

**La Porte Park and Recreation Department
Park Board Minutes
February 19, 2020**

The meeting was called to order by President Mitch Feikes, who also led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Also in attendance were Kyleen Fuller, Nicole Messacar, Jake Heulat, Drew Mullen, Mark Schreiber, Pam Carroll, Kyle Cashmer, Brett Binversie, Karyl Feikes and Roberta Mumaw.

Public Comment

None

Recognitions

Mark Schreiber wanted to recognize the passing of Dr. Seth Philbrook. Dr. Philbrook served on the Park Board from 1973-1983 and was very active on other boards and organizations throughout the community.

Mark Schreiber informed the Board that the Healthcare Foundation of La Porte was named Corporate Partner of the Year for the entire state. The foundation has contributed over three million dollars between City and County park projects.

Minutes

The minutes were approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Kyleen Fuller.

Bills/Claims

The bills and claims were approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Kyleen Fuller. Drew Mullen questioned the bills for Beechwood Golf Course from Comcast and Frontier. Kyle Cashmer stated they have 2 different providers as to have Comcast installed in the maintenance facility would be a costly project. The motion was unanimously approved.

Public Comment

None

Sub-Committee Reports

None

Old Business

Mark Schreiber and Nicole Messacar have met with Nick Minich, City Engineer and Nelson Slusser who operates a business that can handle the erosion control at Kiwanis Teledyne. Nick Minich will be working on drawings that will be submitted to Army Corp. Once the drawings are submitted and permits approved we will be ready to begin on the project.

New Business

Mark Schreiber presented the 2019 Annual Report to the Board for their acceptance. If there are any questions regarding the report please reach out to Mark Schreiber. A motion to accept the 2019 Annual Report was unanimously approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Jake Heulat.

Mark Schreiber has been approached by Kyleen Fuller and Andrea Renner Miller regarding the placement of a book exchange at Stone Lake beach house. Andrea Renner Miller provided information

on the Print Pile and Book Exchange of La Porte Indiana. The goal of the program is to increase book ownership. Statics show that book ownership is tied directly to academic success, and a child who grows up in a home with books is 20% more likely to go to on and finish college. Most kids experience with books is in the classroom where they are told what reading material to use, even with the school library they are told which section of books to choose from. This program is a chance to offer book ownership through recycling reading of others that they can choose on their own. This program is currently offered at HotSpot Café in La Porte, with hopes to bring this to Stone Lake Beach and eventually add on in other park locations. The area is completely stocked with books for all ages and all interest. There will be space available for donations as well. The books do not need to be returned, however if returned they can be dropped off at any other location. This will not add extra work for park staff, as both Andrea and Kyleen will be taking care of the area. Mark Schreiber clarified that this will be inside the beach house and will be open during concession hours. A motion to allow Print Pile and Book Exchange to place a library at the Stone Lake beach house with the provision to cease the operation should it not work out was made by Jake Heulat, seconded by Drew Mullen. Nicole Messacar requested that all signage be in Spanish as well. Mitch Feikes feels this is a great idea and is very helpful to children and parents. Mark Schreiber added that Karen Ellison is very much for the project and is interested in adding additional parks. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Schreiber stated that Nicole Messacar had voiced her interest of having a discussion regarding animal acts at the Civic Auditorium due to the Carden International Circus using the facility February 26 and 27. Nicole Messacar stated this could potentially be tabled, but the idea behind the discussion is that circuses are in general controversial and this specific circus has several USDA violations. Nicole would like to look at how other communities have handled situations like this without jeopardizing other events such as The Trail Creek Kennel club who has done demonstrations in the parks in the past. Nicole doesn't feel that there is enough information to take any type of action at this time. The Carden Circus has been utilizing the Civic Auditorium for well over 30 years. Mitch Feikes asked if there was a way to see the animals without going to the Circus. Mark Schreiber stated the circus is overseen by the USDA with processes in place, and that any venture which this board may go into they would need to feel comfortable deciding which animal acts are allowed and which aren't. Nicole Messacar doesn't feel that it would be that challenging once the date is secured to show documentation from the overseeing agency that you're in good standing. Brett Binversie and Mark Schreiber are not sure what would be shown. Mark Schreiber is stating that it needs to be clear on what documentation the Board is requesting the group/organization provide. Nicole Messacar stated this is why she doesn't feel she has enough information to propose anything particular at this time and to perhaps find another community that has addressed this type of situation to see how others may handle this. Mitch Feikes inquired as to what is currently provided to the renter. Brett Binversie stated that a contract along with proof of insurance is provided. Mark Schreiber stated they are regulated by the USDA and does not know what type of documentation would be provided from that regulating agency. Nicole Messacar stated it was ok that Mark doesn't agree, but this is something that she is proposing be considered to see if there's a possibility to address concerns that have been raised. Mark Schreiber added he had not stated that he agreed or disagreed with anything, he is just cautioning the board to not make decisions without having all the information. Kyleen Fuller inquired if the circus attendance and charges that were paid be in the annual report, and if any other types of circuses have been considered. Mark Schreiber stated that Carden Circus rents the facility, this is not something that the Civic Auditorium solicits. Drew Mullen feels this is a legitimate concern and would be interested in looking at this organization's track record. Mark Schreiber said the event has been booked for this year and there is nothing that could be done with their dates and that they usually check dates for the following year after this event with contracts being sent out in September-mid October, so there is a time frame in which this can be pursued.

