

**CITY OF ISANTI  
PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
April 24, 2018  
City Council Chambers**

**1. Meeting Opening.**

**A. Call to Order.**

Zdon called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

**B. Pledge of Allegiance.**

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. Roll Call.**

**Members Present:** Jennifer Garvey, Jeff Johnson, Mayor Wimmer, James Witte, and Aaron Zdon

**Staff Present:** Katie Everett, Parks, Recreation, and Culture Manager

**D. Agenda Modifications.**

Zdon asked if there were any agenda modifications; there were none. Motion by Johnson, second by Witte to approve the agenda for the April 24, 2018 Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board Meeting.

**2. Approval of Minutes from March 27, 2018 Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board Meeting**

Motion by Johnson; second by Witte. Minutes were unanimously approved.

**3. Park Visit Reports**

Everett invited the board to share their reports; she explained that she will take notes on their findings so they did not have to turn anything in after the meeting unless they had something they wanted to leave with her. She said that after the reports, there could be discussion about whether we need to make a list of things to be done or if there are things that staff can just address.

Zdon reported on Academy Park and Whisper Ridge. Academy Park is a new park, so in general the report was all 5's, new or like new. The overall appearance was a 5. For safety or maintenance concerns, the tennis net was loose and the crank was sitting on the ground, so he gave that to Everett. That net should be tightened. The mulch looked good, but it was a little low under the swings as always and at the bottom of slides. It could stand to be raked. Zdon wasn't sure if that was the City's responsibility. Everett explained that it is, and we'll do everything over there now. She also stated that the school had called about the playground being flooded, but there was just still frost under there so there wasn't anywhere for the water to go. Zdon rated the park a 5; his recommendations were to rake the mulch when it's dry and it might be cool to put the hopscotch stencils on the trail there. Everett explained that we have gotten the animal print stencils, so that may be something we can add. Zdon stated that Whisper Ridge is the park we've negotiated over the years; do we fix it, do we take it, do we make it green space. It's kind of in limbo last he's heard. Overall appearance is a 2; it's getting rundown. It's general maintenance, but it hasn't been maintained. There was no tennis net; Everett explained that it should go out this week. Zdon added that the latch on the door to go in was broken. Zdon added that there were kids there playing around. Trails were a 3; they're a little bit older but not bad. Overall condition was a 2; it's a little rundown and we know that. It's mainly the surface. Zdon's recommendations, if we want to keep it an active park, would be a new surface which we know is expensive or at least seal the cracks with a concrete caulking so they don't get any worse. It also needs a good cleaning, and maybe restriping. Everett explained that what we ran into at Mattson, which may be true there too, is that the cracks were too big and they won't fill them anymore. Zdon said that they're not too big right now, and he's done concrete filling before and thinks these are fillable. It would at least prevent weeds from coming up. Garvey added before we moved on that everyone also should have

visited Academy. She thought that she remembered having some kind of sign indicating when the school had use of the park. Everett stated that we do have one and it will go up soon. She made a note to make sure that it gets put up.

Witte stated that he visited Rum River Meadows; overall appearance he gave a 5. He did notice that some of the play stones on the rock wall were a little bit loose. There was some paint chipping near the triple slide on the north on the larger posts. It almost looked like someone had been pulling at it because it was a large section. It will probably get worse as time goes by. Park rating was between a 4 and 5. His recommendations included putting the trash cans closer to the park. Everett explained that she believes they have to be up by the curb so the garbage company will dump them. Wimmer added that we have also found that the closer they are to the equipment, the more often they are dumped in or on the equipment. Witte also recommended adding pet receptacles at the park because there was a significant amount of dog feces in the area. Wimmer stated that we have a property there that has been cited on a number of occasions for allowing their dogs to go on the park instead of their own property. Witte stated that his second park was Isanti Hills. He rated it a 4 and didn't see any visible damage during his visit. He parked on Cottonwood Street, and noticed some minor cracks on the walk to the park. He said the pavilion was a 4. His overall rating was a 4. He recommends pet receptacles here as well. He thought that the equipment also seems outdated, especially the teeter totter system. He said that maybe a rope climbing system like out at Bluebird and something to replace the teeter totter bouncer. Everett explained that the play system out there is actually a different brand than all of the others, so our normal rep won't get us parts for it. The bottom the slide there has a lip that's broken, it's not a safety issue but it will crack more. That park is one that if we want to do anything with it, it will probably be a bit of a bigger overhaul. Wimmer added that these ideas will be put into a hopper and then prioritized. There was a subcommittee a couple of years that prioritized a list of things; Zdon stated that list was a long one with every park, and that's why there's less to do now.

