

**CITY OF ISANTI  
PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
August 24, 2021**

**Call to Order:** Aaron Zdon called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Roll Call:** Members Present: Aaron Zdon, Zachary Gahm, Dan HinnenKamp and Mayor Jeff Johnson  
Staff Present: Alyssa Olson, Parks, Recreation & Events Coordinator

**Agenda/Modifications:** None

**2. Meeting Minutes:** Motion by Gahm; second by HinnenKamp to approve meeting Minutes from July 27, 2021. Motion passed 4-0.

**3. Movie Nights Plan:** Olson shared the list of movies and dates that have been selected and secured for the 2021/2022 City Movie Night calendar. Olson requested the Board's ideas on how to improve attendance at these events after poor attendance and multiple cancellations in the last season. Zdon mentioned reaching out to previous organizations that have 'hosted' nights in the past to see if they would be interested in doing so again. Gahm recommended reaching out to the local area schools and putting a flyer in kids' bags to promote the events. Olson will be reaching out to both groups to garner interest.

**4. Amphitheater Naming:** Olson shared that the new bandshell in Bluebird Park will not be ready for the September 11 Street Dance as anticipated. Board members recommended creating a Fall-style festival as a grand opening celebration that would prelude a potential larger Fall event next year. Notes were made to include vendors and a possible performance and dedication. Olson noted that any dollars spent would need to come from current budget. On naming, Johnson suggested a name in recognition of Council member Lundeen's efforts to forward this project. Zdon mentioned requesting the schools enter names for the Council to approve, similar to how the resting areas in Legacy Park were named. Names would be gathered in September and brought to the next Board meeting to discuss. Olson will reach out to the area schools for name suggestions and will bring all options back to the Board and Council for consideration in September.

**5. Eagle Park Updates:** Olson shared an update on the Main Street Improvement project that impacts Eagle Park, expanding the park footprint. Olson noted additions like removing mulch perimeter, adding another seating area, adding perennial plants and flower beds and adding permanent game elements. Olson mentioned any upgrades should be minimal cost and minimal maintenance. HinnenKamp mentioned creating a "Railroad Viewing Park" that would include a viewing platform and schedule for trains. Board agreed that would be an interesting idea and would be unique to our area. HinnenKamp noted a similar location he visited attracted a lot of visitors. Olson and HinnenKamp will research this idea to see if it would be a viable option and bring value to the community.

**6. Tree Plan:** Olson shared that a number of trees have been removed from both Bluebird and Mattson Parks that need to be replaced. There are also a number of vacant areas throughout the City's parks that need shade cover or beautification. Olson will be putting together a tree plan in the Fall for next year and requested direction on types of trees or styles the Board would like to see included. Olson also noted that any trees not on the current zoning approval list would just need approval from the Council. Zdon recommended looking at the past tree plan to view previous placement suggestions. Johnson mentioned we applied for a state grant and Olson shared details of what that would allow us to accomplish, should we be approved. The funding would allow for 15-20 trees to be added in the next 3 years under that program. Of the list provided, the Board identified 6 trees – Cedar, Eastern Red; Hickory, Bitternut; Ironwood; Japanese Lilac Tree; Serviceberry, Allegheny; and Linden, American – that would be preferred to include in future tree plans. Gahm mentioned Bluebird needing large shade trees for coverage and the CISC complex is in need of shade coverage as well and should be considered as the tree plan develops.

**7. Department Updates:** Olson shared updates on August events, including Curious Creatures, Farmers Market and Street Dance. The Street Dance having a celebration for Grace McCallum went well despite morning rain. Gahm noted he really enjoyed the event and the band. Olson mentioned the band is on the short list for next year as they had the best crowd response yet. Olson shared the event was picked up by

both local, state and inter/national media. Olson shared she is working on incorporating a 9/11 tribute at the September event. Johnson requested the fire truck from the Fire District. Gahm suggested connecting with the Cambridge recruiting center. Olson noted she has requested presence and ideas from local first responder and veteran groups to enhance a tribute. HinnenKamp recommended asking vendors to incorporate a patriotic element to their offerings. Zdon mentioned having the VFW present the flag or the National Anthem with their color guard.

Olson shared the Farmers Market vendors are still hit or miss on satisfaction. Olson noted the new vendors are doing very well, whereas some of the returning vendors have not done as well this year, especially the ones selling soaps, jams/jellies and salsas. Specialty products and produce appear to be doing the best onsite. Olson shared the goal is to move the Farmers Market to the new liquor store location and she will be looking at the feasibility of that and those options in the coming months. Johnson suggested bringing food trucks onsite to which Olson noted that is an option she has looked at and will be looking to incorporate next year.

Holiday Lights event options will be presented to the City Council during Septembers COW meeting. Olson described briefly the 4 tiers of options that will be presented, from a free open festival to enclosed ticketed events. Suggestions to include local businesses and sponsors in the event were noted and Olson confirmed that each option would include sponsorship opportunities. HinnenKamp suggested that we pave our own path with a new event to eliminate some comparisons to other events. Gahm noted disliking the standard drive-thru option, which the Board agreed was not the ideal direction. He also mentioned people aren't likely going to want to attend if it's just a 5-minute drive-thru with nothing to do afterwards. HinnenKamp shared his hesitation to charge for a Christmas event, but that fees do hinder unfavorable attendees and offer opportunities to take cost burden off of taxpayers.

Olson shared that Family Day plans are underway. Zdon noted that two years ago attendance was good. Olson noted she has assumed the same from signup lists, but doesn't have any recorded attendance. Olson will work with the schools to give flyers to students as the event gets closer.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Johnson, second by Gahm to adjourn the August 24, 2021 meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board. Motion passed 4-0, meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted  
Alyssa Olson  
Parks, Recreation & Events Coordinator