

**City of Blue Earth
Parks and Recreation Subcommittee Minutes
Wednesday, February 23, 2022 @ 7:00 AM
Council Chambers at City Hall**

1. Call to Order.

Chair Gaylord called the meeting to order at 7:02 AM.

2. Roll Call:

Members present: Chair Glenn Gaylord, Bruce Ankeny, Dave Kittleson, Ryan Northwick, Brenda Smith, and Morgan Beyer

Members absent: Katie Alford

Also present: City Administrator, Mary Kennedy and Public Works Director, Jamie Holland

3. Minutes approval.

The minutes from the March 25/April 1, 2021 and September 8, 2021 meeting were provided for the Board to review.

Motion by Kittleson, second by Ankeny to approve the minutes of the March 25 and September 8, 2021 Parks and Recreation Subcommittee Meetings. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Old Business

5. New Business

A. Grant for Steinberg Park trail

Kittleson explained that because of the results from the Active Living Coalition survey there has been talk about getting a trail to Steinberg Park. Kittleson has spoken with Jamie Holland and County Engineer Mark Daly about the possibility of getting a section after the bridge paved in order to make a path to the park. Kittleson added that Daly has informed him of a grant that can be written for connecting trails and this would qualify, as it would connect East Street to Steinberg Park. The County is willing to support the City with kicking in some engineering dollars and Kittleson wants to go through the right steps, talking to City Administrator, Public Works Director and now the Parks and Recreation committee, to make this project happen by the end of March grant deadline. Kennedy replied that after speaking with the City Engineer, Wes Brown, the recommendation was to consider waiting until next year. The maximum amount of the grant is \$250,000 and Brown is sure that will not cover the cost. By waiting a year (the grant program is offered yearly), there is time to budget for it as well as get the engineering done to know the total cost. Kennedy brought up the idea of a 5, 10, or 15 year plan to set priorities, which is actually the next agenda item. Kennedy also brought forth an Outdoor Recreation Grant through the DNR that is funded through the Minnesota lottery and a Local Trails connection grant which is also funded through the Minnesota lottery. Kennedy explained that she believes the City cannot receive both, but it is important to know which projects are a priority in advance of applying. If this grant application is rushed to be done by the March deadline, Kennedy fears that the total cost be far above the grant amount, therefore leaving the City with an amount not budgeted for. Gaylord expressed his confusion on the high cost of just adding some pavement, lines and signage. Holland explained that as soon as it is designated a trail, there are certain guidelines

and restrictions for safety. The goal is to get people off the road, as cars are coming over a hill at 60 mph, so solid barricades are needed on the bridge by law and modifying the bridge adds a lot to the cost. Kittleson had some concern that the offer from Faribault County will not carry over to next year and does not want to sacrifice the offer from them. Kittleson agreed to contact Daly about a possibility of putting it off until next year. Holland shared that a person he knows from the state told him that for a grant application, the survey of 137 people out of a community of over 3,000 would be a big red flag and not be a good representation of a community, statistically that number is just not a valid representation.

B. Parks Comprehensive plan

Gaylord reported that the City Council has brought up that they would like each committee to set a 5- or 10-year plan. This committee has done a shorter priority plan in the past, but now would be a good time to do a longer plan. Kittleson shared that Barret and Ashley from the National Parks Service has offered to assist in putting together a comprehensive plan, but will probably want more community input. Gaylord noted that we could use their help if that is what everyone wants, but then the group can get their ideas to the Council. Holland shared that he and Kennedy are a part of a number of committees that run efficiently using a 5-year plan and budget. He noted that a plan is good, but until the budget is figured out, not much can be done. Gaylord asked Holland if at another meeting in a month or two, can he and Mary bring back some ideas for the priorities, even though there are some unknowns since we do not know what the school is going to do with the tennis courts yet. Kennedy suggested that the group also email or call her or Holland with their ideas prioritized and maybe a dollar amount can be put with them in order to plan it out for five years. Kittleson commented that a clarification may be needed to this group's involvement with the tennis court issue as to know how to move forward with Putnam Park. Kennedy explained that there is a separate tennis court committee that has been working for months on it. Smith noted that at the last meeting we prioritized what was wanted at Putnam Park. Kennedy explained that the Council will take recommendations from both committees. Holland explained that in reality, anything done would take about a year and a half as the timeline looks like this: first, it would take 3-4 months to get prices and plans. Next, it would go to Council to see if they want to fund it (budgeting is done in the fall). Then the money is there for the project the next year.

The group had some discussion on the future of the tennis courts and Putnam Park being unknown. Kennedy shared that the costs for the tennis court plans are being split between the school and the City. Kittleson added that a comprehensive plan must also include the costs of maintaining the things we already have, as Holland explained there are many things that need repairing and maintenance. Holland shared that this committee is unlike others, as it has a wide range of interests. Gaylord agreed and added that because of the different opinions many ideas come from this group.

Gaylord suggested a meeting in a couple months to bring back all ideas and priorities and possibly have more information on the tennis courts.

Kittleson agreed to contact Daly about the grant, as well as contact the National Parks Service to assist in ideas for the comprehensive plan.

6. **Other Business.**

7. **Adjourn**

Motion by Kittleson, second by Ankeny to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Gaylord adjourned the meeting at 7:50 AM.

