

**PARKS & RECREATION BOARD  
VIDEO CONFERENCE  
JULY 15, 2020**

Video conference participants: Jim Anderson, Julie Asmus, Rick Fagerlie, Abdi Hussein, Rand Middleton, Val Swanson

Staff present: Rob Baumgarn, Britta Diem, Curt Hein, Ryan Scheffler, Alex Sobieck

Guests present: Jon Konold, Mary Sawatzky

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jim Anderson. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting. Val Swanson made a motion to approve. Motion seconded and approved.

**Invest in Willmar projects:** Jim called upon Mary Sawatzky to report on the ball fields. Mary reported that the priority list for the \$30 million is the Robbins Island project at \$3 million which has been approved by the City Council. The Swansson Field project is \$2 million which is also approved and going thru the process. The Rec Field project is \$6 million. The Event/Rec Center committee has requested \$2 million of their \$10 million. The Invest in Willmar Committee is presenting this proposal to this Board and then it would go to the next phase and onto the City Council.

Jon Konold gave an overview on priorities which includes a new baseball/softball complex located on the south side of the Arena, two turf fields and an inflatable dome to be used in the winter time. Jon discussed the Rec Fields committee's wants regarding the fields, fencing, irrigation, light, dugouts, restroom/concession building. All is dependent upon the costs. He stated that, at the last Invest in Willmar meeting, the City Council had stated that infrastructure is the most important item. If cost prohibits building the bubble, it can be more easily added in the future if the infrastructure is in place. Julie Asmus agreed that was the discussion that took place at the last Invest in Willmar meeting.

What is being presented for this Board to approve is prioritizing the \$30 million. \$3 million is approved for Robbins Island and \$2 million requesting approval for Swansson Fields is in the approval stage. What the Invest in Willmar Board wants approval for is \$6 million for the field complex and \$2 million towards the Event/Rec Center. The group wants to make sure that those projects continue to get pushed forward. The Community Center and the remaining \$8 million for the Event/Rec Center isn't as far along in the planning stages.

Rob stated there should be two motions, one for the \$6 million field complex and another for the \$2 million towards the Event/Rec Center.

Rob then spoke on the Event/Rec Center in Gretchen Otness's absence. The project is a \$10 million cost. \$2 million is to go towards building locker rooms on the north side of the Arena - boys varsity and jv teams together and girls varsity and jv teams together. There would be no demolition, just adding to the north side with the hallway extending from the current door on the north side of the building. The total cost of this comes in about three quarters of the \$2 million, leaving \$200,000 to add conference room and office space in the south east side of the lobby. Looking to the future, if the bubble does get built, the locker addition would be a good connection point. Ideally it would be nice to get the Event/Rec Center built but the money is not there.

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The first motion to recommend that Invest in Willmar move forward on the recreation fields for \$6 million. Rand Middleton made the motion, Jim Anderson seconded. Motion carried. Julie Asmus asked for clarification that the \$6 million did not include Robbins Island. Rob Baumgarn stated that no, the \$6 million was for recreation fields only.

The next motion was to recommend that Invest in Willmar committee move forward on the \$2 million of the Event/Rec Center money. Jim Anderson made the motion, seconded by Rand Middleton. Motion carried.

Mary Sawatzky asked if this was sufficient for the next step. Rob said it would go to Public Works and then to the City Council. She asked if she could give a short update on Swansson. Jim Anderson gave permission. The architecture firm states they feel we could be done by December 2020. The estimated cost is \$364,000 over the \$2 million. The Committee has made some changes to come in at the \$2 million but improving two softball fields instead of three.

Julie Asmus spoke about the road project at the Island which came in under budget by quite a bit. She thinks that the shelters should be done. Rob stated that there was a meeting last night to discuss this and have decided to go ahead and form a proposal to be presented to the Invest in Willmar Committee to approve and send to the City Council. Signs have been posted and notices sent to residents around the lake regarding closure of the Island for the work.

**Dorothy Olson Aquatic Center:** Britta Diem stated that some of her staff have been assisting Public Works staff in some of the minor maintenance/ cleaning. Curt Hein talked about the repair of the leaking pipes. The apparent problem is bad welds. He has contacted a company in Willmar who does welding on stainless steel pipes. They will be stopping out tomorrow to look at the job. The repair shouldn't take too long depending upon what they find. Britta talked about the splash pad. She said she has had some good response from the public who is appreciative of the safety measures we have in place.

**Four Season Shelter:** Rob talked about the shelter which is now completed. We had our first reservation this past weekend and are continuing to take more reservations.

**Coordinator's Reports:** Britta Diem stated that more people are using the bikes and there's been less glitches with the app. She met with Dave Hillenbrand and they created a "how to rent and ride" video. A new alignment has taken shape within the bike group with task force meeting this past Monday.

Community Center has been continuing with the meal site and have about 15 people taking advantage of this service. Britta is hopeful that the Center can re-open soon. Julie Asmus asked what she needs in order to do that. Britta responded that she needs approval. Rob stated that City Council should inform Brian Gramentz, Brian would inform Rob and Rob would inform Britta. Jim Anderson made a motion to move the issue of re-opening the Center to City Council's consideration. Rand Middleton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Jim asked if there was any discussion on re-opening the City Auditorium to the City Council. Jim Anderson made a motion to re-open the Auditorium, Val Swanson seconded. Motion carried.

Alex Sobieck talked about our summer rec activities. Everything is going well, staff is taking care to follow the sanitation routine. She stated that two of our programs, Basketball and Volleyball have been popular with as the

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instructor for each is a college player in the sport. Park It is back with good attendance. June 19 was our first Movie in the Park(ing Lot). Public Works set up the showmobile and the inflatable screen was placed on the stage. An FM transmitter was borrowed from Celebrate the Lights. There were about 40 cars in the parking lot.

Alex has been working with high school coaches and getting camps and clinics up and running. She stated there have been positive feed-back and people are very appreciative that we are offering programs. Rick Fagerlie asked about participant numbers. Alex responded that numbers are lower due to the Covid-19 situation but overall, numbers are fairly good.

Ryan Scheffler stated shelters are available for reservation so he is taking many calls. Open summer hockey is up and running with 8 different groups. He has reserved over 175 fields between Stingers, traveling rec, Legion, VFW and town teams. Our adult leagues have started with 10 men's teams and 5 church teams. Not enough teams for the co-rec league which surprised Ryan. He is looking forward to the fall season, hoping we are able to use the schools for volleyball and basketball leagues.

Julie Asmus asked what we were charging for the four season shelter and if we would be allowing multiple reservations per day ie a morning meeting and an afternoon event. Ryan responded that we are charging \$110 rental and only one rental per day.

Rick Fagerlie asked Ryan what his reasoning is for reserving all the school fields. Ryan replied he is following past practices in that we reserve all the fields and then groups contact us with their reservation request. Rick stated that some of the traveling teams have been having difficulty reserving the fields and weren't aware that Parks & Rec was in charge of this. Ryan said he had informed Mark Owens of the correct procedure and had not heard any complaints. After some discussion, the feeling was that it was a good idea for Parks and Rec to handle field reservations for both City and School fields, as Parks & Rec has the majority of the field use.

**Board Announcements:** There were no Board announcements.

Jim Anderson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Val Swanson. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be August 19. Rob stated that an email will be sent out regarding a special meeting to talk with the Invest in Willmar Committee regarding Swansson field to keep the process on track. Jim Anderson asked if there was any info regarding meeting in person versus video. He feels that the size of the new shelter is large enough that we can social distance. Rob said he would check with Brian about this.