

Park Board Meeting Minutes
Jackson City Hall
7/11/2023
5:30 p.m.

Attendees:

- Attendees: Michael Haeffner, Matt Skaret, Neal Carlson, Luke Ewald, Tony Oxborough, Mike Eddy, Michael Gruhlke , Lynne Anderson, Joe Pell (City Council Representative).
- Absent: Mike Gilbert.
- Guests: John Weland, Phil Perro, Kim Benes, Robert Grunewald, and Lila Cushman

Parks and Recreation Month:

- July 2023 is National Park and Recreation Month, we will get a photo for the newspaper, and request the city council reads the proclamation for their July 2023 meeting.
- <https://www.nrpa.org/events/july/>

Sunscreen Options- for Splash Pad:

- A resident contactd Luke regarding sunscreen dispensers for Splash Pad; the park board discussed that an onsite shade structure is already available; there was also concern about ongoing cost of sunscreen (i.e. packets vs. a dispenser); it was determined not to pursue this right now.

Outdoor Hydration Stations:

- Luke shared the following outdoor hydration stations that might be worth exploring- it was determined that we will purchase two hydration stations through the Statewide Health Improvement Partnership (SHIP) grant, the grant can only allocate up to \$2,999 for this project.
 - [Outdoor Bottle Filling Station](#)
 - [Outdoor Drinking Fountain](#)

Memorial Park Shelter House:

- Matt shared that Troy from Bolton-Menk provided a sample for the Memorial Park Shelter house; the attached image is a pre-fab building the State of Minnesota put in a State Park up north; the interior would be used as a warming house in the winter with restrooms, and the exterior would be used in the summer for outdoor activities; the estimated cost would be around \$600,000.
- The Park Board agreed this is a good course of action to take as it would fit nicely with the Memorial Park Plan that includes adding amphitheater for music and other events. The Board will have further consideration at their August meeting.

Community Survey- Parks, Trails, & Recreation:

- Prior to this meeting, Luke share the [Community Parks/Recreation Needs Assessment](#); this assessments is being completed in a different community located in the northern metro; there are questions that might help shape some of the work that park board is doing or could look at doing.
- The park board will discuss this survey as an option for Jackson during the August 2023 meeting.

Benes Recreation Area Condition:

- Matt received an email from Robert Grunewald on 7/10/2023 pertaining to the condition of Benes Recreation Area; the email is described as followed:
 - Hello Members of the Jackson Park Board (and my City Council representatives for Ward Two), I plan to attend the July 11, 2023 Park Board meeting at 5:30 pm to discuss the current condition of Benes Recreation Area (a City of Jackson park). There is currently no sign visible that indicates this is a City Park. I see no indication that the public has access to this area. The City of Jackson received State Grant money to improve this park several years after the Benes Recreation Area was established. Does the City of Jackson have a responsibility to maintain this park after they received State Grant Money to improve this park? The current condition of Benes Recreation Area is an embarrassment. The many areas of tall grasses and weeds are not inviting people to use this park. The large areas of thistles, burdock (cocklebur), invasive Poplar Trees, and tall grasses are worse this year than last year. It is difficult to walk through the open areas because it is overgrown and not maintained. It should not be necessary for neighbors to call city hall to report this area needs to be mowed City employees are at this park every day of the year to service the lift station. Those employees should be able to report the Park condition to the park department. I do not think this Park should be classified as a "wetland". If registered with the State of Minnesota as a "wetland" ... that could hinder any future development. Benes Recreation Area is no more a wetland than Dann's Island or Albertus Field. Declaring this area a "wetland" is a mistake. The current river access (at the sight of the old bridge) should be better maintained to provide public access to the River. The current "road" is nothing but a rough trail of dirt/mud that is difficult to drive on. People need to have easy access to the river. I talked to my neighbor Kim Benes yesterday. Earlier this year Kim approached Svoboda Excavating telling them he was going to fish on the north side of the River and that his car would be there. He was denied access. Svoboda Excavating indicated they owned the property and no people were allowed there. It was private property. That is wrong. Svoboda Excavating does not own Petersburg Road. The road is actually on Kolander property but it is a dedicated roadway with a 66' right-of-way that is public. The City needs to start actively maintaining that road on a regular basis. A sign indicating "Public River Access" needs to be installed. When Svoboda tried to buy the roadway several years ago, the DNR indicated they would never give up a public waterway access. It is very important the City of Jackson clarifies that there is public access to the river using Petersburg Road to the north side of the River in the area of Svoboda Excavating. The

City of Jackson should never give-up a public access to the river. These are the only email addresses I could find for any Park Board members. I also included my City Council Representatives for Ward Two and Dave Maschoff. Please share this email with anyone who should see this. I will be at the meeting on July 11, 2023 at 5:30 pm. I will also forward an email with 30 pictures of the weeds, thistles, and burdock that I took 7/9/23 to show the condition of Benes Recreation Area. Please confirm that someone from the Park Board has received this email and the photos. I will send photos in a separate forwarded email. Sincerely, Robert Grunewald 59 River Street, Jackson MN.

- This is Robert's second year approaching the Park Board about the condition of Benes Park; his biggest concern is the thistles, burdock, and invasive Poplar trees which make the park area unusable; lack of public access to the north side of the river in the area of Svoboda Excavating; Kim Benes was denied access earlier this year, Svoboda claims they own that land and it is private property; the City needs to make sure a public access is available at all times on the north side of the river; the City needs to have control of that 66' roadway, and must "maintain" that road frequently so Svoboda cannot claim the area because it was abandoned; the DNR may need to get involved.

