

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD***Wednesday, September 2, 2020 – 5:00 p.m.*

WebEx Meeting

**MINUTES**

**PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Shannon Crouthers, Chair; Rick Eriksen, Bobbie McClure, Marty Tessmer, Danielle Lammon, Nick Kinney, Steve Sundberg, Angela Zbikowski

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Mike Ely

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Joe Sack, Manager of Recreation; Pat Schuler, Manager of Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR); Joy Thompson, Lead Naturalist, OSNR; Brian Green, OSNR Superintendent; and Suzie Jaquith, Recording Secretary.

**OTHERS ABSENT:** None.

- I. CALL TO ORDER:** By Parks & Recreation Board Chair, Shannon Crouthers at 5:00p.m.
- II. INTRODUCTIONS:** None
- III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** The Agenda for the September 2, 2020 meeting was approved after a motion was made by Member Eriksen and seconded by Member Kinney.
- IV. ADOPTION OF PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES -** The Minutes for the August 5, 2020 meeting were approved after a motion was made by Member McClure and seconded by Member Sundberg.
- V. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS/REMINDERS**
  - A. Greeting and PROS Update – Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space reported a virtual meeting was held to discuss the Hoffman Park renovation project. Another meeting with neighborhood residents is planned in 4-6 weeks to share concepts based on input from first meeting. Tollgate Crossing Park is under construction and will be finished in late September – early October. This park will feature adult focused activities including tennis courts, and sloped exercise trails to name a few. Parklane pool renovation project will go out to bid this month and is scheduled for construction in winter of 2020. The pool which opened in the 1960's, will include a new pool house, and a splash pad feature. The bid for the street medians improvements went out today (Sept. 2nd). Almost \$3 million is budgeted for projects from 2019, 2020 and 2021. City council approves two to three miles of medians for improvement. The projects span the city's six wards. Southeast Recreation Center is scheduled to go out for bond financing this month. Parks, Planning, Design and Construction will work jointly with the Public Works Department, who will manage the construction of the project. Del Mar and Meadow Hills pools are closed during the week but will be open on weekends through Labor Day and then close for the season. Pools are open to lap swimming at Moorhead pool and Central Recreation Center pool. Staff is preparing plans to re-open some

**NOTE:** By simple majority vote, Board may re-establish Agenda order. Quorum is reached with five members.



additional open swim areas at the indoor facilities as well as the re-opening Beck and Utah pools. The high participation at golf courses remains strong. To date, the Golf Division has almost recovered the \$1.5 million revenue lost from being closed for 7 weeks due to the pandemic. The Parks Operations & Maintenance Division has had many challenges maintaining irrigated turf in the parks with the high temperatures this summer. Most special events have been cancelled for the rest of the season due to the pandemic, however, staff is working on re-imagining what some new events could look like and scheduling those throughout the remainder of the year. Events will be smaller but still serve the community. Outdoor gatherings are still limited to no more the 250 people. Recreation staff is working with CHSAA to host some smaller sports tournaments at Aurora Sports Park. The City Manager's Proposed 2020-21 Budget has been delivered to city council. A budget presentation will take place at a city council special study session on September 8, 2020. Member McClure expressed she would like to be included in the next virtual meeting for Hoffman Park Renovations. Director Bell responded she will ask Tracy Young, Manager of Parks, Planning, Design and Construction to reach out to her.

- B. Open Space and Natural Resources Update – Pat Schuler, Manager of Open Space and Natural Resources (OSNR) gave an overview of the OSNR division. The OSNR maintenance work group maintains and manages open space, trails, reservoirs, a rodeo arena, nature centers, and all buildings at the Plains Conservation Center. They also manage projects related to special open space sites. The Naturalists team provides education and outreach programs to the community. The Ranger team provides patrols, outreach, and stewardship education at the reservoirs, open space sites and trails.

Brian Green, OSNR Superintendent gave a slideshow presentation on Confluence Open Space Restoration Project and operations of the Aurora Reservoir.

**Confluence Open Space Restoration Project:** This 60-acre property, located at the confluence of Coal Creek and Murphy Creek, just north of Buckley Airforce Base, immediately east of Coal Creek Arena, has been a sand and gravel mine since about 1979. City acquired the property using mostly grant funding. Staff are preparing a reclamation plan to restore this property into a natural open space. The goal is to naturalize the site for the benefit of wildlife which is quite diverse. An underwater survey was done to determine the depth of the ponds. Areas of the property will be graded, softened and re-seeding with natural vegetation. Staff is working with an engineering contractor and landscape architect consultants to develop the property into a pristine, open space natural area. Construction is scheduled to start July 2021. Member Eriksen asked for the conceptual drawing to be share with board members. Suzie Jaquith will email the presentation to all members.

