

**La Porte Park and Recreation Department
Park Board Minutes
February 16, 2022**

The meeting was called to order by President Mitch Feikes, who led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Also in attendance was Nicole Messacar, Joe Ault, Denise Bealor, Mark Schreiber, Brett Binversie, Kyle Cashmer, Pam Carroll, Karyl Feikes and Roberta Mumaw.

Recognitions

Mark Schreiber informed the Board that due to moving out of the city limits Kyleen Fuller would no longer be on the board. He wanted to thank Kyleen for her time. Denise Bealor will replace Kyleen. Denise is a life-long La Porte resident who retired from Whirlpool after 37 years. She is looking forward to giving back to her community.

Mark Schreiber also wanted to recognize Nolan Ryan for the work he completed on the Veterans Walkway to earn his Eagle Scout rank. Nolan is with Troop 887 stated that his project was to level and reset the Veterans bricks and install new borders along the walk. Nolan and his group of volunteers removed the bricks, leveled the sand, installed the borders, and finished by adding leveling sand. The project took 8-10 days to complete.

Minutes

The minutes from the previous months meeting were unanimously approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Denise Bealor.

Bills and Claims

The bills and claims in the amount of \$46,088.17 were unanimously approved on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Joe Ault.

Public Comment

None

Sub-Committee Reports

None

Old Business

Mark Schreiber informed the Board that the department has had 3 employees test positive for COVID in late January. All employees had mild symptoms and have since returned to work. We continue to follow all protocols.

New Business

Mark Schreiber thanked the administrative staff for the work put forth on the 2021 Annual Report and requested acceptance of the report from the Board. The report was unanimously accepted on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Joe Ault. Mitch Feikes thanked the entire park staff for all their work and efforts put forth on all projects.

Mark Schreiber informed the Board that the city was told in late November that the Swanson Center would be stopping their operation of the Senior Center that is housed in the old city-owned downtown fire station for the past 30 years. The City was going to close the center and offer the more than 40 members a membership at the YMCA. Mark asked for the Park Board's support allowing the Department to undertake the operation of the Senior Center and engage in senior activities. The building needs repairs and would require a staff member to oversee the facility. Mark has been in conversation with the Healthcare Foundation of La Porte and will be applying for a grant for the operations of the center. The conversations

seem to be positive, but if the grant does not get approved through the Foundation, the city has pledged to support the project. A motion to support the operation of the Senior Center and engage in senior programming was made by Denise Bealor, seconded by Nicole Messacar. Nicole Messacar inquired about major repairs such as the elevator. Mark Schreiber stated the Senior Center would remain on the first floor only and no major repairs would be made. The short-term plan includes the operation of programs and building upkeep. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Schreiber stated with the Senior Center there is also a group called the Stitchers that have been utilizing the space in the basement. They are part of the Purdue Extension and have been in the basement for the past 5-6 years. The basement is not a good place for them to be, as it is very dark and damp. The thought is for them to occupy the 1640 First Street Building. In exchange for their use of the building, it is proposed they provide classes through the Park Department. This will start on a 2-year basis, then renew annually. Mark will meet with the City Attorney to draw up a contract. A motion to allow the Stitchers to occupy the 1640 First Street building and provide classes to offset the cost of the building was made by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Joe Ault. Currently the Park Department is paying the utilities for the building and the hope is this will be a successful partnership for all. The group is community based and they make and donate blankets to area hospitals and organizations. The motion passed unanimously.

Mark Schreiber stated that the Water Department will attend a future meeting to discuss the test wells that were done in Soldiers Memorial Park.

Board member/Department head comments

Mark Schreiber gave Pam Carroll a great amount of credit for the WinterFest events. All events were well organized and well attended. Mark also stated that the ice rink has been fun, but also challenging due to the weather. There have been over 600 skaters and about 24 kids take lessons.

Mark Schreiber stated that the kickoff meeting for the site plan for the Kesling Park Complex was held recently with Joe Ault attending as the Park Board representative. There were some good suggestions presented and we look forward to the plans.


Nicole Messacar stated that she attended the WinterFest Scavenger hunt, and it was great to see all the families participating.

Brett Binversie stated that Friday the Libido Funk Circus will be at the Civic and tickets are still available for balcony as well as table seating. Also, on Saturday March 19 there will be an event that is being called Shamrock Shenanigans. There will be Irish food and drinks available.

The meeting was adjourned on a motion by Nicole Messacar, seconded by Joe Ault.



Mitch Feikes, President



Roberta Mumaw, Secretary

Approved: 3-16-22