

**MINUTES - UNAPPROVED
OWATONNA PARK AND RECREATION
REGULAR PARK BOARD MEETING
FEBRUARY 13, 2023
4:30 PM**

Members Present:

Chair: Jon Thiel

Vice Chair: Gina McGuire

Board Members: Tyler Cochran, Sara Baird, Kara Perry

Members Absent: Greg Posch, Jonathan Douglas

Staff Present:

Jenna Tuma, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

Eric Anderson: Recreation Manager

Tricia Fisher: Administrative Specialist

Dani Licht: Recreation Supervisor

Kurt Stangler, Recreation Supervisor

MJ Knudson: Recreation Specialist

Council Member: none

LOCATION: City Hall, Council Chambers

OPENING BUSINESS

A. Call to Order at 4:30 pm

B. Roll Call:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Gina McGuire, to approve the February 13, 2023, Park Board Meeting Agenda and second by Tyler Cochran. All members voted aye.

APPROVAL OF THE JANUARY 9, 2023, MINUTES

Motion by Tyler Cochran to approve the January 9, 2023, Park Board Meeting Minutes and second by Sara Baird. All members voted aye.

PERSONS WISHING TO APPEAR

Gary Jones – a resident who lives nearby Mineral Springs Park expressed his concerns with the deer management program, specifically with Mineral Springs Park. He asked for it to be considered removed from the hunt area for park user safety or increase the communications to warn users of the activity. Signs should be in multi-languages.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Jenna Tuma welcomed and introduced the new Recreation Supervisor at Brooktree Golf Course, Kurt Stangler. Today is Kurt's first day in his new position

at the City of Owatonna. Kurt comes with over 20 years of experience in the golf world, and he was very excited when he saw this opportunity at Brooktree Golf Course. He is also a huge Kansas City Chiefs fan, so he was really excited after their super bowl win last night.

- b. Matt Hokanson, Tennis Pro, gave an update on Tennis and Pickleball Center
- U10 academy – age 4-18, established 228 kids since they started.
 - 147 kids under the age of 12. Retention rate is 70-80%
 - 6 tennis courts, 4 pickleball courts
 - Hosted 12 tournaments for kids since late October
 - Currently open 7 days a week, there are 81 players and most are under age 10
 - His goal is to be at 300 after this year, and the ultimate goal would be 500
 - Pickleball Mondays is very popular with between 20-30 people
 - Winter walking has been a great way to utilize the space in the early mornings at the facility

Jon Thiel asked how it is going now that we have pickleball and tennis sharing the same facility. Matt commented it has gotten a lot busier, with the combined membership of Tennis and Pickleball, consistent pricing, and equal opportunities for both groups.

Eric Anderson added that all junior classes are in the evenings, so indoor walking would not work later in the day.

Matt is currently a professional pickleball registry certified coach, he is in the top 90%, and will compete soon and if he does well, he will be in the top 90% player.

c. Deer Management Program discussion

MJ gave an update on the program:

- The City applies by end of April with the DNR
- Archery applications open in August, and the deadline is usually in September
- The stands are pre-determined by park staff
- 17 locations, one hunter per seven-acre standard (DNR)
- Two seasons, each about 4 weeks
- This year, after being contacted by Mr. Jones, park staff added additional signs to the locations.
- In addition to the DNR standards, the Parks & Recreation requires each person take a proficiency test, this is not required by the DNR but we choose to make it mandatory as an added safety requirement.

There have been several communities in surrounding areas that have added the deer management program and have called to gain knowledge and information from us.

Last year 32 deer were taken (2022) with 16 hunters.

Gina asked if the application goes in each year and Council reviews it, and MJ commented it is council directed.

Jenna stated we hope to continue with past practices, but we always open to feedback, and Gary provided us with good feedback. The signs are only in English right now, staff will look to adjust for the upcoming season. Tyler mentioned offering citizens education regarding which alternative plants you could plant that would not attract the deer to their yards.

d.

- The joint Park Board meeting with Faribault will be held on Wednesday, April 26 at 6 p.m. and it will begin with a tour and meeting will follow.
- The March Park Board meeting will cover the Master Plan update.

OLD BUSINESS

a. United Way Learning Trail

Jenna will follow up with them this week, and since the master plan is in 90% completed, so she doesn't see any reasons why we couldn't do this.

b. Corky's Early Bird Tournament donation 2022

MJ: reported stats from the budget for the project lights, currently there is \$63,195 and this started around 2016. The 2022 donation was in the amount of \$13,100 and went into that account. In 2021 they took \$10,000 and donated it to We All Play. The cost of the light project is probably around \$700,000 to one million so they will continue to make contributions.

PARK PERMITS

a. Buecksler Park – February 11, neighborhood glow sledding

- a. This event was held this past Saturday, there were tons of people there, and the neighborhood came together. Parks, Recreation and Facilities department provided fire pits and firewood. Buecksler skating has been a huge success for the first year.

MEMORIALS AND DONATIONS

a. Patricia Freed, bench – Dartt's Park

b. Gary Joachim, bench – NAEP at 26th Street (waiting to get the verbiage)

MJ is starting to get benches in, the one they ordered is on its way!

SENIOR UPDATE

- a. Eric commented they are working on getting the first floor in order and opening the bottom door at the West Hills Social Commons. Carpet and paint is being updated and work on repurposing spaces to be used more effectively on the first floor for services to use. The first coffee talk was held by Thomas.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Director's Report

- Jenna gave an update that the department heads and Council will be meeting to work on a long-term strategic plan and identify what the priorities are.
- There will be a groundbreaking event held on April 4 for the Council Chambers remodel project.
- Staff are working with Police Department to pilot a parks services officer program to address some of the issues in the parks and trails. The role will be customer service focused.
- The City wants to be an employer of choice, staff are working on internal culture and striving for a positive work place.
- Be on the lookout for the 2023 Spring & Summer Activity Guide that is mailed out this week.

b. Staff report:

- Eric Anderson commented there was a great turnout on the rescheduled Winter Weekend Out events, the temps were warmer.
- The department continues to evaluate Winter Weekend Out as a whole, and if you have any ideas, we would appreciate hearing them.
- We are excited to have Kurt. Aaron's crew is working hard on the Brooktree bar project and it is going to look great.
- We reorganized a bit internally and hired three Recreation Facility Assistants after position opened up. One starts today, one next week and the other one will be starting soon.
- MJ reported facilities is using See Click Fix internally right now.
- There are job openings for full-time and part-time maintenance workers.

c. Board Member Report

Gina McGuire: Took her son snowshoeing, and they had a great time!

Tyler Cochran: Went on his first snowshoeing excursion on winter weekend out, and it was good.

Announcements

- In the News
 1. Weekly Owatonna People's Press articles:
<http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/Blog.aspx?CID=3>

2. Owatonna Live Straight Talk [Straight Talk \(owatonnalive.com\)](https://www.owatonnalive.com)
- Actions Requested from past meetings

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion by Sara Baird, and second Kara Perry to adjourn the Park Board Meeting at 6:00 p.m. All members present voted aye.

The next board meeting is March 13, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. at Council Chambers.