



PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, April 7, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.

WebEx Meeting

MINUTES

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Shannon Crouthers, Chair, Rick Eriksen, Marty Tessmer, Danielle Lammon, Nick Kinney, Mike Ely, Steve Sundberg, Angela Zbikowski

MEMBERS ABSENT: Bobbie McClure

OTHERS PRESENT: Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Joe Sack, Manager of Recreation Services, Derrick Tripp, Recreation Superintendent; John Wesolowski, Manager of Parks and Forestry, and Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary

OTHERS ABSENT: Nancy Freed, Deputy City Manager

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

II. INTRODUCTIONS: None

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: The Agenda for the April 7, 2021 meeting was approved after a motion was made by Member Eriksen and seconded by Member Tessmer.

IV. ADOPTION OF PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES –
The March 3, 2021 meeting Minutes were approved after a motion was made by Member Eriksen and seconded by Member Kinney.

V. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS/REMINDERS

- A. Aquatics and Sports – Derrick Tripp, Recreation Superintendent, gave an overview of the Aquatics and Sports programs. Back in March of 2020 when the pandemic began, many of the Aquatic and Sports staff were reassigned temporarily to assist other PROS Divisions as well as other city departments where they received much praise from city staff and citizens for their contributions. Staff worked in Access Aurora; assisted with the Parks Infrastructure Survey, Aurora Sports Park Improvements Project, “In and Out” Project for Aurora Water and the City Pool Improvements Project, to name a few.

Sports Program - One of the challenges staff faced during the pandemic was communicating with participants and sponsors due to the unknowns of the frequently changing restrictions and closures. Staff were very careful in preparing responses to ensure the messaging was accurate and clear. Staff had to closely follow the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) guidelines for Return to Play as well as Tri-County Health guidelines. Staff attended weekly webinars hosted by Tri-County Health to stay current on the latest guidelines to follow. In addition, staff was in close communication with the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) and the Colorado Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) on a weekly basis to help ensure best practices were used. Sports protocols

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and safety procedures were put in place very early on and staff continued to update them throughout the pandemic. Symptom screenings were in place for user groups prior to practices and games. The Mask Mandate was implemented for staff, participants, and spectators. Social distancing of 6 ft. was also implemented. Some programs and activities that were able to be held in 2020 were a “Sandlot” Youth/Adult Sports, Independent Youth Sports Organizations (IYSO’s) practices, and CHSAA Girls State Softball Tournament. In 2021, there is the return of more traditional programming and events such as tennis, track, pickleball, soccer, gymnastics, summer camps, eSports and hosting the national girls softball tournament. 2022 and beyond, staff will be evaluating and being creative by looking at new trends moving forward by asking for feedback from the community as well as reaching outside the state. In the future, staff is looking forward to the opening of the Southeast Recreation Center indoor field house, Mission Control online platform for eSports programming and eventually a hub with the ability to have in person sports leagues, matches and tournaments for adult and youth at recreation centers. The Denver Bid Committed for FIFA World Cup in 2026 reached out to PROS to include Aurora Sports Park as a potential training location. Staff submitted Aurora Sports Park information to the Denver Bid Committee recently. The Hoffman Mini Pitch at Hoffman Park will be programmed soon.

Aquatics – In 2020, after being closed due to the pandemic, indoor pools were re-opened in June and three weeks later, two of the outdoor pools, Meadow Hills and Del Mar were opened all using an online reservation system with capacity limits and time slots in place. Aqua Fit Classes also resumed in September. The reservation process has been a huge success with nearly 100% booking capacity. As with the Sports Program, safety protocols were in place by following CDPHE and Tri-County guidelines. Programs for 2021 include CARA Swim, Learn to Swim classes, Water Safety classes, Lifeguard Certification, Aquatics Camps and Aqua Fit Classes. 2022 and beyond, staff will continue to evaluate and expand programs by engaging with the community and following trends for new programming. A board member asked if staff anticipates any new sports programming in 2022. Derek responded there have been discussions with the Ultimate Frisbee; working with eSports; and exploring what is new in the aquatic’s world. Staff is excited for the upcoming grand opening of the newly renovated Parklane outdoor pool.

