

**CITY OF ISANTI  
PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
January 25,2022**

**Call to Order:** Alyssa Olson called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Members Present: Zachary Gahm, Dan Hinnenkamp, Mayor Jeff Johnson

Absent: Aaron Zdon

Staff Present: Alyssa Olson, Parks, Recreation & Events Coordinator

**Agenda/Modifications:** None.

**2. Oath of Office:** Mr. Vaughn Irke pronounced the Oath of Office and was officially sworn in as a new Board member. Mr. Gahm was nominated for Chair. Motion passed 4-0. Mr. Hinnenkamp was nominated for Vice Chair. Motion passed 4-0. Ms. Olson was nominated for Secretary and accepted with a motion 4-0. All members reviewed and completed the Conflict of Interest form.

**3. Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Hinnenkamp; second by Johnson to approve meeting Minutes from November 22, 2021. Motion passed 4-0.

**4. Review of Park Board Meeting Dates:** Notice of dates already approved by Council for 2022.

**5. Review of 2022 Comprehensive Parks, Trails and Open Space Plan:** Ms. Olson highlighted items that are included in the 2022 Park Comp plan and an overview of future goals and plans for Isanti parks and trails. Mr. Gahm asked about future trails in terms of sidewalks coming through the new developments. Ms. Olson acknowledged that sidewalk requests that are not already included in the developer agreements go to Council for review and approval. Mr. Hinnenkamp noted the impressive walkability of Isanti and is glad that is a continued initiative for future planning. Mr. Johnson and Ms. Olson noted they had recently become aware of a new swatch of property along the river bank just NW of the bridge on County Rd 5. The Community Development team will be looking more into what is available and what that land can be used for given DNR restrictions. A parking lot, fishing dock and kayak launch were all mentioned as potential opportunities. Mr. Johnson asked about baseball field upkeep and some items that were mentioned at the previous night's goal setting meeting. Ms. Olson confirmed those items were not included in the current plan as they were made after the report had been completed. They can, however, be included in upcoming annual plans. Motion by Hinnenkamp; second by Johnson. Motion passed 4-0.

**6. Eagle Park Railroad Project:** Mr. Hinnenkamp let the Board know that his contact at the BNSF is no longer with the company so contact with their organization has been dropped. Ms. Olson will connect with a new contact received through staff to see if there is still interest. Hinnenkamp mentioned that any signage with trains on it typically draws attention towards these types of parks and could be useful. Hinnenkamp also mentioned the railroad ties that are lying unused along the tracks and possibly having those donated from BNSF; Olson noted that we would not use those ties unless they were stripped as the materials are highly toxic to animals, plants and people. Olson provided some images of the current park space as well as a potential mockup of what the park could look like, which includes a viewing platform, landscaping, seating throughout the park, historical signage, and room for future growth. Financing will be key to moving a plan forward and Olson will connect with both the BNSF and Isanti County Historical Society on opportunities. Mr. Ihrke also noted he has connections with Canadian National, which also uses the line. He will provide a potential contact to Olson as a potential path forward as well. Olson also mentioned incorporating historical signage into the plan and working with the ICHS on those. Johnson suggested a "railroad established" date sign noting the beginning of the railroad in Isanti.

**7. Community Garden Update:** Olson provided an update on the community garden and plans to reconfigure and add plots within the garden and to add more seating options. Johnson noted the garden has been very popular in the community and that it typically sells out each year. He was happy to see that we were not eliminating plots, but were offering expansion opportunities. Hinnenkamp asked if it was a profitable garden and Olson mentioned she did not believe it returned a profit, but was not meant to. Discussion noted a possibility to expand both the current garden and to add a potential second garden to the NE end of the

City as a secondary option as those developments are completed. Future growth will depend on increased popularity and requests for use.

**Department Updates:** Ms. Olson provided an update on both December and January events and programs. Both the Santa event and the Candy Cane Flashlight Hunt were highly successful with 250 and 100 attendees, respectively. The movie night only had one family that remained through the movie, but it was hard to tell what the factors were for the low attendance as there was a heavy snowstorm outside. Olson also noted that at the Flashlight Hunt, there was a family that got lost in the backend of the trails and was found by Public Works in their final sweep. Directional signage will be added in 2023 to help guide through turns. Gahm noted that the trails in Legacy Park are very well maintained in the winter; Olson mentioned she would pass that along to Public Works

The Farmers Market will officially be moving to the new liquor store location on the North end of their lot, until that lot is sold. The market will also be moving to Wednesdays to avoid traffic issues on the heaviest store traffic days. Vendor applications will be available the first week of February.

2022 Street Dance bands and schedule have been finalized. Vendor applications are now open and Olson is working on logistics for the September event, which will move to Bluebird Park. Johnson noted bringing in a comedy show, however, Hinnenkamp noted that is a conflict of interest for him. Ihrke asked about parking for events moving to Bluebird Park. Olson mentioned that we have all of the City-owned lots available and would ask neighboring properties, such as the ice arena, for overflow permission as well.

Olson announced the Council-approved name for the lighting event, which will be Illuminate Isanti. Gahm provided feedback on his family's trip to Miracle at Big Rock in WI and suggested having a similar light tunnel that is synced with music. Olson noted that she is working to include the best level of lights possible within our first-year budget and that maintaining expectations is going to be a tricky part of promoting the event as there are so many great events in the market. Hinnenkamp recommended an idea for the logo using the City's current logo; Olson is working on mockups to share in the coming months.

Olson shared the restrooms in Bluebird Park and splash pad ideas are currently in the works as they will be paired together for grant opportunities. Both projects are coming in over budget, but she is working to see what will be feasible for these CIP plans in their 2022 and 2023 implementation years.

Olson is also finalizing plans for the archery range to be approved by Council in February and built this spring as soon as the grounds are cleared. The lanes will be ADA-accessible and will include lighting.

**5. Open Discussion:** Hinnenkamp shared an update on potential carnivals for the September Street Dance. Most of his contacts are booked on the dates we were looking at. Hinnenkamp asked about inflatables as an alternative; Olson was on the same page with potentially looking at smaller scale options like individual rides or games to see if a full-blown carnival would be successful. Hinnenkamp suggested looking to a supplier that doesn't work in the winter to see if they could supply a carousel or something for Illuminate Isanti – charging a small fee to ride, but would be an enhanced option for the event. Olson liked that idea and mentioned it would set us apart from the other area events. Hinnenkamp forwarded logistical requirements for carnivals to Ms. Olson and the two will connect on potential features for both September and December events.

Gahm mentioned that the county no longer uses their inmate work program so that is no longer an option for City projects, referring to the fence painting at Bluebird Park.

Gahm asked again about a beer festival and Olson noted it is not on the docket for 2022 due to all of the current plans coming into play, but there is an opportunity to look at it again in 2023.

Hinnenkamp asked about any plans to fence in the Amphitheater for future rentals. Olson mentioned that the City will be renting fencing until it is beneficial to purchase. At that point, it may become an amenity that is available for event rental, but the space is intended to be open and available to the public.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Johnson, second by Hinnenkamp to adjourn the January 25, 2022 meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board. Motion passed 4-0, meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Alyssa Olson

Parks, Recreation & Events Coordinator