

**REGULAR MEETING  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
City of Oakdale  
February 19, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Oakdale Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, February 19, 2019, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Chair Bethke at 7:00 PM.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Chair: Maxine Bethke

Vice Chair: Janet Cunningham

Commissioners: Jane Klein  
Paul Lockhart  
Jason Kuchenmeister  
James Roettger

Also Present: Colleen Swedberg, City Council  
Chuck Scott, Oakdale Pickleball Club  
Brian Bachmeier, Public Works Director  
Jeff Koesling, Parks Superintendent

Absent: Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting, November 20, 2018**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KUCHENMEISTER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING OF NOVEMBER 20, 2018 AS PRESENTED.**

**6 AYES      0 NAYS**

**CITY COUNCIL UPDATE – Colleen Swedberg**

Councilmember Swedberg thanked the commission for their support following the recent passing of her father.

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With the absence of Recreation Superintendent Williams, Councilmember Swedberg reviewed three recent recreation events she had attended.

Samoyed Dog Sled Presentation – More adults than kids attended this wonderful event. The free program plans to return next year with more exciting additions.

Snowshoe Night Hike – Last Friday, the snow provided the best snowshoeing that Councilmember Swedberg has experienced in the past four years of attending the event. It was a lot of fun and also included appetizers, drinks, and games.

Indoor Markets – Councilmember Swedberg attended the most recent market and purchased from three vendors. Only two markets remain.

Next, she reported that the council is currently working with the developer on the 3M project to finalize details.

Lastly, she informed that this year's Landscape Revival is scheduled for June 8, from 9 AM to 1 PM at Walton Park. Native plants will be sold by growers in the parking lot, exhibitors will talk about pollinators and clean water, a food truck will attend, and the event is free.

Chair Bethke commented that the open seat on the Parks and Recreation Commission, left by Colleen Swedberg when she was elected to join the City Council, has candidates in waiting. The next step is for the council to conduct interviews, then a new member may join next month, or more likely April, to fill the seat.

### **ELECT CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR – Maxine Bethke**

Commissioner Cunningham nominated Chair Bethke to keep her position as Chair.

Commissioner Klein nominated Commissioner Cunningham as Vice Chair.

Noting no other nominations, Chair Bethke closed nominations and called for a vote.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHAIR BETHKE TO ELECT CHAIR BETHKE AS CHAIR FOR ANOTHER YEAR AND COMMISSIONER CUNNINGHAM AS VICE CHAIR FOR A YEAR.**

**6 AYES      0 NAYS**

### **PICKLEBALL UPDATE – Chuck Scott**

Chuck Scott of the Oakdale Pickleball Club gave an update on his club. He thanked the City for the new courts at Tanners, which offer a smoother, more level surface than the cracked courts at Walton Park. The asphalt surface is an improvement from the concrete at the old courts too, because it is easier on the knees. The surface at Tanners is playable when wet, and there is less space for chasing down balls. With the fence between the new courts, the balls stay close.

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2018 attendance included 114 days of play with an average of 10.7 players a day. Membership is at 72 paid members, includes an advisory group of 8 people, and a set up group of 12 people. Dues are \$20 a member, up from \$10 a member in 2017. The club's cash balance is \$3,069.30. A purchase of a storage locker at the new courts was anticipated but Superintendent Koesling recommended against it. The main purchase the club makes is pickleballs.

Special events include pickleball picnics. These are popular with members. The last one was held on October 12, 2018. Two picnics are tentatively planned for 2019. There is a pickleball demo planned for April 27 to familiarize potential members and recruit new members. The club has also sold shirts and badges.

There are challenges facing the Oakdale Pickleball Club. Mr. Scott explained competition for players who can go to other venues, including The Y, Woodbury, Maplewood, and that the options in venues have changed a lot in three to four years. Another challenge is that the club currently has no place to store their balls, chairs, two squeegees, and broom. The last challenge is the lack of lighting that has discouraged late afternoon play for members who wish to play outside of their work hours at the beginning and end of season. The Walton Courts did have lighting.

At this time, Mr. Scott stood for questions.

Chair Bethke asked the age of the youngest player, and if that person could recruit other younger players. This would create a feeder system for the sport to keep going. To capture teens and preteens, it may be possible to reach out to the Oakdale Athletic Association or scouting organizations. She would like to see more diverse age groups involved in pickleball.

Mr. Scott replied that the youngest player is in their 30's with the average age of players in their 60's. Bringing in folks from the junior high didn't work in the past because of ability. He will follow up with contacts if anyone has any to share. The schools are teaching pickleball.

Commissioner Lockhart added that Tartan has a pickleball program and added courts.

Commissioner Klein, noting the limited physical activities geared for the age 60 group, commented that it is nice to see the average age of 60 for the sport. It is critical to stay active when aging instead of becoming sedentary. This population can also recruit their children and grandchildren to play with them.