**Aurora Reservoir:** The reservoir is well known for being a great place for paddlers such as kayakers, canoers, and paddle boarders as gas motored boats are not permitted. There is a large boat beach and a swim beach with a designated swim area. Parking lots can accommodate up to 750 automobiles. Staff had to find creative ways to social distance during the pandemic such as positioning cones on the beach to direct patrons and reducing the number of vehicles allowed into the park by 50%.



There are six walk-in access points into the reservoir. In 2020, walk-ins have increased by 95% compared to last year. Overall, visitation to the park through July increased 28% compared to last year. Entry fees were stopped in April and May during the pandemic which reduced revenue. In June, after being approved to open again at half capacity and again charging entry fees, the reservoir started to recover some of the revenue lost.

Joy Thompson, Lead Natural Resources Specialist, gave a slideshow presentation on the Naturalist Program. The Naturalists provide outreach and educate the community on Aurora's natural resources. There are three nature centers: Morrison Nature Center at Star K Ranch, Plains Conservation Center, and Senac Creek Nature Center at Aurora Reservoir. Generation Wild Programming is a Great Outdoors of Colorado (Goco) grant funded program aimed to get underserved audiences out into nature and open space. Goco conducted a survey and found the biggest reason people were not taking advantage of the programs was because they were not aware of the opportunities offered in their cities. Naturalists help empower citizens through this program by getting them into nature and open spaces within their community and in doing so, inspiring future stewardship interests. The Naturalist Team is part of the Generation Wild Northeast Metro Coalition which works with many different organizations that are also members. Outreach involves distributing flyers to audiences to garner interest. Some outdoor experiences offered include kayaking, stand-up paddle boarding, hiking, biking, nature watching, archery, fishing, and camping. Staff continues to develop different ways to reach out to the community during the pandemic such as the Family Nature Club which gives ideas of ways for families to experience nature and open space together. They also engaged in some virtual programming with the COMPASS program ran through the Recreation division which included a virtual tour of the open space sites in Aurora. In-Person Programming has resumed, following social distancing requirements. So far this year, the Naturalists Team has had 2,475 connections with the community. Member Tessmer would like to see participants receive certificates for participating in these programs. Staff is open to the idea and will follow up.

## VI. BOARD MEMBERS REMARKS

### A. Comments from Board Members

- Member Eriksen commented that Hampden Run park has no restrooms and asked if there are plans to supply them? Director Bell responded saying restrooms are a challenge to keep clean due to staffing shortage and financially, it is not feasible to have them at all parks. She will follow up with PROS staff to get their thoughts. Follow up: A permanent restroom will not fit on site and the cost was prohibitive for a neighborhood park renovation budget.
- Member Lammon noticed the women's restroom was locked at Red-tailed Hawk park. Director Bell will follow up with staff. She also commented she would like to have a PROS Budget presentation given at one of the board meetings. Director Bell responded a presentation usually follows city council approval of



the Budget in November/December and she will share that information at that time.

- Member Crouthers commented she golfed Saddle Rock golf course with her husband who almost had a hole-in-one. She reported all the golf courses are in great shape. She commented the grass at the Aurora Sports Park looked immaculate and thanked staff for their efforts to keep parks, open space and golf courses looking nice.
- Member Kinney asked about volunteer opportunities within the city. Joy Thompson responded that has an OSNR steward program. She referred him to Aurora’s website.
- Member McClure thanked a parks staff member, Enrique, for replacing irrigation heads at a park, saying he was very helpful and pleasant. She asked if shade was going to be a consideration for the renovation of the playground at Hoffman Park. She recommended placing sitting benches and trees around the perimeter of the playground. Director Bell will pass along comments and recommendations to staff.

**VII. FUTURE MEETINGS**

A. Wednesday, October 7, 2020, WebEx Meeting, Meet A PROS - TBD

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT** – Member Lammon made a motion to adjourn and Member Eriksen seconded. The motion passed at 6:32 p.m.

**Shannon E. Crouthers**

Shannon Crouthers, Chair;  
Parks & Recreation Board

*Suzie Jaquith*

Suzie Jaquith, Recording Secretary

ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** *Shannon E. Crouthers*  
Shannon E. Crouthers (Oct 8, 2020 08:26 MDT)

**Email:** shancrouthers@gmail.com

# PRAB September 2 Minutes\_draft\_sj bsb edits

Final Audit Report

2020-10-08

Created:	2020-10-08
By:	Suzie Gilroy Jaquith (sjaquith@auroragov.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAfZxeHpCfzGbl3IMs-2Rd1VS34Aybrnf3

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2020-10-08 - 2:10:26 PM GMT- IP address: 50.237.6.50
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2020-10-08 - 2:11:07 PM GMT
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2020-10-08 - 2:25:29 PM GMT- IP address: 73.3.169.157
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