Disc Golf Course/Nelson Creek Wild Parsnip Concerns:

- Will discuss during the August 2023 Park Board meeting.

Community Gardens:

- Items to be discussed during the August 2023 meeting:
 - Garden tillers- manual or electrical, preferably both.
 - Garden shed or storage containers- John also discussed having one of the work benches turned into a storage cabinet with doors.
 - Composter- it would be nice to have a second composter.
 - Weather station- for live weather reports that can be shared on the future registration portal for all gardeners to see, I personally like this idea.
 - Security cameras- I agree with John, it would be good to get a few cameras installed.
 - Wheelbarrows- I know folks have their own wheelbarrows, but it wouldn't hurt to have a couple onsite for all gardeners to borrow when needed.
 - Tarps- to cover the beds during the winter.
 - Grand Opening/Ribbon Cutting- it was discussed to have it earlier in the gardening season, but it was now thought of let's do it during harvest season to showcase all the produce folks are growing... maybe waiting until sometime in August or September 2023?
 - Benches/picnic tables- I believe Neal was going to bring one of the ADA-compliant picnic tables up to the garden, maybe a gentle reminder would be nice to ask him if he could bring it up sometime this month or next.

- Scarecrows- while this was not discussed, I thought of it now. It would be fun to have the gardeners make a scarecrow or have a scarecrow building contest...might be a fun way to socially connect with each other?
- Evaluation- evaluation the gardens as a project to identify accessibility, food insecurity, and healthy eating access; this project would be shared with decision makers and residents to demonstrate the impact the garden is making in Jackson.

Sandbox Updates:

- Last year, we posted on the City's Facebook page what residents would like to see in place of sandbox; there were various comments shared by residents, with several comments expressing desire to have better equipment similar to surrounding communities; at this time, we will focus on prioritizing sandbox maintenance instead of dissolving into a different project; we will explore installing an excavator at the sandboxes for kids to use.
- The sand in the volleyball court at Sunset Park will be upgraded—the current sand is poor quality and the area is uneven; the goal would be to make the volleyball court more enjoyable to play on barefoot and look at developing summer league in the near future.
- Tony would like to move the volleyball court to Ashley Park, this is the original location for the sand volleyball court several years ago.

Basketball/Tennis Court Maintenance:

- Matt shared maintenance will be completed in September 2023; the estimated cost should be around \$7,300 covering the courts in Ashley, Central, and Dumont Parks.

Tony/Neal Report:

- There is an ongoing need for picnic tables in various benches; we explored the idea of purchasing foldable tables, but still in infancy.
- Albertus Fields have been reviewed by Tony and Neal; the benches and shelter need a lot of work to the point where it might be best to remove them altogether; minor adjustments and improvements have been made by the park kids to at least make it useable for the remainder of this season.
- Will look doing a controlled burn this autumn or spring 2024 for the Benes Park area; will explore who owns the other property area as what was shared by Robert Grunewald may not all be accurate.

Next Meeting:

- 8/8/2023 at 530 pm at Ashley Park Shelter House

Adjourn:

- Meeting adjourned at 730pm.

Additional Investigation regarding Benes Park**Email from Bob Grunewald, 7/12/2023:**

Hello Matt,

Thank you for listening to the concerns my neighborhood has about Benes Recreation Area. I believe progress will be made to improve that park.

I just returned from the Library looking for past archives of City of Jackson meeting minutes. They used to have ring-binders of all the past minutes from years ago. They no longer receive or keep printed minutes. The City minutes are online on the City website. The only problem is the public on-line minutes only go back to 2015. The information I submitted to you today is from the June 3, 2014 City Council minutes that I had in my archive those minutes are incomplete. But it clearly explains what I said about Petersburg Road being completely on Kolander property and Svoboda property does not touch the road right-of-way. I hope this information will help the City about Petersburg Road at Svoboda Excavating.

I believe that river access needs to remain public. I believe signs indicating "public river access" should be posted. Public access to water should never be given up.

I will not be a pest with emails. /// I can not find an email address for Tony. I hope you share this information with him. Please share this info with anyone who needs to see it.

Does the public have online access to City of Jackson Minutes from before 2015???? How can the public research the old minutes? The Library can no longer help with that information.

Email from Lynne Anderson, Park Board member, 7/12/2023:

I got on my bike and took a ride along the gravel road through Benes Park this afternoon.

I was surprised that the park doesn't look half bad for as busy as the guys have been working on the new Disc Golf this summer. It is reasonably mowed;(but needs it again) and the road needs some attention. There was a gentleman there with his three dogs and they were having a blast running after butterflies!

Anyway, my question is about the picture above. I see where the bunches of thistles are and the weeds. But that is not City property, that I can tell. Please fill me in here. The property across from you looks bad, but it is not city property. The property south of the row of trees under the "city boundary line" is awful. That is not our property. One piece may be a landscape business. The other may be the Benes responsibility. I know the park will be mowed and improved as soon as the guys can get to it. Please let me know if I am correct or if property has changed hands. I have contacted Steve Handevitd and I will forward his message to you, also.

Thanks for your input and wanting Jackson to keep improving. That's how we get better. I am proud of our trails, parks, bike share, river and we want to keep improving.