

**CITY OF ISANTI
PARKS, RECREATION, AND CULTURE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
September 26, 2017
City Council Chambers**

1. Meeting Opening.

A. Call to Order.

Garvey called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Pledge of Allegiance.

Everyone stood for the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll Call.

Members Present: Jennifer Garvey, Jeff Johnson, and Mayor Wimmer

Members Absent: James Witte, Aaron Zdon

Staff Present: Katie Everett, Community Events and Parks Coordinator

D. Oath of Office for new Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board Member

Jeff Johnson read the Oath of Office as written.

E. Agenda Modifications.

Garvey asked if there were any agenda modifications. There were none.

Motion by Wimmer, second by Johnson to approve the September 26, 2017 Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board Agenda. Motion was unanimously approved.

2. Approval of Minutes from June 27, 2017 Parks, Recreation and Culture Board Meeting.

Motion by Wimmer. Second by Johnson. Vote was unanimously approved.

3. Bike/Walk Trail Sign Redesign

Everett explained that PRC has examined the sign at the end of the trail and all decided that the 5,000 word sign is not effective. Everett printed out the pictures of what Cambridge has at their end of the trail, and she drove by and it does still look like this. She stated that after the packet went out, the Bike/Walk Committee has talked about posting the rules in the past. It's not strictly written in the agreement that both have signed that this sign needs to be posted so she asked for Mayor Wimmer's input. Wimmer stated that the trail is a little bit different, it is not under the jurisdiction of the City of Isanti or of Cambridge, it's the joint powers. The Park Board doesn't really have jurisdiction over that; basically what we're trying to have is our park board and their park board trying to decide how to make the trail better. The issue that we run into with rules, and they run into it a little bit more than we do. There is a 60-40 split he believes because 301st is where the eventual demarcation line for Cambridge and Isanti. Whatever is north of that is their responsibility and what's south of that is ours. For our newest member, we pay for 40% of the cost of the bog walk and they pay for 60% of that, and we in essence pay for the part of the trail that will eventually fully within the City of Isanti and they pay for what will fully be in Cambridge. Almost of it right now is in Isanti Township; he stated he believes they pay \$500 a year. Everett stated she believes it's \$1,000. Wimmer stated he thought we were paying about \$7,000 or \$8,000 per year; Everett said she'd have to look it up to know for sure. Wimmer stated that either way, the majority of it will be in Cambridge so they pay that majority of that annual cost. Wimmer stated that what Cambridge is running into, and you can see it in the picture, is to the right of that line is private access because there is a home back there, and the rest is the trail. What we're trying to do is have people respect the fact that we have the trail, it's an easement to the joint powers, but it was all of these property owners in essence selling us

that easement and making sure we're good neighbors to them. The biggest concern they had was that people might not be behaving themselves on the trail. It has gone remarkably well, there have been just a couple things over the years that have ever been any kind of an issue. In the discussions, and we meet per the joint powers agreement with Mayor Palmer in January and go over things, the township is also there as well, and we wanted to make sure is that people know the rules of the trail as they're getting on to it. He didn't want to say that was a request from the township, but it was one of the concerns to just make sure everyone knows what it's about. Wimmer asked Everett to confirm that she was at the last meeting; she said that she was and both agreed that it was a very brief meeting. Everett informed the board that staff are planning to meet with Cambridge, because they do the work to maintain the trail, this fall. Because the committee meets in January, we want to get an idea of any issues before it snows. There are some places where roots are coming up through the pavement again, so it will be helpful to see those things before the meeting.