Garvey stated that she went to Unity. The grounds are pretty much grass and dirt at that location; both were soft but looked good. There is one pavilion and one picnic table. The picnic table with the roof has wood shingles, and there were a few on the ground. They look in very rough shape. The regular pavilion looks wonderful. Her question was why the pavilion is so far off the road and she wonders if anyone uses it. Some of the parking lot pillars are broken and it seems like there are some missing. She's guessing that those will need to be replaced. Everett explained that she and Public Services Director Wood had just been discussing those, and neither were aware of any previous discussions of what to do about them. Everett guessed that those were probably put in in the 80's. Garvey also asked about the agreement with the school for the use of the parking lot. Wimmer stated that there isn't one; Everett added that she thought there was. Garvey explained that it was plowed all winter. Wimmer stated that it shouldn't be and didn't know who was doing that. Garvey stated that the bleachers still look good. Garvey stated that she also went to Riverside Park. The playground still looks like it's in good shape, she gave it a 4. She didn't notice any safety or maintenance things. The mulch is adequate in both places, and the borders still look good. Overall, she gave it a 4. Zdon added that it's a little faded; Garvey agreed that it is. Garvey did notice that the little torpedo seems slow; Everett said that one was replaced last fall, and you have to be hanging on them for them to really move. Garvey stated that she also went to Bluebird. She gave the playground a 4, it's in really good shape still. The only thing was the swings. It seems like the poles are in the ground more at Bluebird than they are at Riverside and other parks; so where the feet hang is deeper. Zdon added that it gets really deep at Bluebird. Garvey stated that she thinks the swings should be adjusted to where the mulch is, rather than the mulch being dug out. The swings should be higher, but she doesn't think you can there because the poles are in the ground so much. Wimmer asked if there's a lot more material at Bluebird. Garvey said that there is, and it looks like a lot of mulch has been added over time. Everett said that there is some money budgeted to do a full replacement of the mulch, and she believes it includes Bluebird. You need a certain depth of mulch, and at the bottom it's not mulch anymore, so we'll have to dig it out. That process might bring those swings up; but it shouldn't be too hard to make the chains shorter either. Garvey stated that she still thinks it may be interesting to measure the frames in different parks to see if they really are different. Garvey noticed that the trails have some larger cracks, and made a note that the larger one would be a

concern for skateboarders or rollerbladers. Wimmer added that the trails get done at the same time as crack sealing and those kinds of things are being done in the area. Garvey also added that the hopscotch needs to be redone. The pavilion looks good, she gave it a 5. Her recommendations include moving the public ice rink sign from the back of the rink to the parking lot side so people see the rules before they get on the rink, and repairing the curb near the basketball court because it may be an ADA concern. She added that she also asked a few of the adults that were there, and no one knew there was public restrooms at BMX; recommends a sign near the playground since not everyone goes to the pavilion.

Mayor Wimmer stated that he went to Legacy Park. There is some exposed fabric and some ATV tracks, more than we have in a while. There is some patch/repair needed for the limestone that's taken out of there. And the basic things we have every year clearing the little branches and things as much as we can. It's still pretty wet and soggy. At River Bluff it's a grass trail, so there's not much going on there yet. The trails got a lot of use in the winter. When the water goes down, we'll get the bridge back in as quick as we can too. Wimmer also added that Everett can expand later on the Isanti County Public Health program at the community garden. He said we'll also be working with the schools, there are three interested so far, to do painting the plow. We'll take a Public Works plow, they'll sand it down and put a coat of primer on it, then we'll park it at any Isanti school and then they can paint it. Everett clarified that it is just the blades, not the vehicles. So far the two charter schools as well as the Middle School/MNC are looking to do that. We'll put them out at Isanti Day then.

Johnson stated that he went to Mattson Park. He said it's newly constructed; he gave the overall appearance a 5. The parks will probably all need to be graded for the mulch. The pavilion looked great, and there were actually a lot of kids playing there when he went. Overall condition he rated a 4.5. The only problem he noticed was that the slides had a back-pitch that creates a pool of water, and if it's not water it's a bunch of sand. He thinks it looks like something that could be adjusted. Otherwise, the park looks great. Since he has moved here, he has seen them in the park doing work more times than he can count; they just replaced swings and mulch last year. Johnson said that his other park was the VFW Park. That one to him is old and outdated. It looks like we took new stuff and put it in the park with the old stuff still there. There's paint peeling on the swings; it's higher up where the kids can't reach it though. Everett stated that there is now a sidewalk to it that was never there before. Garvey added that that may help get people there to use it. Johnson asked if we are fully responsible for that park. Everett explained that we are fully responsible for everything inside the fence. She said she's not sure exactly what the history of that park is. Zdon added that the VFW likely built the park or something to begin with, but that was before all of their terms.

Everett asked for a quick recap; she asked if anyone has something at a park that needs to be put on a list. Zdon said his only thing is getting the tennis net fixed. Witte said that he would just want the stones on the rock wall at Rum River Meadows to be tightened, and with Isanti Hills he'd recommend updating that equipment. He said it doesn't have to be a rope climber, but he asked some kids that were there what they would like to see and that was what they said. Everett stated that those kinds of things may also be worked into the comprehensive plan update.

