

**REGULAR MEETING  
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
City of Oakdale  
May 21, 2019**

**CALL TO ORDER**

A regular meeting of the Oakdale Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, May 21, 2019, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Chair Bethke at 7:00 PM.

**CALL OF ROLL**

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Chair: Maxine Bethke

Vice Chair: Janet Cunningham

Commissioners: Jane Klein  
Paul Lockhart  
James Roettger  
Jenny Nyberg

Also Present: Colleen Swedberg, City Council  
Jill Sadler, Oakdale Resident  
Sandra Ricker, Oakdale Resident  
Jeff Koesling, Parks Superintendent  
Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting, April 16, 2019**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ROETTGER TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING OF APRIL 16, 2019 AS PRESENTED.**

**6 AYES      0 NAYS**

**WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONER – Jenny Nyberg**

New Commissioner Nyberg joined the commission tonight and introduced herself. Her background includes working at Richardson Elementary in North Saint Paul as a Volunteer Coordinator and

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Literacy Tutor. She now seeks to serve the place where she lives by joining the commission to explore new ways to serve her community.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Oakdale Nature Preserve Signage – Jill Sadler, 7019 46<sup>th</sup> St N, served on the Parks and Recreation Commission for five years, including chair. She shared the history of the renaming of Oakdale Park to Oakdale Nature Preserve as a part of the buildout of the Oakdale Discovery Center in 2007. While online information indicates the park name as Oakdale Nature Preserve, there are still four signs throughout the park displaying the old name. This causes confusion for residents, visitors, and staff. She recommended the commission look into the potential cost of replacing, or saving money by modifying, the old signs to reflect the name Oakdale Nature Preserve.

Parks Superintendent Koesling estimated replacing three signs would cost \$3,000. When needed, staff maintain signs by stripping, refinishing, and repainting. A couple signs made for the Hadley Avenue projects were over \$2,000. Impression Signs makes them out of redwood and they are not cheap.

Jill Sadler replied that there are four total signs, one large, one medium, and two small. There may be options to receive a bid to laser flatten a section of the sign, install a new insert; either redwood or weather resistant; and budget for one sign per year.

Oakdale Nature Preserve Dock – Jill Sadler, 7019 46<sup>th</sup> St N, found a piece of wood punched out on the dock at the Oakdale Nature Preserve and discovered that it was being considered to remove the dock from the park. As a 22 year Oakdale Resident, she has noticed the dock is often in use and it would be a shame to have the dock users lose it. On the dock, you can bird watch without traffic, and also have a place to sit on the lake. The park benches are nice, but it is a different experience to sit on the lake. The dock receives vandalism, but not unlike other park features.

Chair Bethke understood and recalled talking to a teacher while a school visited the dock to collect water specimens for class. The dock also offers shade. It is in rough shape.

Parks Superintendent Koesling informed the commissioners that when the boardwalk was being built near Castle Elementary, the dock was identified as a safety issue. There is no access to the dock. It would be awkward and dangerous for a regular park user to get to it, and if someone went down there and got hurt, the city would be in a legal bind. The engineers wanted it removed prior to the boardwalk install. First Responders do have the ability to get there.

Commissioner Klein expressed concern that there is not ADA access, and while she can appreciate the fact that it is beautiful, as a city we need to think about safety and liability. She recommended to put the dock on the agenda to address as a priority item. Either make it safe or decide if it should be taken away or moved. She requested photos.

Jill Sadler replied that the dock may not be wide enough to be ADA accessible. The best we could do is gain access to it. ADA may require modifying the dock.

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Mr. Koesling will send pictures of the dock to the commission tomorrow.

Off Leash Dog Park: Rules, Etiquette, Enforcement – Sandra Ricker, 4891 Helena Ln N, is one of the pre-dog park residents living steps away from the parking lot and park entry point. Unpleasant occurrences and observations include unleashed dogs without collars wandering the parking lot and into the street, a noise infringement of excessive barking and aggressive behaviors, health concerns of dog waste and waste bags in the parking lot and street area, and people parking near the fire hydrant. She does not feel 911 is a good use of police department time for her concerns, but she would like the rules to be enforced, for there to be spot checks, and for another impact/feasibility study to take place before moving on with additional park modifications.

Chair Bethke said the Police Department can do random visits. A Community Service Officer can have a presence there. Michelle Stark is the liaison between residents and the Police Department and would be a good person to contact. You can also find your neighborhood's sector sergeant by visiting the city website.

Parks Superintendent Koesling sympathized. He informed Sandra Ricker that the majority of items she mentioned are enforcement issues. These are police issues. There is a sign posted with the rules.

Commissioner Klein recommended Sandra Ricker organize a meeting between concerned neighbors and the police department to discuss the enforcement issues. Documented occurrences can assist the police with enforcing the area.

