

UNOFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE
MITCHELL PARK, RECREATION & FORESTRY BOARD
DECEMBER 13, 2018

A regular meeting of the Mitchell Parks and Recreation Board was held on Thursday, December 13, 2018. The meeting was called to order by Ryan Tupper, President at 3:56 p.m., at the City Hall Council Chambers.

The following members of the Board were present: Ryan Tupper, Mary Ellen Jepsen, Brian Johnson, Chris Retterath, Dennis Marek. Council Liaison: Marty Barington. Absent: Melanie Mullenmeister, Randy Seppala. Staff present: Nate Powell, Kevin DeVries, Angel DeWaard, Steve Roth, Dan Dobesh, Brad Gates, Mayor Everson, Justin Johnson, City Attorney, Stephanie Ellwein, City Administrator. Marcus Traxler, Daily Republic Newspaper

A delegation from the Mitchell Aquatics Club was present represented by Taya Swanson. Ms. Swanson presented to the Board a request from the Aquatics Club to place a plaque honoring donors. They would cover all costs and are looking at the main entrance wall leading into the pool. Director Powell informed the Board that under the donor guidelines, they are allowed three signs of various sizes and they have one big sign already and are allowed two more. After a brief discussion Motion Tupper, Second Retterath to allow a donor recognition plaque to be placed at the Rec Center with the location to be determined by Rec Center staff and the Aquatics Club. Motion approved and carried.

Additions to the Agenda: City Christmas tree

Motion Jepsen, Second Retterath to approve the agenda with the addition of City Christmas tree under new business. Motion approved and carried.

Minutes of the November 15, 2018 meeting were reviewed. Motion Johnson, Second Jepsen to approve the November 15, 2018 Minutes as read. Motion approved and carried.

A discussion was held regarding the Rec Center capital projects line item. Chair called a point of order. Motion Retterath, Second Jepsen to approve the Bills as submitted. Motion approved and carried.

Director Powell reviewed with the Board handouts covering how many ash trees the city has, map of locations, current city ordinance, current practices, who owns the tree and responsibility, what other city ordinances are, treatment options for EAB, homeowner options, proposed EAB policy and proposed fee option-dangerous tree removal policy. Powell informed the Board the city is compliant with all practices except it the department currently removes dangerous street (blvd) trees at no cost and to be compliant with the city ordinance a small fee would need to be charged, which was reflected as \$25.00 in the handout. Powell noted with the Emerald Ash Borer in South Dakota now is the time to look at the existing ordinances and the need to potentially take out dangerous trees if the infestation makes it to Mitchell. Also

presented was a list of trees currently not allowed to be planted on the boulevards and Powell requested that ash tree be added to the list. A very lengthy discussion followed with Board members raising many concerns on charging for the removal of dangerous trees. Powell pointed out that there are an estimated 8,000 ash trees city wide and if there was a confirmed case of EAB the options would be to remove only infected trees, remove all ash trees or treat infected trees, which would be approximately \$46,200 every other year for only park trees or \$162,825 every other year for all parks and street trees plus part-time employees to cover the work of our licensed full-time staff. Johnson questioned if anyone has been billed in the past 6 years for tree removal. Roth replied no, and said currently if we get a call about possible EAB we inspect the tree, if needed we contact John Ball and a sample is taken and the state determines if it EAB. Johnson questioned if we could just go to Council to get funds to cover the cost for removal of all ash trees. Mayor Everson noted the city ordinance states the city is to charge the homeowner for the removal of dangerous or dying tree and the small fee proposed would make it compliant with the ordinance. Question was raised if \$25.00 was an appropriate fee or if it should be more aligned with tree removal costs. Johnson stated he felt the citizens will not care how many ash trees around the lake, or parks get dropped they will care about how many ash trees get dropped in their boulevards that they're going to get charged for that they wouldn't have a year ago. Council Liaison Barington proposed a 50-50 cost share for taking the trees down, this way it is a partnership. Park Foreman Gates reiterated to the board that is important to stay as far ahead of the issue as possible and that city staff does most of their tree removal during the few months of winter. The Board continues to express its concern with charging a fee for removal of dangerous trees and if a fee was charged how it be determined as a person with a 10 foot tree versus a 50 foot tree could pay different fees and if the fee was set at only \$25.00 it would create the potential of the city being viewed as a personal tree service. Powell clarified that a 10-foot tree is too short to be deemed dangerous and the homeowner would be asked to remove it. Tupper questioned if non approved ash trees or all ash trees should be placed on the list for trees not approved to be planted on boulevards and what qualifies as a dangerous tree. City Administrator Ellwein noted that if the Board wants to recommend a fee they will need to recommend a motion on this but will need to table any action until next months meeting. Tupper recommended tabling any further discussion or action until next months meeting to allow time for Roth to put together an amended list of trees not permitted as street trees and to allow Powell to get together various fee estimates for removal of dangerous trees.

