



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

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

1. Call to Order

2. Approval of Minutes: Motion to approve March 7, 2024 minutes: Johnson; Second: Chen. Approved via unanimous consent.

3. Reports

Parks Report—Guy Goldsmith

- Parks staff conducted snow removal, turf aeration, seeding, and composted the turf at the dog park.
- Staff started spring landscaping and gravel/rock removal.
- Field maintenance crew has begun daily maintenance at athletic fields.
- Baseball clean up day was March 28 and fields were cleaned of leaves and winter waste.
- Park bathrooms have been opened for the season.
- DNR has stocked the city ponds with trout for the season. Fish are permanent fish and are replenished every year as needed.
- Little Free Library has been reinstalled at Penn Meadows Park and work is almost complete on that renovation.
- Centennial Park Next Stage is close to being sent for bid. Project on pace to begin after Blues & BBQ this summer.
- Looking to hire a tuck pointer for masonry and painting work on the Community Center. Previous contractor went out of business. Seeking at least three bids.
- Parks staff assisted with proscribed burns at local parks to control invasive plants.
- City received the Tree City USA designation again this year for the 28th year in a row. This will help with other grants including one for \$1000.00 provided by MidAmerican Energy this month. The grant will assist in purchasing about 12 trees for use in City parks.
- Parks is still seeking season help for the summer season. Applicants must be 18 years old.
- City Clean Up Day is the last Saturday in April. Residents can bring large items for disposal that day.

Recreation/Pool Report—Shelly Simpson

- Summer programs are being finalized and seasonal activity guide has been released with registration open now.
- Community Center is busy with spring break levels of use.
- Open House was held at the Community Center along with Communications and Library staff. Offered 25% off memberships. More than 200 people attended.
- Several upcoming events this month: kayak trip, shed hunt.
- Aquatic programs continue to be strong. 360 participants in March.
- Youth athletic leagues close this month.
- Current Recsters registration opened for summer camp which leads to large increase in revenue this month. Open to K-6 students.
- Target to open pool on Memorial Day weekend which will depend on staffing levels available and weather. Simpson stated that pay starts at \$13.84.

4. NLCC Fees Proposal

- Information on fee proposal was provided in the meeting information packet.
- Fees were last updated in 2018. About 60% of operating costs generated from tax dollars, 40% from user fees.
- Daily fees being recommended to be simplified, removing the difference between resident/non-resident rates to have one fee of \$6.00 for rec center and pool use. Memberships will still have different rates based on residency.
- Johnson asked whether \$6.00 was too high. Simpson stated that it is in line with surrounding communities. Chen pointed out that compared to other options for entertainment this is a good deal. Johnson asked what happens if someone truly cannot afford the fee. Simpson stated they would first look to memberships and financial assistance is available to residents for the membership, which can be zero or close to it. Arnold asked whether there was a way to identify slow periods at the facility and offer discounted pricing at those times to drive revenue and help meet the needs of those seeking to save money. Parrish drew the comparison to Coralville which offers a similar program for discounted use of their pool.
- Arnold asked whether it was possible to allow for purchase of an annual membership that can be paid over time. Where a family could purchase the membership but break payments up into monthly installments with a twelve month commitment. Motley stated staff is planning to address memberships and this could be a possibility to explore.
- Johnson challenged staff to look at how they define families to see if it can include grandparents who may be caring for their grandchildren.
- Arnold asked whether there was a revenue goal attached to the increased daily fee. Simpson stated that she is having conversations with City staff to that end but currently there is no goal. The primary purpose is simplicity and a one price point without policing everyone's address who comes in on a daily basis.
- Parrish asked whether there was a potential to increase the age of children who currently have free access. It is currently set at two years old and under. Could that age be raised?
- Simpson stated that pool rental fees would also be changed under the proposed fee restructure. It would be a \$5 increase for residents and non-resident rates would be 125% of whatever cost residents pay. Greene and Parrish asked whether that was enough of an increase. Arnold asked whether given staffing levels whether the rental cost covers the labor and other hard and soft costs incurred by the City. Johnson pointed out that costs have increased across the board for families this year and to be cautious in raising prices too much. Parrish pointed out other communities charge based on how many people are attending the event and how much labor cost is involved in supporting the event.
- Simpson stated that it is recommended membership rates stay the same for the time being with staff to further explore how to potentially simplify the memberships and re-examine the fees at a later date. Commission members suggested again to simplify the pricing so it's based on a monthly cost for either a month to month cost or an annual subscription and presented in a clear, concise manner. Chen pointed out the naming conventions are confusion for the membership packages and should be examined. She also asked what defines a "household" for memberships. Simpson stated that it means any people living at one single address.
- Simpson stated that with room rental rates the goal is to simplify. Johnson stated she thought those rates seemed very inexpensive. Grugin stated the reasonable costs allow for family use of the facility for birthday parties and events. Arnold inquired whether fees attached to rental cover the hard costs incurred by the City. Motley stated there are not really any hard costs incurred and renters are required to clean the space when they're done.
- Simpson stated the field and shelter rental fees would be implemented in the fall. Concession stand will no longer be rented out. Ballfield rental is currently \$20 per hour and covers preparation but not staffing. Goldsmith stated that auxiliary costs for quick-dry and chalk, etc. is based on use and passed along to the team that rents the field. Motley stated renters tend to be the same people year over year and have been good to work with and care for the fields. They get first right to schedule for the following year and value the relationship with the City.
- Program fees are determined on a case by case basis depending on the program and associated costs. In house programs incur all expenses and income. Contracted programs split revenue 70/30 with the instructor with City receiving 30%. Tri-City programs base revenue off number of participants from the community paying an

equitable share. Arnold inquired whether residents get earlier access to programs, specifically before and after school programs. Motley stated the schools that participate in the program are all local schools so it's likely all students are residents. Scholarships are also available to residents. He stated residents have two-day priority access to swim lessons before non-residents can register.

- Grugin recapped the line items discussed above, starting with daily fees. Simpson stated daily fees were the most urgent and hopes to implement that change on May 1. Commission members supported the \$6.00 daily fee with the suggestion to explore special hours during the week for reduced admission to help boost facility use during slow times. Staff will revisit pool rental costs and bring back to the Commission. Memberships will also be examined and streamlined.

5. Questions, Concerns, Updates

- Parrish inquired how the Recsters schedule allows for CCA students to be accommodated on days off. Simpson stated that currently there is not a demand on those days. Motley pointed out that staffing is also a concern because most of the staff is ICCSD and UI students. Simpson stated that most often students go to the in-school program first before the City program which may explain the lack of demand.
- Johnson asked when the dog park would re-open. Goldsmith said the cold weather isn't helping but May/June is reasonable.
- Parrish inquired about the new park at Fox Run. Goldsmith stated this is on track for August with trail work on new equipment. He also stated the Penn Meadows park splashpad will undergo renovation late summer, after kids have gone back to school.
- Arnold asked what the City Hall open date is. Goldsmith stated the week of April 21 is slated for move in. Commission meetings may be held there in April.

5. Community Input / Ideas to Share

6. Upcoming Events

- a. Annual Muddy Creek Trail clean up is this Saturday.

7. New Business

8. Old Business

9. Next Meeting

- a. Thursday, April 4, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

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