Mr. Scott added that a feeder system is the aging population of tennis and racquet sports players who can't keep up due to age. They can still have fun playing pickleball.

At this time, Mr. Scott asked the commission if they would like to receive club updates like this again in the future.

Commissioner Klein replied that as the club grows, that Oakdale would like to accommodate growth in what is of interest to residents. The commission would like to see him again in another year.

**OAKFIELD PARK PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENT PACKAGE – Brian Bachmeier**

Mr. Bachmeier presented an overview of the condition of Oakfield Park's playground, and sought recommendation from the commission on replacing the equipment. The structure currently in place has reached the end of its useful life at the age of 26 years. The parts have become difficult to find replacements. Chair Bethke met with park users last fall, including daycare providers, who solicited their suggestions on their vision for the new playground. These suggestions were provided to the commission in their packet and given to our vendor, Minnesota Wisconsin Playground, the carrier of GameTime equipment. A layout plan was prepared with a main play structure and four standalone features beside the swings.

Parks Superintendent Koesling worked with the vendor to get the price toward the end of last year on the main structure, including a grant, for a very good value with competitive bidding prices. Mr. Bachmeier extended appreciation to Mr. Koesling for his work. The standalone features are based on 2019 prices now in effect. The commission will review the layout and determine the new features for the playground.

Mr. Bachmeier reported that virtually all equipment identified for the neighborhood is ages five to 12 years. The commission may want to also consider features for a younger age set. He noted that younger children are attracted to equipment meant for older age groups. The "Buck-A-Bout" is spring loaded and we have reservations that it may be susceptible to abuse.

Mr. Koesling added that the Walton Park spring loaded equipment is meant for ages two to five years and the older kids abuse it. It has been replaced four times, \$1,800 a time. The question becomes how many times should it be replaced.

Commissioner Kuchenmeister noted that there are differences between Walton Park's spring loaded features and the "Buck-A-Bout" in the catalog. The "Buck-A-Bout" looks more difficult to break, with four springs shown in the picture versus a single spring under the car at Walton Park.

Mr. Koesling replied to a question made by Commissioner Kuchenmeister. When equipment breaks, parts can be replaced at a cost. It depends on the piece. Sometimes, the whole feature needs to be replaced if a section breaks.

Commissioner Cunningham asked if there are penalties when vandals are caught.

Mr. Koesling answered that the parks department does not act as enforcement. The prosecutor, city attorney, and police have this responsibility. Mr. Koesling has gone to court twice related to vandalism in five years. In his experience, only a fraction of the cost is recovered for what has been damaged and what the city has put into it.

Mr. Bachmeier continued with his comments. Mr. Koesling has suggested reserving a space for a sandbox because the daycare groups would like to see it kept there. The kids use the sandbox every morning. The southeast corner could serve this function. The balance of the fill would be wood fiber to meet Americans with Disabilities Act requirements. The main structure is defined as inclusive, with a minimum of five accessible features. He strongly recommended the commission to approve the main structure, as the \$69,000 price is a very good value for the size and cannot be held any

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longer. The standalone features are subject to whatever the commission recommends. There is \$11,000 available; the budget is \$80,000.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KLEIN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART TO APPROVE THE PURCHASE OF THE MAIN EQUIPMENT STRUCTURE FOR THE \$69,000 COST AND CONSIDER THE STANDALONE FEATURES, MINUS THE SPRING LOADED FEATURE DUE TO MAINTENANCE.**

**5 AYES          1 NAY - KUCHENMEISTER**

Commissioner Kuchenmeister desired keeping the spring loaded feature. The four spring design would be difficult to break compared to the single spring cars at Walton Park.

Commissioner Klein argued that spring loaded features are dangerous. Improper use of the equipment can cause an older child to hurt a younger child on the other end when playing. Her concern is not only with the breakage of a spring and labor to replace it, but also the danger of improper use.

In response to a question made by Commissioner Lockhart, Parks Superintendent Koesling replied that he is unaware of any known injuries with Walton Park's spring loaded equipment.

Director Bachmeier urged the commissioners to decide on the other features tonight. Then all the equipment may be ordered at once, avoiding a remobilization charge.

Mr. Koesling agreed, advising to save money by putting all the equipment on one truck.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ROETTGER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER CUNNINGHAM TO APPROVE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE "BUCK-A-BOUT" SPRING LOADED FEATURE WITH THE CATEPILLAR CRAWL TUBE.**

**6 AYES          0 NAYS**

Commissioner Kuchenmeister praised Chair Bethke for talking to residents. In the future, he would like there to be an open house to pitch these ideas to the residents and ask what they want.