Garvey stated that looking at the picture, Cambridge has three signs on the left. She asked if the third sign was the rules. Everett said that it is and it matches exactly what we have. Garvey asked if Cambridge or the committee has had any discussion about taking that one down and redoing it. Wimmer stated he didn't think so, but he thinks they seem to be happy with their signs. Everett said she hasn't heard anything from them about it either. Wimmer stated he does agree that nobody is going to look at a sign with so much on it, and we've tried to do that with some of our signs to just have the big overall things on there. He is not sure if we need to do a sign like that or if we can do a sign with just the major rules. Johnson stated that he was out on Sunday to look at it and it's ridiculous; he didn't know who would stand there and read 19 rules, but he did. He said he does like the draft sign if it would be in a little more detail. He stated Cambridge's second sign is more detailed. Wimmer stated that the issue they have is that the trail on their end doesn't go to anything, so they're trying to show that if you go across this road and along this other road, you'll get to a Cambridge trail. They're trying accomplish with that is to show it does tie into a bigger trail system within their city, but the end is still in the township. That's why they have the more detailed sign. Johnson said that this one shows Bluebird Park, but it's kind of vague as far as parking; there's more parking than that. He said the four rules that are on the sign are the most important rules. Everett stated that those were examples and that's why she included the list of rules to see if there was something else they thought should be included. Wimmer stated he likes the visual of it. Everett stated that when we go to get the sign made, the people who do that will have more image rights so they can get symbols that look better too. Everett stated that we'll also make sure this matches the style of the signs that are already out. She asked Wimmer if for now we would put up a sign like this and keep the other sign up and then talk to the bike/walk committee. He states yes, and one thing we can talk about is not having that as a requirement. He's not sure where that will go or not go, he doesn't recall why it was in there necessarily. Since the trail has gone very well, maybe the township would also be okay with it. Anytime you get this specific with what kind of sign it gets cumbersome, especially as time moves forward. Garvey stated that she can see where on the Cambridge end with where the easement is, it's more pertinent than it is on our end where it is. Everett stated that by this time of year, once we order these it will make more sense to put the sign out in the spring so it's not out all winter when people aren't using the trail. In that time, we'll have met with the bike/walk committee to get an idea if both of those signs have to be up or if we can just post the one. The money budgeted for the signs is in 2017, so it's best to order this year.

Everett asked what changes they would like to see to the sign before it's made. Wimmer stated that the demarcation line is wrong; Everett stated that is where Beacon has it and asked if that's wrong. Wimmer stated that it is wrong. On the sign it's on 299th, but it should be on 301st. Everett asked if there are other landmarks that would be useful to put on the map. Wimmer stated that he didn't know if the board thought it would get too crowded or not, but to show where the bog walk is, and if it would be beneficial to have something that shows the topography. That's one of the beautiful things about the trail is that there's a bog walk, there are pine trees here, there are a lot of different things you go through in 3 miles. If we could somehow show that. Garvey stated that it's a nature walk, so if we could notate that more

somehow. She stated that it shows 3 miles, but it might also be useful to have the other mile marker points shown too. She stated that she would add "For a complete list of rules, visit the City of Isanti website." Wimmer agreed. Garvey stated that way people know there are more rules and we have the back up. Everett stated that part of the reason it is so simple is that signs get exponentially more expensive the more colors you add to them, so that's why there are patterns in there but we can work with that and maybe still include some of those things. Wimmer stated that for people who haven't been on there before, he gets that comment a lot that it's neat how many different things you go through. Johnson said that he would agree, and he is also a visual person. They walked some of it and drove the majority, but if there were more detail in that sign it would be phenomenal for the first comer. He stated that those are the most important rules out of the 19 that he could think of. Everett stated that those are kind of the most common issues we have on the trail.

