



Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes
January 4, 2024, 7:00pm

Present: Shelly Simpson, Brian Motley, Guy Goldsmith, Tim Hamer, Richard Grugin, Shannon Greene, Amy Chen, Nicholas Arnold, Donglin Chai, Gwen Johnson.

1. Call to Order

2. Welcome new Board members: Nicholas Arnold and Donglin Chai.

2. Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve December 7, 2023 minutes: Chen; Second: Greene. Approved via unanimous consent.

3. Selection of Board Secretary: Arnold approved via unanimous consent as Board Secretary.

4. Report from Nick Bergus, City of North Liberty regarding the Centennial Stage project:

- Project to be completed in four stages, first being the Centennial Center and Amphitheater, followed by a splash pad and enhanced playground, pavilion, and honor garden.
- Capital campaign update: \$2.265 million raised to date from a number of sources, including over \$120,000 from local residents. Total goal is to raise \$3.5 million before completing the project. City will continue to fundraise and there are opportunities for donation at all levels.
- \$900,000 grant received from the State of Iowa on December 7, 2023, with 90 days for City to raise additional \$100,000 to secure the grant. Bergus reported the City is approximately half way to that \$100,000.
- Timeline for bids to be sent in March with construction beginning following Blue and Barbeque in July and continuing through September of 2025. This will impact Blues and Barbeque in 2025.
- New staff person has been hired to manage the Centennial Center and has already begun.
- Space envisioned as vehicle to bring the arts to North Liberty – music, comedy, theatre, ballet, local school productions. Anticipated to be home to many of the roughly 40 city events each year, though not all.
- Addressing potential concerns over scale of events in the park, Bergus stated that Blues and Barbeque would be the high water mark in terms of number of people attending an event, though some events of 500 people could occur monthly during nice weather.
- Bergus stated that walking trails and the playground will not be substantially affected during construction and that exterior restrooms will be publicly accessible.

3. Reports

Parks Report—Guy Goldsmith

- Parks team has been organizing and winterizing facilities throughout town.
- The ice rink at Penn Meadows Park was installed and will be open for use once the weather turns cold enough to freeze. There has been a lot of community excitement for it to open. The ice rink cost \$10,000 to purchase and \$1000 annually for new plastic sheeting. It takes two hours for the team to install each year. The rink will eventually move to Centennial Park for a more level surface. Skates are available to the public at the Community Center.
- Goldsmith submitted the Trees Please grant to Mid-American to replace trees at Penn Meadows Park. City typically receives \$1000 each year to plant trees in public spaces. The Tree City USA application has also been submitted and is pending final approval – which should be received.

- Staff attended CPR recertification.
- Goldsmith met with Shive Hattery regarding the City Administration Building and the Centennial Park Next Stage design and irrigation.
- Goldsmith attended to city slate planning meetings to determine events for the city slate.
- Goldsmith met with Shelly Simpson on the five-year capital improvement plans for the community center.
- Goldsmith met with City Administration to discuss the FY25 parks budget.
- Goldsmith provided an update on the Pebble Court/Fairview Lane request that was presented to the Board at December's meeting. City staff will use funds from the current Parks landscaping budget to improve the roundabout as requested. Scheduled work for this coming summer. Board members commented this is a fantastic response to a community concern and encouraged community members to bring forward any other such requests in the future.
- Fox Run Park project bid has been awarded and the construction will start at the end of July or early August for completion prior to the end of Fall. Project will tie trails and sidewalks together and add a playground.
- Grugin inquired about the park complex status on the north side of town. Goldsmith stated the purchase is close to being or already has been finalized for the land but that the city will likely sit on the land until the Centennial Park project is completed before beginning any work. That concept and design has yet to be discussed in detail.
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b. Recreation/Pool Report—Shelly Simpson

- Arnold inquired about the five-year capital plan. Simpson reported that the major issues that need to be addressed are: roof replacement, repair to the pool area windows and infrastructure, repairs to the parking lot, curbing and drainage.
- Simpson noted the facility is consistently busy, especially in the evenings and on weekends to the point of overuse/overcapacity. Future plans may include expanding existing facility or building a new facility for some services. Board members praised the work of the staff managing all the competing activities and events at the current space.
- Simpson stated December is a big month at the Rec Center for registrations, programs, and revenue.
- The center has hired a full-time custodian for the facility who begins his position this week.
- Simpson noted that memberships to the Rec Center are consistently 60% city residents and 40% non-residents. Due to the facility being overcrowded, staff may need to look at ways to address the issue in terms of non-resident fees. Financial and scholarship assistance would not be affected.
- Arnold asked whether it is possible to see year-over-year data showing the growth in use of the facility on a month by month basis.
- Chen asked whether the city's resident vs. non-resident usage is similar that of our surrounding communities. Simpson noted the differences between the facilities and offerings.
- Chen inquired about ways the community can financially assist to ensure kids from all socioeconomic backgrounds have access to swimming lessons at the facility. Simpson noted they do currently offer some programs in this regard.
- Chai noted that many people in the community may not be aware of all the offerings and programs at the Rec Center and asked how we can do a better job in promoting those to the community at large. Simpson stated that there are some issues in that regard but they do work with the City communications team and library in a collaborative manner.
- Motley provided an update on the youth basketball league that is operating in the facility and at others throughout the area. It is a very popular league so finding space for all the teams is a challenge.
- Motley provided an update on the soccer, flag football, and volleyball leagues which operates similarly to the basketball league. Arnold commented with the growth of those leagues and the pending construction of the park complex on the north side of town, there is potential to create a destination complex for youth sports teams which would bring people and revenue into local businesses.

4. Questions, Concerns, Updates—none

5.Community Input / Ideas to Share

6.Upcoming Events

- Simpson reminded the community that Beat the Bitter is at the end of January and is full of events for community members, many of which are free of charge.

7. New Business

- Johnson inquired as to the timeline for the trail that will run to the dog park. Goldsmith said that is slated for FY25.

8. Old Business

9. Next Meeting

- a. Thursday, February 1, 2024, at 7:00pm.

10. Adjourn Motion: Greene; Second: Johnson None opposed.