#### **4. Public Parking Signs**

Everett explained that one of the biggest complaints we hear after BMX events is the parking. The association has said that their volunteers haven't been able to effectively point people to all of the lots in Bluebird. Putting up some signs might help to educate people that the lot at the arena isn't the only place to park. Everett explained that she included two options in the packet. The first one is what we already have at the City Hall lot. Maybe we put a couple of those out on Isanti Parkway pointing into the park. One thing to consider with that, is that at River Bluff we posted a sign that said that lot is reserved for park visitors. That's kind of different from public parking; we don't want people parked there overnight, we don't care if people park here overnight. The one hour spaces at Bluebird are each labeled. Johnson asked where we're thinking of putting these. Everett said that's the question. Zdon stated you'd want one on Isanti Parkway pointing toward those lots. He asked if the asphalt pad that's labeled as a parking lot is going to be

converted. Everett stated that it will this year, and we're hoping to get it done at the same time as some other projects to save money. Everett asked if it would be helpful to have sign on the north side of Isanti Parkway as you're leaving BMX telling them to take a left out of there for more parking. Zdon said it would. Garvey stated that the problem with parking is only a couple of times per year. Zdon said that even a normal race with regular turnout, the lot is over flow. For a big race, they fill every single lot and more. Garvey asked if we've thought about doing A-frame signs and keeping them at BMX, putting them out during the event, and when the event is done taking them in. Everett added that those might catch their attention more. Zdon agreed and said that the city's signs look nice, but they're not high vis. Garvey stated you could put one up as you're leaving the lot and then into Bluebird and/or depending on the weekend maybe soccer too. Zdon stated these could be used for soccer too, because they're not supposed to park on the grass along Isanti Parkway for soccer either but they do. Johnson stated that if you go with option 1, you'll need 4 or 5 of them, and since the A-frames might be cheaper, maybe just go with those. Everett said the prices might not be that different since we can just reorder the signs we have made. Johnson said that he's noticed the parking issues too. Garvey said she doesn't think people will notice the public park sign, but they will notice an A-frame. Everett stated that BMX does post a lot of printed signs showing where the parking is, and wanted to know if the board thought we should post option 2 somewhere so while people are at the arena they have an idea of what's available. Zdon clarified it would be a decent sized sign with a map; Everett said yes. Johnson said it's not a bad idea, but you're kind of fighting a losing battle. Garvey asked if anyone knew if BMX has a sponsorship from Coke or Pepsi. Zdon said that they do from Pepsi, and they had a sign from Pepsi that they were putting out. It was a banner, which does wear down and tear. Everett stated that when groups have special events that require permits, they are not allowed to put out signs unless they get a sign permit. BMX has decided they don't want to do that anymore. Zdon said that it's too much hassle, and then they're making signs and putting signs up. Everett said it's really just about knowing that you have permission to put the signs up where you are putting them up. There was an incident during one of the nationals that they just put them out on a business's property, and the City got a call about that and it was a big deal. They haven't put up signs since then. Garvey said that we can't do the A-frames then because they'd need a permit. Everett said that A-frames are different and are allowed with a permit as long as they're taken in at night. Zdon said that he'd be willing to bet that if the City got A-frames made that BMX could use and soccer could use, they'd have people to put them out. Johnson asked if there was anyone upholding the parking rules and regulations. Everett stated that the Police Department will ticket anyone who is parked where they're not supposed to. Zdon said there were tickets at the last event. Garvey asked where they're being ticketed. Zdon stated that basically if they're not parked on asphalt. Garvey said that the public parking signs and A-frame signs won't really solve that problem. Zdon explained that the track used to be in a field and people parked on the field all the way around, and that's the way it is at many tracks. Garvey asked then if we need to do the opposite and put out no parking on grass signs. Everett said that typically at those events they put out barricades at the places where a person can get onto the grass. If someone is going to drive around that, they're going to drive around whatever we put up too. That's part of the event responsibility, managing spectators. Garvey said that if we have sign up that says no parking on grass, the police have something to point to. Everett said that the police don't need that to ticket someone. Johnson and Zdon agreed that no parking on grass signs are a good idea, and it's not a difficult thing to put up. Zdon said it wouldn't hurt to have a couple more public parking signs, whether or not people see them, and if we want to we can look into A-frames. Witte asked if BMX would disclose the information on their website or post it while it's happening. Zdon said that it's posted everywhere during events, you can't miss it. Garvey asked if their signs say specifically to not park on the grass; neither Zdon or Everett were sure exactly what they say. Garvey stated that typically when facilities know that they're having one or two events a year with overflow parking, they have some type of temporary signs that direct people to do that. That is the bigger problem, the bigger events with people who aren't regularly coming here. Everett asked in that case, is it the City's responsibility to be getting them signs for their event. Zdon said that it is not. Everett said that Public Works does already borrow out barricades and those kinds of things for events. Johnson stated that we're handing out a lot of stuff to these events. Garvey asked if Everett knew if the BMX board has looked into this. Everett said that there has been a lot of turnover for them in the last couple of years, so it's possible that the decision to not put up signs was not made by people who are there now. It's