Everett stated Public Works spends a lot of time cleaning up that corner because at this point, the community dogs have decided that's their favorite place. She said that signs don't do a whole lot for people that aren't going to pick things up anyway, but the next page in the packet shows a sign that we can get a \$28 sign to encourage people to pick up their pet waste because it spreads disease. Johnson said that he was thinking of doing the three signs; one at the city line, one at the beginning, and one in the middle. He understands that Everett is saying the one spot is where the dog waste is being dumped and asked if there's a garbage can there. Everett stated that there's not, and at this point we have a contract that doesn't include one in that, so until that contract is up we might not be able to get more. Wimmer stated that depending on how far out we put it, it will become a target as well. It's one of those things, like you lock your car to keep the honest people out. He would be a little apprehensive about putting a can out that far. The thing we need to do is to talk to the Police Chief because we're getting another bike patrol bike, so we'll now have a couple, so we can have the officers go up there. We can ask them to also talk with Cambridge PD to every once in a while just do the random, joint back and forth. Garvey asked if we have at Bluebird or any of the other parks pet pick up signs. Everett said we don't at this point. Garvey said she's guessing then that we don't have the bag disposal things anywhere. Wimmer stated that we have talked about doing that, maybe even within the last year. Everett stated that they're not terribly expensive, but the challenge again is getting people to use them, and then we also have a garbage sitting full of dog bags in the sun for a week. Johnson said that the signs would be a good idea; that way if the bike patrol was going by and saw someone's dog defecated they'd be able to say something about it. Garvey asked if there was a way to incorporate this with the new sign so we don't have to add a whole separate sign. Right now the sign shows leashing, but it seems like there might be space to add picking up after your pet. That way we don't have to add another whole sign, so that in the future we don't say we have the pet sign so now we need to add this, whatever could be the case in five years. Wimmer asked Johnson to clarify that he was suggesting getting this one in a couple spots. He confirmed that the memo stated that we can get one sign for \$28 or \$26 for three plus, so why not just get 3. Put one at the city line, one right at 3rd and Isanti Parkway, and one in the middle, so you're not double but even triple reminding them. Wimmer stated that he doesn't have a strong opinion either way, in his experience people who are going to take care of things will take care of it, and those who won't, won't anyway. It's good to remind them, and as we discussed with having the bags, if we do that we have to have a can available because it's only the most dedicated pet owner that is going to then carry that bag with them for the next 3 miles. Garvey asked if the garbage at the soccer complex is done by us or by them. Everett stated that is done by them. Garvey said that if it's just soccer maintaining that, that won't work.

Garvey asked if Everett would bring this back for the October meeting. Everett stated she will. Garvey clarified that since we don't meet in December we'll have to have it finalized by November; Everett confirmed. Wimmer stated that none of these will be going up until next April anyway.

4. Legacy Table Repair

Everett stated this is another continued discussion. She spoke with the Public Services Director, and they decided that because the boards depend on the location on the table and there's not any volume discount

on them, we're recommending that at this point we just get enough to replace what we need to. In the future we can get the ones we need, and at \$66 each they will fit in a future budget as well, hopefully. Everett stated that we didn't find any tables in other parks that can't be repaired. We met with the Rotary and they are considering donating. Wimmer stated that we were saying 3 more, and they thought maybe more than that. The thing we're looking at with those Rotary tables is that they'd be handicap accessible so there's the one end without benches. It's nice to have those tables. They made it sound like, yes this is a slam dunk. The regional rotary then matches them; but we haven't heard anything from the yet but they've donated other things over the years as well.

Everett stated that at this point, it's hard for us to anticipate how long these repainted tables are going to last us, but for now they don't immediately need to be replaced. It doesn't look like there's a big priority for any of them to be replaced this year. We should be able to use the money for the tables to get the replacement slats at Legacy. Johnson asked if it was cheaper to replace the slats than the whole table. Everett stated it is, and one table is about \$1000. Everett stated that these things are all expensive. Wimmer stated that to give Johnson an idea, to do a normal play park you're looking at \$70,000-\$80,000 just for equipment, not installed. We did Legacy for about \$120,000 with everything. That's why we are trying to do more of the passive parks, where you have trails, and people can just kind of be in that space. It's a lot more cost effective, and then the maintenance and replacement is a lot less expensive.

5. Academy Park Update

Everett stated that she drove by yesterday and the equipment is sitting in crates in the parking lot. It looks like the area where the equipment is going has water in it right now so they might be waiting for it to dry out before they can do anything. It is Harlan with GameTime that will be installing that. Everett has gotten all of the manuals so we know what all of that equipment is and we'll be able to get part numbers and all of that as we need to replace it. Hopefully that goes up within the next couple of weeks. Wimmer said to get Johnson up to speed on this one, was that they wanted to expand their capacity for students in that building and originally it was a commercial building that they were renting so it was still producing property taxes. Then it was bought by a non-profit that basically holds properties for charter schools, and so it has disappeared off the tax rolls, which is a significant dollar amount. Then they were looking to build the middle school, which they're building now. And they wanted to do some park things and they had that extra space. So what we worked out with them, through probably close to a year of negotiating back and forth, was that we would allow them to increase their school size and change their conditional use permit. We were looking to have a neighborhood park over there, which would have been north of Cajima, kind of in that same area where the middle school is going to, so we flipped that to this which will be that neighborhood park with trails and sidewalks. It's part of kind of a larger concept. It will be deeded over to us. They will have exclusive use of it during school hours, after that it's open to the public. There will be tennis courts and an open area; they had some kind of thought of a soccer field but it's not that big of space. There's a track that goes around that, and it will connect to a future city trail that will go around that whole wetland area over there. The goal is that as that commercial area gets built out it will tie to the residential on the other side of 8th, that people during the day can use the walking trail on their lunch or whatever. Then we'll also have exercise type play equipment, so there will be an outside stationary bike. It's a little bit of a newer concept for us, but we think it will be a good idea. Then that area that was going to be a future park area then will be a tax-producing parcel. So in essence, we're trading where the park would have been for this. They get to meet what they need, we get a park in that area that meets our needs, they're paying for it all to build it and we'll take it and we'll have to replace it and maintain it over time. In essence, we get a nice new built park for free to the City, and we get to flip an area that wasn't going to be producing taxes to one that is.

