

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

MEETING DATE: July 27, 2022
LOCATION: Recreation Complex
CALLED TO ORDER: 7:06 p.m.
MEETING ADJOURNED: 7:48 p.m.
NEXT MEETING: August 24, 2022, 7pm

ROLL CALL

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT
David Addison, School Board Liaison	X	
Josh Bowlin	X	
Andrew Clapper		X
Tracy Downing	X	
Ben Eckler-Chair		X
Mike Johnson	X	
Kate Krieger	X	
Dan Meehan		X
Lindsey Michaud		X
Karen Alexander, Council Liaison		X
Scott Davis, Staff Liaison	X	

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

2 corrections. Krieger moved to approve the minutes. Downing seconded. Minutes were approved by voice vote with no dissent, abstention.

VISITOR COMMENTS

None

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Downing: more of a topic, but interested in y'all's feedback: <shows video of commercial grade fireworks show between houses> These are my neighbors and this happening in their backyard. Fireworks run deep for

me as I was in a burn unit for 7 months after my experience. Is there anything being done on a citywide level to handle this?

Addison: Did you call the police?

Downing: I did, they didn't come and they almost laughed at me. My sons told me you can now buy fireworks set up commercially, which is obviously what they did. The day before the 4th around 10:40pm. I don't want to be nasty, but this was like nothing I've never seen. Is there anything to do?

Davis: the police are already so stretched on the weekend of the 4th: there's just no way to be everywhere and handle it all.

Downing: would it be worth looking at what other communities are doing, offer alternatives for folks that want to participate,

Bowlin: are you talking about something formal from P&R Commission?

Downing: Scott is the city's fireworks guy, what can we do?

Addison: this has to be citywide: we have ordinances, but it's about enforcing them.

Downing: I looked it up and you can fine people for putting off non-permitted fireworks

Davis: I can bring it up at our next department head meeting to the fire chief/police chief. We'll talk about how to enforce it, because people know, we put it out there.

Bowlin: do we want to pick up the summer trash pick-up idea?

Downing: that was such a fun idea

Davis: if y'all want to coordinate that it would be great

Bowlin: you suggested one park to focus on, right?

Davis: let's start with one and see if it gains traction. It depends on how many folks come out and what kind of media response we get and go from there

Mike: along those lines, on the way to the beach there was a display with tools for cleaning up the beach.

Trash cans, recycling bins, buckets, bags, etc. Let's just ask folks for help taking care of their parks. Maybe if the resources are just there maybe we can eliminate some need for man hours.

Davis: if you'll take photos of that I'd love to see what kind of language they're using.

Bowlin: pool remodel? Where are we on that?

Davis: we're starting our planning process now. 18 months away from a bond issue, basically.

COUNCIL REPORTS-presented by Karen Alexander

Not here

STAFF REPORTS-presented by Scott Davis

PARKS & RECREATION

Staff changes include the elimination of 1 park maintenance (open since April), 1 evening/weekend custodian (open since May), 1 fitness manager, 1 administrative coordinator. From 19 we're down to 15 staff members. We are dividing up duties of these positions between remaining staff. We are looking at how we completed some of those tasks and are trying to automate as many as we can, or streamline operations where possible.

The other big change for parks was cutting the contract mowing agreement of about \$75,000 out of the budget. We choose to try to bring this service in house instead of potentially laying off another position or two.

Pavilion rentals are totally online now. This was a lot of what our admin coordinator did, so moving it online helps a lot.

We were able to bump our part-time wages up to a minimum of \$13.50, with another planned increase to \$14 on January 1. Hopefully this will be beneficial long term for us to help retain employees.

Community Days went really smoothly. No major issues with any of the City events. I wish the fireworks had been a bit longer. As with everything else inflation raised the cost of the fireworks. With the amount we had budgeted we needed to shorten the time of the show a bit to stay in budget. We usually have 18 minutes, this year was closer to 13. We'll look for some donations for next year. We usually get donations but none this year most likely due to the... issues with parade last year.

\$17,500 for 13 minutes of fireworks. We paid the same last year and the fireworks lasted 18 minutes. Inflation!

The parade was also shorter. We usually have 80 units, but this year it was closer to 50. We had 6-7 back out day of and 6-7 back out the week before, mostly covid-related. Crowds were normal per usual.

As you may have seen in the paper we will be declining our last Municipal Park Grant that was to expand off the meeting rooms to allow for a 2000 sq ft dedicated aerobics studio. With fitness participation and revenue still off 40% from pre-COVID levels, and with the loss of our Fitness Manager, it is just not fiscally prudent to spend \$700,000+ on this studio. We will have the option to reapply for this grant in the future if fitness participation increases.

Parks and Recreation finished out FY22 on a strong note. Our total revenue was \$2.1m, on \$1.86m estimates.

Day Camp has been fantastic this summer. We have been sold out every week, with a wait list of about 25 each week. Most of our specialty camps are going well too. We're discussing adding more groups next summer, which would necessitate splitting the kids into age groups in different areas of the park. But it's a lot of kids .

Addison: it seems like the pool has had a consistently good year.

Davis: it's been going really well. The freestyle pool pass is helping immensely. Also due to just how hot it's been.

Pool has been a pretty good season. We have a younger life guard and management team this year. We have had some growing pains with music choices, cleaning duties, and such. It is definitely more difficult to keep our locker rooms in great shape without our evening custodian. Participation and revenue is in really good shape.

Downing: Do the receptacles with the can-sized opening work better?

Davis: somewhat, but people still fit trash in there

Storm damage from yesterday is still being analyzed. Deer Creek Park took a pretty good beating. Deer Creek Park was Deer Creek. The restaurant formerly known as Cousin Hugo's was under water. The bridge between Maplewood and Webster is closed.

Addison: I'm looking at the damage at the lumberyard, and the one down by Trainwreck Saloon, too.

Davis: Brentwood Bound (\$\$ to fix the creek) is still in the works.

OTHER

Bowlin: softball teams, still full?

Davis: yeah, there's just so many fields and so many spaces to play.

Downing: I have a question about the 4 eliminated positions and how it will affect you. What about the fitness manager?

Davis: He was in charge of the fitness center, of the classes, of hiring staff, he organized the parade, etc. It's a

tough time to lose them, but we have to align our staffing with our revenue. It's going to be hard to rebuild the fitness program without a fitness manager. We're working on finding a way to get the work down. We're in our busiest season so we're running around with our hair on fire. When the summer session is over we'll get it worked out.

Downing: can we as a commission do anything to help? It's frustrating to be on this committee and watch you all going through a hard time.

Davis: you can roll COVID back? I don't think we'll ever get back to the levels we were at. Meetings are too easy to have online, we'll never get back there. I'm not sure fitness will come back – everyone bought a peloton or they're working out outside.

Downing: kudos to your staff because I was in Blackburn and it looked fantastic.

SET NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting scheduled for 7 pm. Wednesday, August 24. Downing moved, Addison seconded. No oppositions.

ADJOURNED

Addison moved to adjourn, Bowlin seconded. Approved by voice vote with no dissent, abstention. Meeting adjourned at 7: 48 p.m.

DR