

**MINUTES
OWATONNA PARK AND RECREATION
REGULAR PARK BOARD MEETING
JUNE 12, 2023
4:30 PM**

Members Present:

Chair: Jon Thiel

Vice Chair: Gina McGuire

Board Members: Tyler Cochran, Jonathan Douglas, Nan Silkunas

Members Absent: Sara Baird, Kara Perry

Staff Present:

Jenna Tuma, Parks, Recreation and Facilities Director

Eric Anderson: Recreation Manager

Tricia Notch: Administrative Specialist

Thomas Gorycki: Recreation Supervisor

MJ Knudson: Administrative Specialist

Kris Busse, City Administrator

City Council Member: Dan Boeke

LOCATION: West Hills Social Commons

OPENING BUSINESS

A. Call to Order at 4:30 pm

B. Roll Call:

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Jonathan Douglas to approve the June 12, 2023, Park Board Meeting Agenda and second by Tyler Cochran. All members voted aye.

APPROVAL OF THE MAY 8, 2023, MINUTES

Motion by Gina McGuire to approve the May 8, 2023, Park Board Meeting Minutes and second by Jonathan Douglas with the change of wording of two dates in the minutes. All members voted aye.

PERSONS WISHING TO APPEAR

Public comment provides an opportunity for the public to address the Board on items that are not on the agenda. Comments will be limited to five (5) minutes per person. The Board will not normally take any action on items discussed during Public Comment.

The following people shared concerns with the July 8 Pride in the Park Event at Morehouse Park.

Deb Gnemi

Francis Wiersma

Joan Young

April St. Martin

Gretchen Satterlund

Heather Gleason

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Comprehensive Plan – The City contracted with Stantec to do a city wide 2050 comprehensive plan. The group is asking for Park Board's input, and it is on the agenda for the August 14 meeting. They are looking for 30-40 people to participate in this process, if you know someone interested, please contact Jenna.

- b. SWOT Analysis: There is homework for the Park Board in a memo that was handed out, Jenna included a handout of the NRPA metrics for Owatonna, along with the Park Board Charter (on the city's website) with current park rules and ordinances. Jenna shared that at the July meeting, we will work on a SWOT analysis exercise to understand the department's opportunities and where our focus should be. Then in August the Park Board will be doing a workshop with the 2050 comprehensive plan group.

- c. Regional Park naming update: Staff has been working on the regional naming as part of the recent park master plan, after the City Council Study Session in May the agenda item was on the May 16 Council agenda but it was pulled to allow to make sure we are not leaving the name Morehouse out. This was a good pause, an idea to do "recreational areas" was developed, such as Morehouse Recreation Area or Kaplan's Woods Recreation Area. MJ and Jenna presented that concept to the Council at the June City Council. The Council asked staff to go back to the Park Board and discuss the history of the families similar to the research provided for the Council Chambers naming. Staff contacted the DNR to ask if we can apply for regional significance before approving a name change, we could. Jenna shared the City Council values the input from Park Board. Nan asked since we are pausing, we could explore a Native American name and if we could get someone from the Dakota background as an expert to weigh in on it. We don't have an expert on staff but would try to find someone. If anyone knows of someone with that knowledge, please let MJ know. Nan said there were a few purposed names from the community that we could go back and find out. Tyler commented that history and language are important. Eric Anderson suggested reaching out to Mankato's Community Center or a professor at MSU that might have connections. Jenna noted some members of the Council felt like Morehouse should be the name of the regional park, not a secondary name. Jon Thiel commented we could share it back and try to find out from the public their interest. Councilmember Dan Boeke appreciates the work the Park Board has done. City Administrator Kris Busse added that the challenge is trying to rename something, and there are strong feelings on the Council that they don't want to lose the Morehouse name. Since we are not in a rush, the Park Board plans to take time and maybe take it back to the community.

d. Civic Clerk – is a new agenda software program that Park Board will implement in July. For a few months, we will run both systems and still send the agenda packets electronically and they will also be available on Civic Clerk.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. Born Learning Trail – MJ Knudson reported there was a summary in your packet. United Way presented in September regarding a quarter-mile trail that would be painted and signs in English and Spanish that promote physical and mental well-being. United Way takes on various communities nationwide with this project. Estimated the cost of \$2500. The life expectancy of the signs is 2-4 years. Upkeep would be repainting every year; United Way would help with those things. There is a map included in the packet. \$2900 for the set of signs, \$300 for ten posts, and \$250 for paint. Bringing it to PB as a purposed partnership with United Way.
 - i. Nan asked if the signs were ADA accessible, Jenna commented they are not. Jenna mentioned the Parks and Recreation department is looking at establishing policies on artwork and signage. Gina reminded Park Board we need to decide soon so we can let United Way know.

PARK PERMITS

Park Permits were attached in the packet
Motion by Tyler Cochran, and second by Jonathan Douglas to approve the Park Permits. All members voted aye.

MEMORIALS AND DONATIONS

Included in Park Board Packet. The brochure will be included in an email.

SENIOR UPDATE

- a. Thomas: Adult Leisure Pursuits had 12 new members join recently, which is now 241 members, he also heard positive feedback from seniors on the fresh paint, carpet, and the two new spaces that were recently created for use.

6. COMMUNICATIONS

- a. Director's Report: shared information on the 2050 comprehensive plan
- b. Staff report:
- c. MJ: Mike Klein was hired as the new Park Foreman, Kaplan's Woods trail connection is under construction, and people can still access Kaplan's by 18th Street. It should be finished by the end of June.
- d. Eric: River Springs Water Park received mechanical updates this past off season and everything is ready to go. The water park opened on June 1st. It is a busy time at River Springs Water Park and Lake Kohlmier, lots of use of kayaks and canoe rentals. He also noted that many of our

programs started for the summer this week, and staff training has been taking place.

e. Board Member Report

Jon Thiel: Asked how the new golf supervisor is doing.

Jonathon Douglas: Commented he has some concerns regarding Pride in the Park event.

Gina McGuire: none

Nan Silkunas: none

Tyler Cochran: shout out to Tom Gorycki and what he is doing at the West Hills Social Commons. Tyler participated in the Coffee Conversations and said it went well.

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 Jonathan Douglas to adjourn the Park Board Meeting at 5:48 p.m. All members present voted aye.

The next board meeting is July 10, 2023, at 4:30 p.m. at the West Hills Social Commons multi-purpose room.