Everett that we'll also be getting signage that matches our other parks out there. It is called Academy Park according to the agreement that was passed through Council. We will post a sign that shows people that during school days, she believes between 7:30 and 4:30 that the playground and soccer field are reserved for the school. So if anybody comes over during the day, they'll know that the school has priority for

those. Outside of those hours it's an open public park. That sign will be posted somewhere visible so people will understand what's going on without having to know the story. She explained that the picture attached to the memo didn't copy the best, but it shows what the equipment is. She got an updated layout recently; they might have discovered they didn't have enough fall zone around something maybe, so it's going to be shifted around a little bit. It looks like it should be a fun little park. That side of 65 doesn't really have a place for people to be outside.

6. Isanti Indoor Arena Steel Repair

Everett stated that this is really just a memo. We had issues with one of the lights under the awning at the entrance filling with water. Long story short, we ended up having to cut that light out and put it on the outside because no one could figure out where the water was coming from. Then we discovered trying to patch that hole was very difficult because it was special order white. Right now, it's patched with something that looks pretty good. If the board decides that it's very important to replace that with the special order white, we can do that. Johnson explained that he went out twice because he was so confused, and decided that it's a poor building design. He didn't understand how water would get in there with a steel roof and steel ceiling. Wimmer stated that we had a previous issue with water, but it actually ended up being condensation because it's such a large facility, and then making sure there's a proper requirement that they run the air flow system. It's a large enough building that it has its own atmosphere. Everett confirm that it does, and the dirt floor adds another element to that too. It's a fairly new building, so we're still learning how to operate it the best that we can. This was just so you all know that if in the future there are any issues, the steel is really expensive. Johnson said he doesn't think it's that important and it doesn't look that noticeable to him. He wouldn't spend \$100 on a 3x3 sheet. Everett explained that she was kind of hoping she could talk about this when Zdon was there because he's in the construction field and he might know otherwise, but this is the information she's been given by the person who built the building. She has called Menards and confirmed it's a thing they don't sell. For right, we'll keep it as is and know that in the future regular white steel is maybe okay.

7. Parks Updates

Everett said that going all the way back to August, Celebrate Isanti was a great event. We had more run/walk finishers by almost double than we did last year. Wimmer stated that he wanted to state again that Everett did a phenomenal job with that. It was originally supposed to be the Two Cities, One Community event, and we got twice the participation when it was only one city. He stated Everett did a phenomenal job, it was a really crazy day having all that extra and everything was changed around, so it was really cool to see how it all came together. Everett stated that the car show did really well that day too. They are thinking about the future and how to expand that and fit more cars, and how they can continue to draw people in. We are looking forward to the future of car shows. Jonah and the Whales is always great. They like coming here, they're super easy to work with, and people like coming to their shows. All of our food vendors have been consistent over the last few years, and they want to keep coming back. We had a couple of new people this year, and as they're available they might come back. A lot of people in this region have consistent things they do every year, so getting new people that are able to come to all three street dances is hard. But it's an easy thing for them to set up and know that there will be customers right there. Wimmer added that with our consistent 80 and sunny weather, it was phenomenal. Everett stated that this year we had no problems in the forecasts this year, it was a complete flip around from the year before. Everett stated that we are starting to see the end of the life of our stage. In the next few years we'll have to look into options for that. Wimmer explained that it is a rebuilt stage that didn't have life in it to begin with. Everett stated that we repair it as needed and it's serving it's purpose. She stated that, just for fun, she went online and found one of those semi trailers that opens up into a stage and it's cover. She was quoted over \$100,000 for that, so maybe that's not what our future is. There are options though, so we'll be looking at those and how to make this stage last another year.

