

**MINUTES - UNAPPROVED  
OWATONNA PARK AND RECREATION  
REGULAR PARK BOARD MEETING  
MAY 8, 2023  
4:30 PM**

**Members Present:**

Chair: Jon Thiel

Vice Chair: Gina McGuire

Board Members: Tyler Cochran, Sara Baird, Kara Perry, Jonathan Douglas, Nan Silkunas

**Members Absent:**

**Staff Present:**

Jenna Tuma, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

Eric Anderson: Recreation Manager

Tricia Fisher: Administrative Specialist

Thomas Gorycki – Recreation Supervisor

MJ Knudson: Recreation Specialist

Drake Simonson – Recreation Supervisor

**Council Member:** none

**LOCATION:** West Hills Social Commons

**OPENING BUSINESS**

A. Call to Order at 4:30 pm

B. Roll Call:

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Motion by Gina McGuire to approve the May 8, 2023, Park Board Meeting Agenda and second by Kara Perry. All members voted aye.

**APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 26, 2023, MINUTES**

Motion by Sara Baird to approve the April 26, 2023, Park Board Meeting Minutes and second by Tyler Cochran with the change of wording on the 501C3. All members voted aye.

**PERSONS WISHING TO APPEAR**

**NEW BUSINESS**

a. Election of Officers & Roles for Park Board

Tyler Cochran nominated the current officers to stay in their current roles, Jon Thiel for Chair, Gina McGuire for Vice-Chair, and Sara Baird for Secretary.

There were no other nominations after asking three times, nominations were closed.

The 2023-2024 positions are: Chair: Jon Thiel, Vice Chair: Gina McGuire, Secretary: Sara Baird

All members present voted aye.

Jenna read the Oath of Office as Nan Silkunas was sworn in as a new Park Board member.

- b. Greg Kruschke – Community Development Manager for Owatonna presented on New Development on 80 acres in Mineral Spring Estates. Maps were included in the agenda packet. The development will bring single-family homes, townhomes and a multi-family structure. The developer sees the importance of green space, but nothing is currently in place for a policy of new development and green space. Greg mentioned a focus group will be assembled and they would like 2-3 Park Board members to participate.
- c. Park Naming – MJ Knudson emphasized the importance of naming the park to achieve regional park status. MJ presented slides and feedback from the Park Naming project survey that was conducted on Engage Owatonna. The slides will be sent to Park Board members. We will also send out the history on the families of Kaplan, Dr. Morehouse, and Kohlmier. The goal is to get recommendations from the Park Board of the top choices to bring forward to the City Council.
  - a. Concerns were expressed to be careful when naming parks after native heritage without more information from the experts.

**Wakpa' Owothanja Park & Wakpa Regional Park** – Park Board wants to consider a Dakota name but would like more research done by a subject expert. Would consider it with contingencies of finding out more information.

**River's Edge Regional Park** – This was the option that Park Board recommends moving forward.

The Park Board did not like the following names and does not recommend them moving forward: Straight River Regional Park, Owatonna Regional Park, Morehouse Regional Park

NRPA Agency Performance Review – Eric explained the park metrics attachment was a snapshot, it is a benchmark of the national piece. We will wait to see Owatonna's and compare.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Deer Hunt Recap = MJ Knudson
  - a. We are moving ahead with the 2023 deer hunt. The DNR did a walk through with Mr. Jones, the DNR did not agree with his findings and recommends continuing to have the deer hunt in 2023. There is a DNR fact sheet included in the agenda packet. We will have additional signage at each of the entrances and will also have signs in Spanish.
  - b. Tyler – is there anything else we can do to educate the people? There is an ordinance to not feed the deer.

## **PARK PERMITS**

- a. Juneteenth Celebration – Manthey Park, June 17 – Alliance for Greater Equity
- b. [Event Permit] 11@7 Concert Series – Central Park – June 8, 15, 22, 29, July 13, 20, 27, August 10
- c. [Event Permit] Downtown Thursdays – Central Park – June 1 (so far, will add) July 6, August 3
- d. [Event Permit] OHS NHS Color Run – Kaplan's Woods Parkway – May 13
- e. [Park Permit] Narcotics Anonymous Activity Day – Disc Golf Course – June 11
- f. [Event Permit] Harry Wenger Band Festival – Central Park – June 17
- g. [Park Permit] .5k Run for Owatonna Humane Society – Muckle Trail from MSB to Chamber – June 24
- h. [Park Permit] Mineral Springs Park – Wedding – July 1

Motion by Tyler Cochran, and second by Kara Perry to approve the park and event permits. All members present voted aye.

## **MEMORIALS AND DONATIONS**

None – will send out updated memorial and donation brochure

## **SENIOR UPDATE**

- a. Thomas gave an update on the West Hills Social commons. Coffee conversations will occur monthly. The Park Board will tour the facility in one of the upcoming meetings.

## **6. COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. Director's Report
- b. Staff report:

- c. Drake Simonson: Talked about the volunteer coaches' policy that was emailed out to Park Board.
- d. MJ – City Council Chambers construction has started, the trail connection project started today, Mitch Weiss is now a new maintenance worker, We have a Park Foreman position open. Born Learning Trail update will occur in June.
- e. Eric – Summer programming starting up, added four additional pickleball courts. We made some changes to our registration process. We added a “donate now” to our registration process.
- f. Board Member Report

Jon Thiel: How's the golf course? Eric responded it's a learning process, but it's all positive as we work through things and let Kurt develop. The new bar has been positive. He also mentioned at Daiken field there are large rocks – MJ will talk to Jesse.

Jonathon Douglas: Commented about the tents along Kaplan's parkway.

Kara Perry: none

Gina McGuire: Asked if the Park officer will not be happening this year, and it will not, but there will be officers on bicycles this summer.

Sara Baird: is there a place for teens to get helmets in town to use for biking or the skate park? We do not have any

Nan: none

Tyler Cochran: He was at Corky's Tournament volunteering for the Youth Scholarship Fund and the fields looked great.

### **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 \(owatonnalive.com\)](http://owatonnalive.com)
- Actions Requested from past meetings

### **ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Tyler Cochran, and second by Gina McGuire to adjourn the Park Board Meeting at 6:32 p.m. All members present voted aye.

The next board meeting is June 12, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. at Council Chambers.