



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, January 6, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.

WebEx Meeting

MINUTES

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Rick Eriksen, Marty Tessmer, Danielle Lammon, Nick Kinney, Angela Zbikowski, Mike Ely, Bobbie McClure, Vice-Chair, Steve Sundberg

MEMBERS ABSENT: Shannon Crouthers, Chair

OTHERS PRESENT: Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Joe Sack, Manager of Recreation; Joy Thompson, Natural Resources Supervisor, and Suzie Jaquith, Recording Secretary.

OTHERS ABSENT: None.

I. CALL TO ORDER: By Parks & Recreation Board Vice-Chair McClure at 5:01 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS: None

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: The Agenda for the January 6, 2021 meeting was approved after a motion was made by Member Eriksen and seconded by Member Zbikowski.

IV. ADOPTION OF PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES – Member Tessmer requested to amend the November 4, 2020 meeting minutes to include that he had requested a list of upcoming projects for the year to be provided to the committee. The amended Minutes were approved after a motion was made by Member Eriksen and seconded by Member Ely.

V. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS/REMINDERS

- A. Greeting and PROS Update – Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department, reported on the 2020 accomplishments of each division. She is proud to report staff did an amazing job maneuvering through the many challenges during the pandemic. Staff provided many memorable experiences and opportunities for the community through recreation centers, reservoirs, open space, golf courses and pools. Staff coordinated with Aurora Public Schools to provide learning centers for students. The reservoirs experienced record attendance. Financially, the Golf Division and Recreation Division funds performed better than expected. Golf was able to recover all revenues lost during the five weeks the courses were closed, ending the year better than what was budgeted with an expected two million dollars fund balance. Recreation worked hard to manage their finances by saving money on supplies, services, and reducing the number of seasonal staff. This will result in the fund ending the year in a strong positive position that will help navigate them through the first half of 2021. Parks Planning, Design and Construction Division and Open Space and Natural Resources Division brought in \$2.5 million dollars in grants which were associated with Parklane Pool renovations, Sand Creek Park large picnic shelter, and Plains Conservation Center. Special Events and Marketing Division found

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



unique ways to still provide fun activities for families while following social distancing restrictions from Tri-County Health and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). Some events included Movies in the Parks, pop-up pumpkin patches at Red-Tailed Hawk and Moorhead Parks, and Boos Cruise at Aurora Sports Park. Member Sundberg asked how raising the minimum wage will impact the PROS Department. Brooke responded over the last 3 years contingent staff have been paid 50 cents an hour over minimum wage. This year, seasonal recreation positions are paid at minimum wage, and wage increases present challenges when balancing revenues against expenses during the COVID pandemic.

- B. Meet a PROS – Joy Thompson, Natural Resources Supervisor, gave a presentation titled, Naturalist Team 101. The Mission Statement for the Naturalist Team is to inspire lifelong connections to Aurora’s natural resources through excellent communication, interpretation and education. The team consists of four full-time staff and some seasonal and part-time staff. There are three types of areas that are programmed – schools (students), public (families), and events (educational booths). There are three Nature Centers – Morrison Nature Center at Star K Ranch, Senac Creek Nature Center at Aurora Reservoir, and Plains Conservation Center. Some general topics taught in programming include wildlife, birds, reptiles/amphibians, plant life, water quality, outdoor wilderness survival, astronomy and outdoor recreation and cultural history. The Naturalist Program made 49,001 connections in 2019 and 15,160 in 2020. Generation Wild program serves underserved children and their families to get them out into nature. 10,000 people were reached in 2020 and 3,000 in 2020. Numbers were down in 2020 due to the pandemic however, virtual programming proved very successful in reaching the community. Program highlights included receiving SCFD grant for \$53,000 for 2021, Generation Wild programming funded through 2023, partnership with Denver Botanic Gardens at Plains Conservation Center, new virtual school and public programming, Weed Warrior volunteer project, and new visitor center exhibits at Plains Conservation Center.
- C. NRPA Membership – Joe Sack, Manager of Recreation reported all members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board automatically become members of the NRPA (National Recreations and Park Association) and one of the benefits of being a member is a subscription to NRPA’s, Parks and Recreation Magazine. The magazine is mailed monthly to their place of residence or there is an electronic version available online at nrpa.org.

VI. BOARD MEMBERS REMARKS

- A. Comments from Board Members
- Member McClure asked Director Bell for an update on the homeless in parks and open space. Director Bell responded rangers and park maintenance staff regularly visit parks, open space and trails and they are aware of any issues. There is a city policy regarding how homeless encampments are to be handled and it involves several different city departments. To move an encampment there must be a risk of fire, a documented increase in crime or significant damage to property. All are taken into consideration in the decision-making process. The



city also provides outreach programs to the homeless with information on different resources to assist them.

- Member McClure reported a grant from the USA Soccer Foundation was given to the city to convert the tennis courts at Hoffman park in to a mini-pitch court. Manager Sack added the mini-pitch court was installed last year and an official kickoff is planned, hopefully, in the early spring.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Wednesday, February 3, 2021 – Virtual meeting - Webex

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Member Lammon made a motion to adjourn and Member Ely seconded. The motion passed at 6:12 p.m.

Shannon E. Crouthers

Shannon E. Crouthers (Feb 9, 2021 14:35 MST)

Shannon Crouthers, Chair;
Parks & Recreation Board

Suzie Jaquith

Suzie Jaquith, Recording Secretary

ADOPTED _____

PRAB January 6 2021 Minutes_Final

Final Audit Report

2021-02-09

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By:	Suzie Gilroy Jaquith (sjaquith@auroragov.org)
Status:	Signed
Transaction ID:	CBJCHBCAABAAugjjEyaAX9FDiMYvtrVbOZ49qwBVaTFo

"PRAB January 6 2021 Minutes_Final" History

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2021-02-09 - 8:59:30 PM GMT- IP address: 50.237.6.50
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2021-02-09 - 9:00:28 PM GMT
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2021-02-09 - 9:35:01 PM GMT- IP address: 75.71.100.10
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