Everett stated that the next item is the scavenger hunt. Staff had so much fun watching the kids bring the passports back in. The ladies up front always asked people if they had been to parks they hadn't been to

before, and everybody had. People would come in and share them with their friends, and they'd go out and do them. It did exactly what it was supposed to do. She did send out the survey for it. We got amazing answers from people. The only critiques were that people want more prizes. Wimmer added, or split up the grand prize; however at first when we were setting it up we didn't know if we'd have enough to make it a grand prize. We ended up with enough that people wondered if we couldn't split that out. He stated that every kid that turned one in did get a Frisbee or a water bottle. Everett confirmed that everyone did get a prize. There were a couple of people that said they didn't hear the announcements happening; and since she was there Everett isn't sure how that is possible if they were actually there on time. Everett stated that it's not a big deal because the first name we drew was a kid who was there, so it's not like we drew their names and they missed it. But, it is something that we can take into next year. We can make sure we make it a bigger deal so everyone is very aware that it's about to happen. Now that we know that people will do it too – WillowBridge was excited to get involved, and they don't necessarily have anything to do with parks – but there might be other businesses in town that want to get involved, and then maybe we can have more prizes in the future. Johnson said that he likes all of the spots and questions. Everett stated that this year, because we didn't know the construction plan for Palomino, VFW isn't on there, so there are things we can update next year too. Johnson asked if we can put it in the Isanti newspaper. Wimmer asked if he meant the Isantian, and he said yes. Johnson asked if it was in there; Wimmer stated that it wasn't. He explained that this was a germination of a request from a Council member to do a Christmas Bentlyville thing like they do in Duluth with a scavenger hunt, to what can we actually do, and this is what was born out of that. Again, this hits that great spot of getting people out to our parks who hadn't done it before and know what we have, and making it fun and enjoyable for them. And we did it with as little cost and effort as possible. So, with all of that, the timing didn't work for getting it into the issue of the Isantian. Everett stated that there will always be an extra cost when we insert something into the Isantian, and it costs more than you might expect. It is something we can think about including in the budget for this. Johnson said he thought it would get more people involved. Johnson said everyone did a great job, and as a new resident he'd like to do more that. Everett stated that with this one, we really can have an unlimited number of people participate with the same amount of effort from us. As many people as want to, can go online and print that off and it doesn't cost us anything. Wimmer stated that is really the genius behind this, as someone being conscious of where their tax money is going, we want to do as much as we can with as little dollars as we have to do it with. When you start adding things in, like going into the Isantian, you might be talking about hundreds of dollars more just for that operation. Johnson asked if we put an article in there. Everett said that we do. Johnson stated that article then could just state to go online and print it out. Everett stated that the biggest part of the budget for this program was advertising. There were some newspaper ads that went out, and she put a sign in each park telling people it was happening and where they could get a passport. Marketing, with most events, is the biggest cost.

Everett explained that the community garden is going well. There is a meeting next Wednesday with the gardeners. She said she has been bringing watermelon over to the senior diners and they are head over heels; they've gotten a lot of stuff this year. Wimmer stated that we have gotten a letter from Catholic Charities that runs Senior Dining in Isanti, they're very grateful as well. He said that the garden again has been phenomenal. Johnson asked where the garden is; Everett said it is at River Bluff Preserve and the address is 1111 Rum River Drive S. Wimmer stated that if Johnson hasn't been to that park, it's 38 acres and has a trail and fishing dock. Everett explained there are maps right at the parking lot, and the community garden gate is locked but if he wants to get in she can get him the code.

