

PROCEEDINGS OF THE STEARNS COUNTY PARK COMMISSION

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

6:00 PM

The regular meeting of the Stearns County Park Commission was held at the Stearns County Park Office, 1802 County Road 137, Waite Park, MN 56387.

Members Present: Sean Gaetz, Kaye Wenker, Orville Willenbring, Richard Blenkush, and Joe Perske

Members Excused: Anne Ackerman and Lucas Sjostrom

Others Present: Ben Anderson (Park Director), Sarah Weed (Operations Coordinator)

Approval of the Agenda: Mr. Anderson added an additional park property to discuss in Potential Park Property. “7A: Letters of Support-Action Item”. Mr. Anderson changed “Mississippi River County Park – Action Item” to “Mississippi River County Park – Update”. *Mr. Gaetz made a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Willenbring second. Motion passed.*

Approval of the Minutes: *Mr. Gaetz made a motion to approve the minutes as written. Ms. Wenker second. Motion passed.*

Nature Explorers - Warner Lake Nature Center - Action Item: Park Commission made introductions for Sarah Hagen with Nature Explorers. Ms. Hagen discussed the idea and purpose of Nature Explorers Preschool and why she would like to start the program at the Warner Lake Nature Center. Mr. Anderson reviewed reports of the rental history of Warner Lake Nature Center. The program would fill a gap in Central Minnesota for outdoor preschool opportunities. Future development of the program, rental and schedule agreements will occur. *Ms. Wenker made a motion to pursue an agreement with Nature Explorers and the Park Department for the use of the Warner Nature Center. Mr. Gaetz second. Motion passed.*

Mississippi River County Park Update:

- a) **Designation Application:** Mr. Anderson informed the Commission that the Great River Park Complex (Mississippi River County Park and Bend in the River Park) application for Regional Designation was ranked high, thus we are eligible to complete a master plan to be eligible for Legacy Funding.
- b) **Master Plan:** The County Board supported the action of moving forward with RFPs to complete a Master Plan for Mississippi River County Park.
- c) **Property:** The County Board did not take any action towards pursuing the property and would like to see the Master Plan completed before they consider an action.

Richmond Property Update: Mr. Anderson updated the Commission that the family has decided to not pursue anything with the County.

Potential Park Property – Action Item: Fred Bengtson of the MN DNR contacted the Parks Department in regards to a property that is for sale. The property is in Lynden township and is approximately 4.5 miles from Warner Lake County Park. The property has similar accommodations to Warner. *Mr. Gaetz made a motion to not pursue the property. Mr. Willenbring second. Motion passed.*

Mr. Anderson explain that there is 160 acres for sale adjacent to Quarry Park. The property is located on the west side of the SNA. The Park Commission made a consensus that the County is not in a position to pursue the property.

2020 Park Department Goals and Projects: Mr. Anderson reviewed the 2020 project list and goals for the Parks Department.

Letters of Support-Action Item: Ms. Weed requested that the Park Commission send Letters of Support from the Parks Department for the ROCORI Trail Board and the Minnesota Trail Riders Association. *Mr. Gaetz made a motion to approve the Letters of Support. Mr. Willenbring second. Motion passed.*

Seasonal Employee Recruitment: Mr. Anderson informed the Commission that the Seasonal Park Positions are now open. The applications can be found on the County website.

Emerald Ash Borer Update: Ms. Weed provided an update on the Emerald Ash Borer Survey and gave information on the volunteer event on March 26, 2020 at Warner Lake Nature Center.

Program/Events:

- a) **Legislative Action Day:** Mr. Anderson will be attending on February 26.
- b) **Prairie Woods:** Cold Spring Elementary was at Warner Lake Nature Center to learn about cross-county skiing. Mr. Anderson saw that it was a success and would like to see more similar events.
- c) **Snow Stomp:** Occurred Sunday, February 9 from 12pm-3pm at Wildwood/sugar shack.
- d) **Full Moon Fat-Bike Ride:** Mid-Minnesota Cycling Club hosted the event at Quarry Park.

Issues by Commissioner: None

Mr. Gaetz made a motion to adjourn; Mr. Willenbring second. Motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 7:45 pm.