### **CITY COUNCIL UPDATE – Colleen Swedberg**

Councilmember Swedberg reported that the Oakdale Wellness 50+ Virtual Walk is going well, welcomed new Commissioner Jenny Nyberg, and reminded the commission about the Landscape Revival on June 8. There will be six native plant growers in the City Hall Parking Lot and 10 exhibitors inside City Hall. Learn about bee pollination, how to grow plants, and visit the food truck. Last year there were over 450 attendees and we hope for more this year.

### **TITAN PARK DISCUSSION - Maxine Bethke**

Chair Bethke and the commission toured Titan Park last fall and talked to neighbors who didn't want a playground added to the park. The location is basically a large house lot, and the commission recommended that the council sell the lot. The city will gain money in the sale of property, put a nice home there, and realize the property taxes. An open house for nearby property owners happened a couple months ago, and they did not want the property sold. Council would like direction.

Vice Chair Cunningham reported that two homes in the cul-de-sac do daycare and use the extra lot for daycare purposes. They don't want people parking there for a park.

Chair Bethke added that the daycares did not want a playground because they have equipment in their yards.

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Commissioner Roettger summarized that the neighbors basically want exclusive use of the park between a few residents. However, that lot is owned by the entire city and every citizen should have access. We took a vote to recommend the sale. The unimproved lot is a liability to the city. There is a safety issue with the culvert. The park is a resource for the entire city, not a few people. If we will not plan to turn it into a proper park, dispose of it.

Chair Bethke told Commissioner Lockhart that the residents who heard the property would remain vacant or become a park likely heard a realtor ploy.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ROETTGER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KLEIN TO RECOMMEND THAT THE CITY COUNCIL DISPOSE OF THE PROPERTY IN A PROPER MANNER THAT THE CITY FINDS APPROPRIATE. IF A PUBLIC SALE IS DECIDED, THE MONEY GAINED FROM THE SALE WILL BE REDIRECTED TO THE PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET.**

**5 AYES    1 NAY - Cunningham**

Vice Chair Cunningham remained uncertain; she sympathized with the concerns of the neighbors regarding selling.

### PARKS UPDATE – Jeff Koesling

Maintenance– Parks Superintendent Koesling reported that crews are doing a great job and in full swing. Sports going on include softball, baseball, and lacrosse.

Walton Warming House – A company in Chippewa Falls provided an information packet on their pre-spancrete structures used for warming houses by other cities that Mr. Koesling shared with commissioners. Brick pattern, paint color, and roof style can be selected. The size of the structure will be 13-14 feet by 24 feet in area. The floating slab foundation with frost footings will be done in house to save money. The turnaround time is about five weeks. They build, bring the structure out, install, paint on site and do all electrical knockouts. Lights and electric heating will be done on our own, in-house; no more 200 pound tanks of propane sitting outside the building. Mr. Koesling is looking for a double gabled building to match the restroom. Costs run \$50,000 built and installed, with extra costs for in-house work estimated at \$12-14,000. The design will have a 6-8 foot opening in the middle with two walls distributing the weight above, and 2-3 feet on each side. The hockey rink is on the CIP. He asked the Parks and Recreation Commission if they are committed. We would like to put a decent building there. But, if not committed, he would hate to throw a \$100,000 building there and not improve the rink. The current warming house structure is empty and not being used for any storage. The usage of the Walton Hockey Rink is down because of the quality of the rink. Good ice can't be kept there. One sunny day will mean open concrete. If it were designed correctly, it would get used. The ice season may only be 30-60, maybe 90 days that the building is used. Mr. Koesling said that the Walton Rink cannot be repurposed the way it is. Cracks that were safety issues for pickleball were repaired and with the heat expanding, the repairs only lasted a couple weeks.

In response to a question made by Commissioner Roettger, Commissioner Lockhart said that if the Walton Rink were taken away, there is plenty of room at Eastside and Northdale Rinks.

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Commissioner Lockhart informed that \$250,000 is budgeted for the hockey rink in the CIP, and \$100,000 for the building.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KLEIN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART TO TABLE DECISION MAKING ON A NEW WARMING HOUSE FOR ONE YEAR, TEAR DOWN THE OLD WARMING HOUSE, NOT FLOOD THE RINK FOR THE 2019-2020 WINTER, CONSIDER ATTENDANCE AT THE OTHER RINK LOCATIONS, AND DETERMINE IF A BUILDING WILL BE ADDED AT WALTON OR THE AREA WILL BE REPURPOSED FOR SOMETHING ELSE.**

**5 AYES    1 NAY - Cunningham**

Vice Chair Cunningham agreed with the motion to remove the structure, but kids may be depending on the ice and there may be another way to gauge the community's comments before deciding not to put ice down.

### RECREATION UPDATE – Julie Williams

Full Summer Newsletter – Recreation Superintendent Williams reported that the newsletter was mailed to residents and is online. It includes all activities for adults and kids.