Everett said that movie nights are starting up. There are two volunteer groups and she's expecting a couple of the regular groups to still sign up as well. Wimmer asked her to explain how they work for Johnson. Everett stated that movie nights are free for the public to attend and there are affordable concessions. Youth groups can volunteer to run those concessions and then they get the profit from that night. We make sure we make back the cost to get the supplies, but the extras from the concessions go to the groups that volunteer. The groups basically just run that and clean up at the end, but kind of their

biggest job is to tell everyone they know to come so there are more people there buying concessions. Just like any other fundraiser you would do for a group, you want to get lots and lots of people there. Johnson clarified that it is in the Isanti Community Center. Everett stated that Heavenly Sunshine Preschool is our record holder, they've had more than 100 people come. Typically movie nights are closer to 30 or 40 people, but as these groups continue to come back they catch on that they need to tell people and they grow too. There was a question about whether or not movie nights are run outside or not. Everett explained that they're not right now because we run them over the cold season, but all of the equipment is outdoor theater equipment so maybe someday that could happen. Wimmer stated that if you look at Bluebird Park, that bowl in the open area was designed that way for an amphitheater to be put in there and have music nights, movie night, that type of thing. When we were ready to kind of launch with that, the Council decided they didn't want to go forward with it, and that's when we did Legacy Park. It would be very nice, but it's just where you put your money. Everett stated that we have the equipment to have movies outside, and it's something a lot of communities are doing outdoors right now. It's something to be considered. Wimmer stated that it's money and time and hours. Johnson said that he knows Maple Grove did it and it's huge in that city. They do it outside in the summer and move it indoors in the winter.

Everett said there's an exciting project happening at River Bluff Preserve. Staff worked with Isanti Soil and Water Conservation District and with the Anoka office, and those offices worked to get some grant funding. What they'll be doing is take cedar trees and cut them down, and basically use big cedar logs with the branches attached and they fasten them to the bank of the river. While those are there, they're slowing down the water so the erosion stops, and they also collect sediment so they build the bank back up. They'll also be planting willow stakes in there so that willow trees will grow in that sediment that's collecting, and once the cedar trees are gone, the willow trees will stabilize the bank into the future. The main area they'll be focusing on is an area about half way between the dock and Martin's Landing where there is a really steep spot where we have some bollards to keep people from falling into the river, and the bollards are about to fall out. They'll work on that first, and then as their time allows this year, they'll work on a section that's right at the bottom of the stairs. The river is undercutting a long section there, so they'll do what they can. It sounds like Soil and Water might have some money leftover so potentially we could reapply and get the rest of that done next year. Wimmer stated that the main area they're working on is an area where ATVs used to go, which they weren't supposed to do, but it was causing so much erosion big chunks were sluffing off into the river. When you go out there you'll see where all the bollards are, there used to be ground there 15 feet further over, but it was just constantly being eroded from all the ATV traffic. Everett added that since we put up the bollards we really haven't seen any ATV traffic back there. It looks like it's working really well, so as much as we can, we want to keep that place the way that it is. Additionally, she stated that we only have to pay 10% of the project. Soil and Water even approached us about the project so it wasn't that much work for us. Tiffany up there does great work finding grants.

The last item is the farmers market. Everett stated that the last market is this week. She will be meeting with the vendors after the market to get their ideas about what we can do for next year and their feedback about how it went this year. In just talking with them throughout the season, it's been overwhelmingly positive to move. We've had new vendors come and try it and stay. Our customers have been happy; we've had new people who didn't know we had a farmers market. Somehow, we do get some people who did know we have a farmers market and they show up very flustered because they can't find us. There is a sign posted at the old site telling people we have moved. One vendor shared with her that they go to the Elk River market on Thursdays and they've been doing as well here as there this year. Wimmer explained that the market used to be downtown because we were trying to help draw attention to the downtown. We did that for a number of years, and the businesses downtown just really did not embrace it or participate, or do anything with it. At a certain point, we had to decide that our vendors are great, but this is not an ideal spot for them from a traffic standpoint. If the downtown businesses aren't going to embrace it, let's put it someplace where we can maximize it as a resource for the whole community. Johnson said he'll have to check it out this week. Everett explained there's a pretty good variety of things from produce,

frozen meat, baked goods, a selling mushroom kits, and more. She stated that if you sign up for the newsletter it goes out every Thursday and lists what will be available that week; you can do that at the website.

8. Adjournment

Motion by Wimmer, second by Johnson to adjourn the September 26, 2017 meeting of the Parks, Recreation, and Culture Board. Motion was approved.

The meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Dated at Isanti, Minnesota this 26th day of September, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,



Katie Everett
Community Events and Parks Coordinator