

Park Board Meeting Minutes
Jackson City Hall
9/12/2023
5:30 p.m.

Attendees:

- Attendees: Michael Haeffner, Matt Skaret, Neal Carlson, Luke Ewald, Tony Oxborough, Mike Eddy, Mike Gilbert, Lynne Anderson, Joe Pell (City Council Representative).
- Absent: Michael Gruhlke.
- Guests: John Weland.

Safe Fishing Sites:

- Matt shared that fishing has been very popular among youth; there has been an increase with fishing very close to the river, fishing from the bridges in town (Ashley Street Bridge and State Street Bridge); youth have been observed fishing off the bridges on the non-sidewalk area of the bridge causing traffic to backup; for policing other concerns, we can work with the police department to chat with the youth to remind them to be safe.; youth have also been seen in the river; the City Council delegated the Park Board “safe fishing sites” to encourage safer locations to fish.
- Tony shared the county made the “no fishing from bridge” signs on 9/12/2023; encourage “respect the river.”
- Safe Fishing locations could include: Benes Park, the old bayou area near Gettys Park, along the Memorial Park area, Ashley Park area.

Parks Department Budget- 2024:

- Matt shared the 2024 park department budget; highlights include Park Improvements which went over this year due to the community garden and dog park; Safety First is still in the works, though it won't be until November 2023 due to a delay with shipping/handling of new rock wall and chin up bars.
- It was noted that for 2024, we will be pretty much done with our Safety-First park projects though still need to acquire some woodchips for a few parks.
- Playground equipment (adding new playground equipment, which could come out of capital improvement fund and Safety-First fund), other park improvements (i.e. Memorial Park Plan, large shelter house, etc.).

Federated REA Grant:

- Matt shared the Federated Rural Electric grant is due 9/22/2023; it was suggested that we look at getting a new outdoor hydration station for Central Park.
- We discussed looking at ways to ensure we have on hand basketball hoop backboards; the current backboards need to be replaced, and the backboards are still on backorder; we

discussed metal vs. plexiglass due to the ongoing maintenance of the courts knowing that we've been replacing them on and off since 2019.

- Motion made by Joe, seconded by Luke, to apply for the FRE Grant for a drinking fountain in Central Park, all in favor, motion carriers.

Dog Waste Receptacles (JCC High School Area):

- Luke shared a resident requested that a dog waste receptacle be placed along Dewey Street; Neal shared we have an extra dog waste receptacle he will put in between Dewey Street and North Highway.

Community Park Survey:

- During the August 2023, we reviewed the Mt. Lake Park Assessment, and agreed to replicate the assessment for Jackson; Mike Gruhlkle, Lynne, and Luke worked together on making additions to the community park survey, you can find the [SurveyMonkey here](#).

Park Improvement Plan:

- During the August 2023 meeting, we briefly reviewed the 2021 Park Improvement Plan; Lynne and Luke met on 8/11/2023 to edits since there have been park improvement plan accomplishments made since 2021.
- Please see attachment document to review the plan.

Softball League- 2024:

- Tony shared he set aside \$2,500 for the softball league season that will begin in 2024; this funding will be used for various improvements to the park, particularly new lighting for the Albertus Fields area; we are currently in the repair phase of the Albertus Fields area due to neglect of the equipment (i.e. lighting, electrical, etc.).
- Matt will budget for a softball league; the main funding will be who will help promote, run the league, organize the league, turn off the lights, mowing and field maintenance, etc.; another option would be to set this up as a volunteer-led league where a group will take on roles to maintain the league; Tony would like to have \$2,000 budgeted for softball league.

Disc Golf Tournament:

- The disc golf tournament is coming up on 9/24/2023; Bill Swan and Neal are working things out for this project.
- The signs have been moved to ensure parking is no longer an issue near MnWest area and homes.

Skating Shelter/Warming House:

- Tony proposed we looked at turning the warming house for ice skating be turned into the proposed animal shelter; the warming house has the interior and exterior materials we need for the animal shelter.
- The warming house will stay for the 2023-2024 skating season until it is moved in spring/summer 2024 up across Little Huskies on Torgerson Lane.

FarmBot:

- John and Luke shared the concept of purchasing a [FarmBot](#) for the Jackson Community Gardens; this project will also be proposed to the JCC School's robotics team and agriculture classes; the goal would be to create an educational opportunity for youth (at the schools) and community members; the cost of a FarmBot varies from \$1,200 to over \$10,000; grant funding will be sought to help purchase the project for the 2024 growing season
- The park board members expressed no concerns about this idea, and would love to see school and/or youth involvement as it develops.

Tony/Neal Report:

- Benes Park sign will be simple "Benes Park", fishing access will be added.
- A dog park sign will be added to US-71 to bring awareness of the dog park; ideally, we'd want the sign to be 18x24 inch, located near White Street and US-71.
- The musical instruments have been installed in Ashley Park.
- Working on getting internet available at the Splash Pad; the internet would be available for the public to use.
- The Splash Pad is still operational, we will wait until the weather begins to get colder to shut it off for the season.
- Cleaning up Memorial Park parking lot; the end of White Street is acting as a "turnaround." Residents have expressed concerns about debris in the Des Moines River; Tony shared that the DNR are usually okay with the city clean up or leaving material in the river; moving forward, Neal will be on the lookout for any debris in the river he is able to take out.

Next Meeting:

- 10/10/2023 at 5:30 pm at Jackson City Hall.

Adjourn:

- Meeting adjourn at 6:56pm.

