

MARION PARK BOARD MINUTES

December 09, 2020, 4:00 P.M.

Thomas Park Administration and Operations Facility

ROLL CALL: John McIntosh (arrived at 4:09), Amy Hussel, Kyle Martin, Bryan Fiscus

ABSENT: Chair Patty Wise

STAFF: Seth Staashelm, Karlene Hummel, Darcie Coberly

GUESTS: None

Based on COVID-19 guidance from Linn County Public Health and the State of Iowa to limit the size of groups gathering, this meeting was held electronically. The agenda and City's website provided instructions on how others could participate in the meeting.

Minutes

Moved by Fiscus and seconded by Hussel to approve the November 12, 2020, regular Park Board minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Reports

The November Financial Report was reviewed. Moved by Martin and seconded by Fiscus to approve the November Financial Report. Staashelm stated numbers are in line with the previous year. All in favor, motion carried.

McIntosh arrived at 4:09.

The November Invoice Report was received, discussed, and filed. The following payments were highlighted and reviewed: Amazon (bulletin boards, City Square lamp covers, face masks) \$414.64, City Tractor (chain saws, bar lubricant, oil) \$1,957.98, Forrest Keeling Nursery (right-of-way tree replacements) \$5,621.50, National Recreation and Park Association (Certified Park and Recreation Professional study materials) \$455, Nexus Corporation (Lowe Park Greenhouse repair materials) \$2,700.10, and Temple Display (holiday lights for Uptown) \$1,598.95. McIntosh said there have been a lot of positive comments about the holiday lights in Marion.

Public Input

None.

Lowe Ball Diamond Tournament Fees

Hummel recently evaluated the fees charged for competitive tournament ball diamond usage at Lowe Park and compared them to surrounding communities. Staff is recommending increasing the weekend rates from \$1,300 to \$1,400 with field maintenance staff present during the tournament, and from \$600 to \$900 with no field maintenance staff present effective for the 2021 season. These prices will be in line with the other communities. Moved by Hussel and seconded by Martin to increase the Lowe Park Ball Diamond tournament fees from \$1,300 to \$1,400 for staffed tournaments and from \$600 to \$900 for unstaffed tournaments effective January 1, 2021. All in favor, motion carried.

Power Washer Replacement Bids

Staff solicited quotes for the budgeted replacement of the 2011 Alkota power washer. Bids were received from Quality Cleaning Equipment \$8,259.20, Hotsy Cleaning Systems \$8,400, and Pressure Washer Direct \$11,095. The replacement is budgeted at \$9,000. Moved by Fiscus and

seconded by McIntosh to purchase a 2021 Alkota 5301 power washer from Quality Cleaning Equipment. Staff noted the 2011 power washer has only had one service call in the past 10 years and will be relocating it to the Lowe Park Maintenance building rather than trading it in. All in favor, motion carried.

Sejkora Farms, Inc Lowe Park Farmland Agreement

The annual lease agreement is being renewed with Sejkora Farms for farmland on the northern part of Lowe Park. There is no change in the number of acres nor the rate for 2021. Moved by Hussel and seconded by Martin to recommend to City Council approval of the one-year lease agreement with Sejkora Farms, Inc., for 33 acres at \$225 per acre. All in favor, motion carried.

Faulkes Heritage Woods Salvaged Timber Harvesting Consultant Proposal

One proposal was received for the Faulkes Heritage Woods Salvaged Timber Harvesting Consultant from Forestry Consulting Services, LLC, (FCS) (Cedar Rapids). FCS estimated the pre-storm value at approximately \$2,000 per acre, excluding Walnut trees which can significantly increase the value per acre. The post-storm value is estimated at 55 to 65 percent of the pre-storm value. FCS agreed to all terms of the proposal except for the firewood harvest following the timber sale salvage harvest, and requested a long-term contract (i.e., two years). Moved by Martin and seconded by McIntosh to accept the proposal with Forestry Consulting Services, LLC, for the Faulkes Heritage Woods Salvaged Timber Harvesting. Staff noted some of the challenges and concerns with this project, including limited staging/landing/loading areas, the steep terrain, and disrupting the natural area for habitat and established, healthy growth. City Arborist Cimprich, Staashelm and FCS will work to address these items with the least long-term impact to the property. All in favor, motion carried.

Staff will work closely with Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation and Trees Forever to develop a forestry management plan and a replanting plan.

Five-Year Capital Improvement Projects Ranking Review

Last month, the Board reviewed the current and proposed Park capital improvement projects and were asked to rank the projects in order of priority. Staashelm thanked the members for their input and shared the tallied rankings. He was happy with the results and noted there was consistency in how the members rated the priorities of the projects. This will be of value to move the park projects forward and obtain funding sources. The City's Executive Leadership Team is doing this same exercise by ranking all city projects.

Receive and File

None.

Other Action or Discussion Items

Staashelm informed the board he and his wife are expecting twins in February and will be taking some time off after their births. A point of contact will be assigned in his absence.

The swing set at the small neighborhood Elza Park (1645 5th Avenue) was heavily damaged in the August 10 Derecho storm. At the next meeting, the board will be asked to determine if the equipment should be replaced or if it is time to re-invent the park area.

The Derecho also destroyed five wooden park signs. The signs cost between \$4,000 and \$5,000 each and require a lot of annual maintenance. The City has not heard if insurance will cover the replacements. This will be on next month's agenda to discuss replacement or other options.

Martin asked for an update on the lights at the Thomas Park basketball courts. Staashelm indicated staff, the electrician, and Alliant have been working on them this week, however, the basketball hoops will be taken down on Friday to be ready for the winter ice rink.

Fiscus asked about the process to backfill the Director's position. Staashelm shared City Manager Lon Pluckhahn is planning to talk with the Park Board and conduct skip-level discussions in January.

Staff Reports

The department's staff report was presented. Operations staff have been busy installing holiday lights in City Square Park and in the two roundabouts on 7th Avenue. Staashelm complimented the staff on the great job they are doing and the positive attitudes they have maintained.

The Splinters Auction concluded November 29 raising over \$25,000 for Trees Forever to use for replanting trees in the community. The Parks Department assisted with the site logistics before, during and after the event.

The Echo Hill Dishes display is almost complete. This unique and informative exhibit at Lowe Park off Irish Drive commemorates the historic event of using satellites to communicate from Iowa to Texas and paved the way for modern day technology.

Southern Disaster Recovery has completed removing Ash trees in the rights-of-way. Asplundh is working in Marion addressing utility lines in trees needing to be removed following the storm.

Recreation staff partnered with the Marion Chamber for the Light the Night, Holiday Lights Tour program. Decorated properties can enter to win prizes. A list of entries will be made available for the public to tour at their leisure.

McIntosh asked if the waterways and creek areas are being cleaned out along Tama Street and if the trees will be salvaged. Staashelm relayed they are being cleaned as well as into Legion Park. The Public Services Department is working with Southern Disaster Recovery to clean out locations in flood areas as they are eligible for FEMA reimbursement. There are no plans to salvage the timber.

Board Discussion Time

None.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 4:55 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 4:00 p.m. at the Thomas Park Administration and Operations Building.

Amy Hussel, Secretary