worth revisiting with them and letting know they can do it, they just need to turn in the paperwork. Everett said we can certainly still get more of the public parking signs. Zdon said that isn't just servicing the BMX community. People coming in for soccer tournaments that aren't regulars don't know those lots are down there either. They just see people parking by the pine trees so they do that too. Garvey asked if there are any A-frame signs that the City already uses for events. Everett stated she has a couple that she uses for the farmer's market and things. Johnson asked about putting a sign at 3<sup>rd</sup> and Isanti Parkway; Zdon said that would definitely service soccer. Johnson said what about one there and then 1<sup>st</sup> and Isanti Parkway and call it a day.

Zdon asked Everett if there were any plans to connect the section of paved trail from the south Bluebird lot toward BMX without having to weave in and out of the tree line. Everett explained that she hasn't heard any plans for that, but maybe at the time the trail is redone.

Everett clarified that the decision is to just get the public parking signs and not maps, and then no parking on the grass. Zdon said he'd just get a few of each and put them out where Public Works thinks is best.

## **5. Parks Updates**

Everett said that the final movie night went pretty well. There were 36 people, but it was really nice outside so we weren't sure we'd get any. Those will start again in October, and the applications for volunteers are available.

The community garden is down to 4 plots, someone else came in today. We will have the meeting with everyone on May 10<sup>th</sup> before it opens so everyone can get together and meet each other and go over rules. Everett was just out at the garden to take inventory of what needs to be done, and it's still very soupy out there, so we won't be able to do any tilling out there for a while. Hopefully we can get out there soon to do that.

We did postpone Earth Day until May 5<sup>th</sup> so the shady areas could get melted and hopefully dry out a little bit. There were four locations with groups signed up. The Master Gardeners have a highway clean up day, so they're not able to attend so Everett may move the Girl Scouts from Riverside Park to River Bluff. For the most part, people could still come to the new date.

We have hired our Parks Intern for the summer. Everett is looking forward to working with Bree. She actually worked at one of our farmer's market vendors farms for a few summers. She is local, but going to school out of state. She should be back by the end of May.

There's a farmers' market vendor meeting scheduled for Friday. There have been several new vendors who have contacted Everett, so hopefully many of them will make the meeting. The market will open May 25<sup>th</sup>. It's the same spot and same time as last year. There were also a couple of new businesses in town that took us up on sponsorships this year.

The Rain Garden Workshop went pretty well. We had 22 people show up. Since it was open to all county residents, she kept track and about half were City residents. It was a good workshop, and she thinks people learned a lot. People seemed interested in finding out what kinds of rain gardens they can do. Tiffany from Soil and Water did a really good job of making them seem like they're just another garden you can plant and anyone can do it.

Everett explained that the lights at Bluebird Park that the board talked about at the last meeting have been switched off. They will not come on until or unless Everett hears otherwise. Zdon asked if the plan is still to move them to the pleasure rink. Everett said she's not sure how that will turn out. When it first came up, they were told that it might be more expensive to just put up new ones than to move those ones. It will depend on cost.

Everett stated that Curious Creatures will be hosted May 8<sup>th</sup>. A daycare provider is going to bring some kids and hopefully we get some more too. The provider also forwarded the information for the County licensing person so Everett sent the program information there as well.

Everett also expanded on the Isanti County Public Health program that Mayor Wimmer mentioned earlier. They are hoping to get five families to mentor throughout the summer. They're going to split the space that the school had last year. They will mentor those families in how to garden and use those foods. The other half of that space then will be used by the School For All Seasons again. We will be putting up another raised bed. We have 4 reserved and only 3 up right now. We'll probably take down the tables that are out there because they keep collapsing. If no one reserves them, we don't want to keep fixing them. Witte asked for clarification on what was being taken down. Everett said it was the elevated beds. Public Works can rebuild them, but we don't have any reserved right now. Johnson asked what's available. Everett said that we have six raised beds total that we can put up. She said that if they don't all get reserved, we may also put one in the Public Health section so they can use it if they have someone who needs it. Everett said there are also 4 regular plots available.

#### **6. Adjournment**

Motion by Johnson, second by Witte to adjourn the April 24, 2018 meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board. Motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota this 24<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2018.

Respectfully submitted,



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Katie Everett  
Community Events and Parks Coordinator