Mark Schreiber spoke to the board regarding the tree inventory that was done for the City last year by Great Lakes Urban Forestry. This was paid through a grant and unfortunately did not cover park land. Mark feels there is a need to do a tree inventory for the Parks and would be in the best interest to use the same company to do this. Mark is requesting permission to pursue a grant for the funding of and the completion of a tree inventory. A motion was made by Nicole Messacar to allow a grant to be written and a tree inventory completed, seconded by Kyleen Fuller. Nicole Messacar stated that she has spoken with Carrie Tauscher who would like to have a meeting with Mark to go through the urban forestry application to make sure it is fundable. Mark Schreiber stated he has emailed her, but has not heard back. Mark Schreiber also stated that another option of funding could be through the Healthcare Foundation. The motion passed unanimously.

Board/Department Comments

Mark Schreiber informed the Board that there were over 100 in attendance at the February 4 meeting regarding the Stone Lake shoreline improvements. Our consultants stated this was one of the better meeting they have had. Most of the input from the meeting was positive, and will be taken into the design phase. This should be presented to the Board at the March meeting. This work will be done with the street repaving and is expected to begin in the early summer, with bids to coincide with this and the project completed in the fall. Mitch Feikes inquired as to if the Park Board would have final approval on the project. Mark Schreiber stated yes, they would as this is all park property. Mitch Feikes also encouraged a musical instrument be placed in this area.

Nicole Messacar inquired on any updates from the meeting that was held with the bike club regarding the use of the Girl Scout building. Mark Schreiber stated that there have been meetings held regarding creating a bike collective that will utilize that facility. A bike collective is something that has been wanted as well as the need to find a purpose for the building. The Maple City Bike club has been trying to get more involved with the mountain bike group to become a more unified group in terms of promoting bike interest within the community. Drew Mullen stated they are trying to get as many involved as possible. Mark Schreiber stated the Park Department would keep ownership of the building.

Jake Heulat informed the Board that the Department could potentially take advantage of state pricing through Fastenal.

Mitch Feikes inquired as to why the phone and internet are needed in the Beechwood maintenance facility. Kyle Cashmer stated the internet is used to operate the new irrigation system, as well to allow Carlos to place orders and look up parts. The phone is good to have in case of emergency situations. Kyle Cashmer will contact comcast regarding installing phone and internet at the maintenance facility.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Drew Mullen.

Mitch Feikes, President

Vice President

Roberta Mumaw, Secretary

Approved:

3-18-20