Lydia Lien Trust. Many projects have been completed already – including new signs around Mill Pond, the musical instruments on the trail between the pool and library and the statues at the end of Main Street. There is \$100,000 remaining in that fund to be used on more beautification projects in and around Bandshell Community Park and Mill Pond.

Moved by Ms. Grev, seconded by Ms. Waller to participate in the LMCIT exercises with Mr. Clark, the Parks and Library Boards. Carried.

Mr. Clark said he had been in touch with Chris from MSA on the Master Plan project. The survey is out on their website however the Board didn’t have a chance to review the changes they made and never received a link to it.

Moved by Ms. Grev, seconded by Ms. Waller reinstate a designated tree crew. Carried.

Discussion was held on “No Mow May.” The issue will be brought back in the fall for further discussion on options to promote ways to help the pollinators yet still mow the grass.

The presence of the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) has been confirmed in Austin. The MN Department of Ag was in town and met with Mr. Hofner. They provided us with information to share with the public; we’ll start with general articles to the newspaper and radio and later follow up with social media posts.

Mr. Reese shared the Austin Employees Association (AEA) will vote on a Memorandum of Understanding tomorrow (June 29, 2022) regarding the grant funded naturalist position becoming a part of that bargaining unit.

Moved by Ms. Waller, seconded by Ms. Grev to close the meeting at 6:15 PM. Carried.

Moved by Ms. Waller, seconded by Ms. Grev to reopen the meeting at 7:23 PM. Carried.

Mr. Donovan said he is busy training new staff and all programs start Monday.

Mr. Hofner said that we are behind on mowing in the parks, and we have lost a couple of our seasonal employees. We picked up 75 trees – very large trees so will be busy getting those in the ground in both the parks and boulevards.

Mr. Reese agreed that May was very busy, the gravel bed at the Fairgrounds is in, and he was able to go to Myre Big Island State Park to a media event with the track chairs to promote them in hopes of getting more use out of them at the Nature Center.

Ms. Grev shared there are 14 youth soccer teams with 215 players, the most they have ever had!

Mr. Merrill said he has met with nearly everyone in the department and seen most of the facilities. He got a letter from a concerned neighbor boy who uses Northwest Park and would like to see more swings for older kids. Mr. Merrill plans to meet up with this boy and his parents to address his concerns.

Moved by Ms. Marx, seconded by Ms. Waller to adjourn the meeting to July 6th at 5:15 PM at the Jay C. Hormel Nature Center. Carried.

Adjourned: 7:31 PM
Respectfully submitted,
Tricia Branden