Summer Staff – Five returning staff and three new hires are in place. They begin training the second week of June and camps start the following week.

Artist of the Month – The Painting Pals come every spring to show their watercolors at the Discovery Center. Their open house on Sunday, May 19 featured a watercolor demonstration.

Summerfest Parade– The parade returns Thursday, June 20. 81 units have applied and the deadline is now passed. We can take a few more, but need to keep the number under 90 units. New participants include the Dixieland Pickup Band and Spire Credit Union. After the parade, Jake Nelson country music will perform at the bandshell.

Summerfest 5K – The route has been tweaked to stay in the Oakdale Nature Preserve and 10K was eliminated. The course will begin and end at the Oakdale Discovery Center and feature the boardwalk in the race. Citizens Community Federal Bank is the main sponsor returning year after year. Hope Church volunteers are positioned along the route and help with snacks.

Summerfest 3<sup>rd</sup> Lair Skateboard Contest – On Saturday, June 22, Amy Brown State Farm and Oakdale Collision will return to sponsor this great event.

Amped Up Entertainment – The series kicks off on Thursday, June 13. This free program is popular with daycare and families. An estimated 100 people attend each event.

Farmers Market – The farmers market returns on Wednesday, June 5 and will run through October 2. EBT Food stamps will be supported and there will be spend \$10, get \$10 market bucks. Nathan plans to work with vendors to see if they'll stay late on concert nights. New vendors include Davis

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Urban Farms, Suzy Q's Best Western Dressing, and The Smiling Olive. The Two Sisters will perform and bloodmobile will attend the first market.

Oakdale Wellness 50+ – On June 13 from 5 – 6:30 PM, a Walk and Talk with Washington County Commissioner Stan Karwoski will take place at the Oakdale Nature Preserve.

Vice Chair Cunningham added that the Oakdale Wellness 50+ Walk Initiative/Virtual Tour participants can earn two extra bonus points by attending the event.

AARP Tax Assistance – Over 200 taxpayers were served by volunteers with this popular program. The Oakdale Discovery Center hosts the program and assists by taking their appointments. Slots fill up in a month.

Park Clean Up Week – Thank you to the around 50 volunteers who helped clean parks. It was a rainy, cold week.

Park n Play – The second annual event was held on Friday. Ten adult enrichment classes were offered at the Discovery Center and Nature Preserve. A few were cancelled of the 15 original classes. We were happy with the overall numbers and will bring the program back for a third year next year.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

New Bathrooms at Walton Park – Chair Bethke announced that the new bathrooms at Walton Park are now open, with running water and ADA accessibility. There is a great improvement inside and out from one and a half years ago.

Field Dugouts and Benches – In response to Commissioner Lockhart, Mr. Koesling said that benches similar to those at the Oakdale Nature Preserve would be expensive to put 16-18 feet of bench in a field dugout.

Wetlands and Mowing – Commissioner Klein requested that parks do not be mowed so close to wetlands, because fertilizers get into the wetland. She suggested a buffer of grasses be planted or raingardens instead of mowing these areas.

Mr. Koesling replied that the residents near Tilsen complain when the area is not mowed because they are afraid of flooding.

Northdale Park Benches – Commissioner Klein noted that benches at Northdale need refurbishing or replacement.

Oakwood Lustre Park – Commissioner Klein recommended not mowing under shade trees where the grass isn't growing well. She discussed other areas being mowed that don't need it such as Tilsen, and other smaller parks.

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Mr. Koesling replied that it is an obligation for city lots to be maintained, and if the city is out tagging residents for long grass in their yards, we will get tagged for not maintaining our property.

Commissioner Klein suggested mulching and three native shrubs that maintain themselves.

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY CHAIR BETHKE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER ROETTGER TO DIRECT STAFF TO REMOVE THE OLD BROKEN BENCH AT OAKWOOD LUSTRE, AND ADD MULCH AND SHRUBS.**

**6 AYES    0 NAYS**

Mr. Koesling replied that he can remove the bench and assist the Forestry Department and City Forester Loren Cota with making the changes at Oakwood Lustre Park.

Tick Season – Commissioner Klein warned about tick season and to protect yourself.

Oakfield Park Planting – Commissioner Klein thanked volunteers who improved the park.

In response to a question made by Commissioner Lockhart, Mr. Koesling replied that the new playground has not yet been installed. He touched base with the installers three weeks ago and they were booked from May into June. We have a new trail going in and told them we want it installed prior. Removing the old playground will take us one to two days. The issue is ripping it out and leaving the area empty for a month and a half with nothing for the neighborhood. There are daycares nearby that use it every morning. The installers will call a week in advance when they are ready to come out, to allow time for prepping the area. We have the equipment.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER KLEIN, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART TO ADJOURN THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, DATED MAY 21, 2019, AT 8:33 P.M.**

**6 AYES    0 NAYS**

Respectfully submitted,  
Laura Linzmeyer