Parks and Recreation Commission Minutes--March 14, 2019

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

Those present:

- Andy Cison, Chairperson
- Cindy Domeier
- Chelsie Bowker
- Charlene Whitbred-Hemmingson

Also present:

- Bruce Zenner, Council Liaison
- Tony Flandrich, Public Works Representative

Those absent:

- Sharon Ornquist, Secretary
- Micah Bender

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES:

Motion by Domeier, second by Whitbred-Hemmingson to approve the February 14, 2019 minutes. Motion carried 4-0.

PARKS UPDATE:

Tony Flandrich, the Public Works Representative, updated the Commission multiple items:

A. Restoration at Riverside

The Friends of the Mississippi has organized an event to help remove some of the invasive species from the park. The organization is looking for volunteers to help with the project on Thursday, May 9 from 6-8 p.m.

Since this is the night of a regularly scheduled Commission meeting, the Commission discussed having a quick meeting immediately prior to assisting with the efforts on May 9. The Commission will also post this event on Facebook to assist with recruiting volunteers.

B. Heritage Park Playground

The playground will be replaced this spring and early summer. Most of the work needed to complete the project has been contracted out; however, public works will assist when possible. A new drinking fountain with bottle filler, new lighting on the building, and new sidewalks to the playground and pavilion will also be installed as part of the project. The Commission will need to assist with deciding where to place benches, trash cans, and the porta potty as the project gets underway this spring.
The roof of the pavilion has recently been replaced. The St. Paul Park Lions club funded the repair.

Flandrich also described that the City has the opportunity to donate the used playground equipment to an organization called Kids Around the World. The organization would haul the equipment away and refurbish it to reuse in third world countries or other impoverished areas. He inquired if the Commission would like to make a motion to ask the City Council to approve Kids Around the World to take the equipment.

Motion by Cison to ask the City Council to approve donating the equipment to Kids Around the World, second by Whitbred-Hemmingson. Motion carried 4-0.

C. Water Treatment Facility Update

The placement of the water treatment facility will require moving the existing batting cages at Whitbred Memorial Park. The City is exploring how much it will cost to build new batting cages. The Commission discussed concerns about the lack of use of the current batting cages in recent years, and whether the money for new batting cages could be raised through other means such as fundraising by the Athletic Association. Since the City is still in the early stages of exploring options and planning, the Commission tabled further discussion until a later date.

D. Lions Levee Park

As of the meeting, the park had not begun to flood with the melting.

Flandrich explained that the boat launch project is still on track, once the spring flooding threat has past. The project will likely take a few weeks to complete.

The steps have been removed and the trees have been trimmed. The Commission briefly discussed that it would be great to be able to remove the driftwood on the island for safety and to help make the park look cleaner. They decided it would be a good idea to try to look into a company or organization that might be interested in taking it out.

AGENDA ITEMS:

A. Invasive plants at Riverside – Discussed in parks update

B. Girl Scouts Project
   The Commission briefly discussed the project ideas that the Girl Scouts had and decided to make a motion to accept their donation of games for the warming house and Summer Rec Program and approve their projects benefiting Parks and Rec. Motion by Whitbred-Hemmingson to accept the donation and approve their project to help the Commission, second by Cison, approved 4-0.

C. Changes to Summer Rec Program – Tabled due to Secretary Ornquist’s absence

D. Heritage Park Playground – Discussed in parks update

E. Bunco Recap
   The last Bunco night had a smaller number of attendees as the January event, but those that were in attendance enjoyed the event.
F. Carbone’s Fundraiser
   The Commission confirmed the date of April 15 for the Carbone’s fundraiser. Commission Members will assist where and when possible that day.

G. Sledding Event Recap
   The Commission noted that the Glow in the Dark Sledding Event was a great success this year. There was a huge turnout and weather was favorable. It was suggested that for next year to add lights further down the hill. Chairperson Cison will explore the logistics and feasibility of this.

H. Bunco Event – March 22
   To help boost attendance at the March event, Commission Members will work to spread the word about the event and post again on Facebook. The Commission still has several great prizes donated from local businesses for the March event.

I. Art and Garden Event
   The Commission discussed moving the date from May 18 to June, as the weather can be unpredictable in May and may be too early for plants. It was decided to move the event to be held June 1 instead. Chairperson Cison will seek support again from Home Depot for this year’s event. The Commission will also seek vendors and potentially a food vendor.

OPEN DISCUSSION:

- Council Liaison Zenner brought up Heritage Days and asked the Commission if they will be involved in the event this year. The Commission agreed to begin thinking about it, but tabled discussion.
- The Commission decided that the Movies in the Park would be an agenda item for the April meeting.
- The Commission also briefly discussed rededicating the Heritage Park playground once work is completed early this summer. It was agreed to do a rededication similar to that done at Dingle Park last year, but the details will need to be planned at a later date.
- Commission Member Domeier brought up the idea to explore adding a dog park to the City. Adding a dog park would involve several items to consider, so the Commission decided the idea could be explored at a later date.

Meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Next Meeting—April 11, 2019 at 7 p.m.

Respectfully submitted March 18, 2019 by Commission Member Bowker