Kevin DeVries reviewed the Recreation Center Report. Programs currently in session are Adult Coed Volleyball on Sundays in the Armory, open pickleball on Wednesday's in the Armory and tennis lessons Tuesday/Thursday's at the 4H building. The roofing project is going well. We are preparing for the MAC swim meet on December 7th-9th. They are expecting around 300 swimmers with warm ups starting Friday at 3:00pm and the meet should be done Sunday by 6pm. We had extra staff and early feedback is that things went fairly well. We hosted a leadership group on November 15th, with staff giving talks on what they do and ending with a tour of the facility. The back gym floor has been refinished and the front gym will be done before Christmas. Kevin noted they are on the rotation for the 2020 state swim meet and if we get it, we may need to look at shutting down the whole facility. Johnson questioned if any

revenue opportunities were missed during the meet with them having their own concessions and if in the future if a percentage of concession sales should be retained.

Steve Roth reviewed the Parks and Forestry Report. Projects we are working on or have completed are: Doty playground is near completion, we have a few miscellaneous items left to do; Sandy Beach infrastructure project is completed the water, sewer, lift station and electrical have been run to the restroom site; Christmas decorations were put up the week before Thanksgiving; Christmas tree was delivered and put up; Worked on snow removal equipment to get things ready for snow; Snow removal; Put equipment in the sheds and cleaned up the yard at the shop; Maintenance on equipment; Northridge restroom roof on.

Dan Dobesh reviewed the Sports Complex Report. Projects being worked on:

MAC

- Routine Ice maintenance/Maintenance on building
- First hockey tournaments Dec 8th-9th and 15th-16th
- Ice charts and dry shaving ice twice per week

Cadwell Complex

- All mowers cleaned up and minor issues fixed
- Snow removal
- Patch up some backstop nets

Pepsi Complex

- Working on equipment for next season
- Take inventory of all supplies

Parks

- Tree trimming over sidewalks/shelters
- Clean out leaves in problem areas
- Repair furnace in Patton Young
- Minor repairs in parks on shelters

Director Powell reviewed the monthly Department Report

Major Incidents and Significant Events

- First swim meet at the indoor aquatic center Dec 7th-9th

Important Meetings and Training Attended

- Lake Committee Meetings
- Parks Board Meeting
- City Council Meetings
- MACPD meeting
- Sports and Events Authority meeting
- Weekly and Monthly staff meetings
- Weekly Department Head management meetings
- Site visit with Game, Fish & Parks for LWCF Grant
- County Fair Bagging Event
- United Way Lunch
- Insurance Discussions with HR

- Conference call with EPA regarding Lake Mitchell Water Quality
- Conference call with the National Parks Service regarding City Trail & Lake Mitchell planning assistance

Project Outcomes

- Doty Playground is near completion
- Sandy Beach Restroom utilities are near completion
- Artificial Christmas tree purchased and installed
- Emerald Ash Borer Plan ready for Parks Board

Current Projects

- Lake development project
- Day Camp playground installation
- Skate Park upgrades
- Revitalize the trail committee – request volunteer from Park Board for committee
- Emerald Ash Borer Strategic Plan
- Rec Center flooding damage
- Boat Docks
- Rec Center Pool punch list
- Rec Center Roof
- Northridge Restroom
- Concessions RFP for Cadwell
- Veterans Discount for Rec Center

Upcoming Special Events and Meetings

- Parks Board meeting
- Lake Committee meeting
- MACPD meeting
- City Council Meetings
- Monthly SEAC meetings

Change in Park/Facility Status

- Leisure pool closed to public during swim meet

Director Powell presented to the Board a request to add a veterans membership rate for the Rec Center, which would be the same as a senior (60 years or older) rate of \$31 per month or \$338 annually. Motion Marek, Second Jepsen to approve adding a veteran's membership rate at the Rec Center to be the same as a senior rate. Motion approved and carried.

Board member Johnson questioned the purchase of the artificial Christmas tree for \$18,000 and where the funds came from. City Administrator Ellwein stated the money came from a Corn Palace fund not the Park and Recreation budget. When questioned as to the size and storage of the tree. Roth stated the tree is 26' and with the star 30', once it is taken down it will be stored at the Fischer Building.

There being no further business the Board adjourned at 5:38 p.m., noting Thursday, January 10, 2019 at 4:00 p.m., at the City Hall Council Chambers as the date of the next regular meeting of the Mitchell Park, Recreation and Forestry Board.