Director Bell expressed how proud she is of Recreation staff and how successful they were to redeploy to other city departments and different divisions within PROS. She was especially proud of the fact that there were no layoffs because the organization was able to find work that needed to be done.

- B. Forestry Division – John Wesolowski, Manager of Parks and Forestry, gave an over of the Forestry Division. Where are city trees located? In front of single-family homes, parks, and around city facilities, open spaces and golf courses.

Grid Pruning Program - The City Tree Grid Pruning Program was started in 2010. John shared a map that was broken down into wards. Pruning of city trees have taken place in 34 areas since 2010. There are 4 areas currently being pruned and 7 areas schedule for future pruning. John explained the program is one of the success stories



for the Forestry Division. Years ago, there was a huge backlog of pruning work that needed done with at least 1,000 work orders open at any one time. By switching to a grid pruning model that is a much more efficient system it has resulted in the reduction of travel time, set up time and saves on fuel. Currently, there are approximately 250 open work orders and the response time averages only 3 to 4 months. Pruning is performed by both city Forestry staff and contracted companies. Where are we going? The goal is to be able to inspect every city tree within a 2 year frequency; use inventory to target areas with the largest population of dangerous trees for the grid maintenance program; and proactively make work orders for all other high risk trees as found through inventory.

Memorial Tree Program – this program is available to citizens who wish to honor a loved one by having a tree planted. The application can be found by visiting the city of Aurora Forestry’s website, www.auroragov.org/trees . The cost for a 2-inch diameter tree is \$260 with a choice of either a shade tree or a 6 ft. Evergreen tree. PROS staff work with the requesting families to find a correct location within the park system and Forestry staff plant and maintain the memorial trees.

Park Tree Planting – John shared an aerial photo of Mission Viejo Park noting where 63 trees were planted by staff and volunteers on an Arbor Day Tree Planting Event. He explained tree plantings in parks are limited because they need to have a good source of water to keep them alive and overspray from an irrigation system is not enough to sustain them. There are not enough seasonal staff available to keep up with the watering of trees. Future plantings include 10 trees at Triangle Park, and 33 trees at the Aurora Municipal Center Campus. At the RTD Iliff Garage Plaza, there are some trees that are scheduled to be replaced. A Board Member asked what tree species are recommended to plant. John replied there is a listing of recommended tree species on the Forestry website, but some his favorites are the Sunset Maple, the Norwegian Sunset Maple and the Alley Elm as well as Oaks. He also commented Honey Locusts are overplanted in city of Aurora.

- C. PROS Update – Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department reported on upcoming events. The Blooms of Fun is a popup event that will be the first event of the special event season. It will take place on April 22nd at Anchor Point Park and April 29th at Village East Park. Staff will be handing out pre-packaged craft kits to youth that contain gardening supplies such as a pot and flower seeds. In October there will be a pop-up pumpkin patch event. Member Tessmer asked what is being done at Utah Park with regards to crime activity. Director Bell responded the crime data over the last 6 months from the Aurora Police Department does not support any changes being implemented at Utah Park with regards to closing the parking gates. She has asked staff to look at improving lighting around restrooms and the picnic shelter area while still being cognizant of the homeowners that surround the park.



VI. BOARD MEMBERS REMARKS


A. Comments from Board Members

- Member Ely expressed his appreciation for the email that was sent to board members describing the Aurora Waters project near Grandview Dog Park.
- Member Crouthers shared she received a comment from a neighbor that the tennis courts at Aqua Vista Park were being used by patrons for inline skating and she also noticed the gates were unlocked. Director Bell responded she will pass along information to staff. Manager Sack followed up that Recreation staff made a conscious decision to keep tennis courts unlocked to give Aurora residents more access. Joe will make sure there is signage prohibiting wheel activities like skating on the courts.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Wednesday, May 5, 2021 – Virtual meeting – Webex

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Member Tessmer made a motion to adjourn and Member Crouthers seconded. The motion passed at 6:14 p.m.


Shannon Crouthers (May 20, 2021 11:29 MDT)
Shannon Crouthers, Chair;
Parks & Recreation Board


Suzie Jaquith, Recording Secretary

ADOPTED _____

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Final Audit Report

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