Parks Superintendent Koesling advised on selecting a main structure without singling out pieces of equipment. Main structures are sold in a variety of sizes. When singling out equipment pieces, the costs will skyrocket.

Chair Bethke considered Director Bachmeier's list of upcoming planned road improvement projects to be used to visit parks in a year's advance of their improvement. Resident's opinions can be collected and the budget for the project can be shared.

Commissioner Lockhart agreed with Commissioner Kuchenmeister to invite the residents to city hall.

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### **PARKS UPDATE – Jeff Koesling**

Plowing – The last few weeks, crews have been busy plowing and clearing trails. Parks Superintendent Koesling oversees five employees on his crew, who are all assigned plow routes. When plowing, he will lose his staff for a minimum of two days. With snowfalls, streets take priority. After completion of an eight to 12 hour day plowing and working until 7 or 8 PM at night, staff will return again at midnight because plowing in less traffic is easier. The Streets Superintendent Jim Romanik does a great job and Oakdale takes a lot of pride in their clear streets.

Trails - After streets, the 60 miles of trails and sidewalks are next on the priority list. The street right of ways need time; if they begin clearing at 12 AM, trail clearing starts at 4 AM. Trails have a 48 hour clearing policy. Kids use them to get to school. We have four machines; not enough equipment and manpower to get to all the schools in the morning. In last week's storm, the main sidewalks near schools were completed to keep kids off streets and the trails in parks were bypassed.

Ice Rinks - Ice rinks suffer because after a snowfall, crews may not get to them for two days. It is supposed to snow again Friday and the storm may be bigger than the last ones. Snow is planned all weekend into next week. Minneapolis and St. Paul schools are closed tomorrow, and more will follow.

Commissioner Lockhart asked when ice rinks typically close for the season.

Mr. Koesling reported that last year, the rinks were closed by this time. The sun gets higher in February requiring more maintenance on the ice. There is not a typical cutoff date in Oakdale, whereas some cities close on a specific date like February 15. If the ice is here, Oakdale keeps rinks going when it is cold enough.

### **RECREATION UPDATE – Maxine Bethke**

Indoor Market – The two remaining markets are March 2 and 16. Chair Bethke recommended the sausage.

AARP Tax Assistance – Appointments are required and only a few openings remain at the Discovery Center.

Summer Program Instructors – Recreation is hiring and applications and job descriptions may be found on the website. Applications are accepted through March and interviews are held in April.

Chair Bethke responded to a question made by Commissioner Kuchenmeister about the ability to fill these positions. Recreation is lucky to deal with a lot of return applicants just like the summer staff parks has.

Mr. Koesling said that this year he will not have his returning summer crew because they are now juniors and seniors in college with internships. The last three to four years had one of the best summer crews in a long time. They were good friends who played sports together. As employees they did not need babysitting.

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Family Skating – The indoor Tartan ice arena will have family skating on March 9.

Indoor Garage Sale – On March 23, from 9 AM to 1 PM, the Discovery Center will host a full house of 23 vendors.

Yoga and Meditation – A new workshop at the Discovery Center will focus on stress and anxiety.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Wellness 50+ Virtual Tour Around Minnesota – Commissioner Cunningham met with Bonnie Wilson of Oakdale Wellness 50+. There will be a new program offering where teams of six track their exercise and earn bonus points while learning new things about their area. Getting involved is fun, involves teamwork, and gets people out and walking without having to drive, because exercising can start from your front door. The virtual tour converts exercise minutes to miles and travels from the state capitol to Duluth, turns west and comes back around. Next month's Parks and Recreation Meeting will feature a presentation by Bonnie on her new program with details on how to get started. The kickoff event is in April and tour takes places from May to July.

Oakdale Athletic Association – Commissioner Lockhart announced that spring programs are now kicking off.

Arbor Day – Commissioner Klein shared that on April 27 there will be four varieties of trees given away at Walton Park including Balsam Fir, Asian Pear, European Mountain Ash, and Northern Catalpa. Numbers will be given out at 9 AM and trees at 10 AM.

Oakfield Park Community Tree Planting Project Phase Two – Commissioner Klein invited those interested to help plant on Saturday, May 4 from 9 AM to 12 PM. This event is in conjunction with the Tree Board and is the same location the new playground equipment will be installed.

Chair Bethke asked if the planting includes the dog park location.

Commissioner Klein replied that a planting at the dog park is still in the planning stage.

Dog Park Boy Scout Project – Commissioner Kuchenmeister shared that the scout is still planning items to include in the project, whether to build or buy premade structures through balancing what is most economical and durable, and will contact Brian Bachmeier soon. Their next scout meeting is on Monday.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KUCHENMEISTER TO ADJOURN THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, DATED FEBRUARY 19, 2019, AT 8:08 P.M.**

**6 AYES    0 NAYS**

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Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Linzmeyer