

PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
Tuesday, November 18, 2014
4:30 p.m., City Council Chambers, Historic Federal Building

PRESENT: Bob Blocker, Paul Hoffmann, Robin Kennicker, Ken Klinge, Kate Lydon and Karen Lyness

ABSENT: David Schlueter

STAFF PRESENT: Marie Ware, Steve Fehsal, Dan Kroger, Eileen Trimble

MINUTES APPROVED; VOTE: It was moved by Hoffmann, seconded by Lyness, to approve the minutes of the October 14, 2014, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK DIVISION REPORT: Park Division Manager Steve Fehsal shared the following:

- Crews are already performing snow removal;
- Tree crew is doing pruning and tree removal;
- We are in winter mode and switching over to winter projects including some construction and house cleaning as well as the usual rebuilding picnic tables, etc.;
- Ben Alden, Facilities Manager continues to work on reservation software for the campground and hope to have that in place soon;
- Staff has been planning for the concrete pads at the campground. Look to install them in April;
- We have hired two Maintenance Workers and hope to hire the Horticulturalist soon. Even though we are filling these positions, we will still have vacancies because the positions are being filled by city employees. The vacancies will slow our snow removal efforts but we will work through it.
- Hillcrest Festival of Lights will start next week at Murphy Park.
- One of the City Council priorities is the Emerald Ash Borer situation so staff is working on a readiness plan to be prepared for when it hits Dubuque. The plan includes public education, community outreach, etc. Decision will need to be made on how to manage the problem, i.e. cut all the Ash trees and not replace, cut some, try the injection option, etc. Funding will be required to put the plan into action. Right now Dubuque is surrounded by EAB so it is a question of when it will arrive, not IF. It usually takes up to four years to find it in a community and we are trying to be as proactive as possible. *Commissioner Kennicker asked how many Ash trees are in the city.* Mr. Fehsal said there are 1,750 Ash in parks and city street trees that are maintained by city, which is 24% of our street tree population. We have no numbers on Ash trees on private property.
- Mr. Fehsal encouraged commissioners to stop at Jackson Park and see the newly dedicated Jackson Park sign and interpretive signs. In late September the Meskwaki tribe blessed the new Jackson Park signage and the 1913 memorial monument of Potosa, wife of Julien Dubuque at a dedication ceremony. The Downtown Neighborhood Association took the lead on this project and applied for a neighborhood grant to purchase the signage. They partnered with a couple different groups including the city and it was a really great event.

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RECREATION
DIVISION
REPORT:

Recreation Division Manager Dan Kroger shared the following:

- Staff is working hard on budget and performance measures. He is proposing moving things around with the activities so supervisors are more accountable for their budgets and funds for different activities are not combined.
- Mr. Kroger distributed a map at the meeting which may be found as part of the original minutes. It is color coded and shows different areas of the city, participants in our programs, and percentage of people age 12 and under. The map is using data from the class registration software and overlaying it on a GIS map of the city. The black dots on the map are people we have served and show 16,975 unique addresses. Using this type of map will allow the department to see if we are reaching the neighborhoods and ages we are targeting and where we are missing people.
- Golf course closes for the season November 23rd. Right now the pro shop and snack bar are still open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are making a change this year and the pro shop will be open for a set number of hours during the week for the entire off season.
- The Marina closed at the end of October.
- There is construction going on at Hempstead which will affect our swim program but we will work around it.

PUBLIC INPUT –
PETS IN PARKS:

The public input meeting regarding pets in parks started at 5:00 p.m. Chairperson Ken Klinge welcomed citizens and thanked them for the taking the time to come and express their opinions and concerns. He reminded speakers to state their name and address and each person would be limited to 2 minutes.

Al Smemo, 3360 Arrowhead Lane: against pets in parks. He has an issue with the agenda of a few causing expense and liability risk for the city; lives by the Arboretum and there are dogs running loose all the time so there is already an enforcement issue; if you believe parks are safe today, put animals in there and they will be less safe.

Ron Ainley, 1075 Valentine Drive: favors pets in parks. As a truck driver, he travels cross country with his dog. Dubuque wants to be a city that includes everybody and draws tourists and tourist dollars, but if dogs are not allowed, you are discouraging a lot of tourists from coming that can't bring their dog. He also prefers an electric collar as opposed to 6' leash or other type.

Paul Andresen, 2535 Mineral Street: against pets in parks. All summer long he listens to dogs barking and has to pick up waste; at Mines of Spain even though the dogs are on a 6' leash they are sniffing at you or nipping at you; there are a lot of pet owners that not that respectable or responsible and he doesn't want to listen to dogs barking; don't let somebody come in from Des Moines and tell you this is how it should be done.

Mary Strom, 960 Mayfair Court: against pets in parks. She lives by Murphy Park and visits there and Eagle Point frequently to take her grandchildren to play and also take walks. She is a dog bite victim and the dog bite rearranged the blood vessels in her leg and she now has a fear of dogs. Please keep parks free of dogs so they are free of fear and people can enjoy the peace and quiet of nature.

Carole Loetscher, 430 Woodland Ridge: against pets in parks (Eagle Point). Owned seven dogs over the years. Dogs can currently go from A.Y. McDonald Park to Veterans' Memorial, City Hall, Farmer's Market, Southern Trail, etc. At Eagle Point

Park people can walk in serenity and have picnics, games, wedding receptions, and bring children knowing the park is safe. Eagle Point does not belong in the dog's world, keep Eagle Point for people only.

Terry Leibold, 2530 Millstone Drive: against pets in parks. Thirty-year employee and thirteen-year dog owner. Brought pictures from Telegraph Herald articles where pets were clearly shown running around not on a leash; at Allison-Henderson Park witnessed two young girls putting a dog on the slide and having it go down – the same slide his two year-old granddaughter would have played on. Sandy at the Arboretum said they rely on 300 volunteers to maintain the grounds at the Arboretum and pets would create another whole level of work. He would like to see dogs banned from Farmer's Market and All That Jazz.

Art Gilloon, 535 Heritage Drive: against pets in parks and the proposed ordinance in its current form. There are 4.5 million dog bites a year according to CDC and the most vulnerable are 5-9 year-olds. We have a three-time All America City and he thinks the pet ban is part of the reason we won the award three times, worry-free parks. Eighty-three towns and cities have banned certain kinds of dogs – Asbury, Cascade, Monticello, Dyersville, Epworth and others banned breeds from their cities altogether. Before proposal goes to City Council consider whether to ban certain kinds of dogs.

Jerry Schmidt, 206 Southgate Drive: favors pets in parks. Retired educator and feels the dogs in parks issue parallels student situations where you shouldn't penalize a whole group for the actions of a few. To penalize 90% of the pet owners that are responsible for the 10% that aren't is unfair. You need to trust the good people to bring their dogs to parks and be responsible and safe.

Ryan Larson, 2535 Broadway Street: favors pets in parks. He is a mechanical engineer and owns his own business; has a pit bull. He can't think of another All America City that does not allow pets in parks. Dubuque needs to get with the times and give it a shot for a year; unfair to discriminate against responsible pet owners.

Richard Kirkendahl, 1215 Valentine Drive: favors pets in parks. He served all over in the military and was able to take his dog with him except in Afghanistan. He came back to Dubuque after many years away and discovered that most of the beautiful parks in Dubuque do not allow dogs. Please change the ordinance – it is long overdue.

Kathy Hartman, 535 Candlewick Court: against pets in parks. She has owned pets her whole life and loves animals and she agrees that for many people the pet is part of the family. She has been bitten and chased and the pet owner is always surprised and says their dog has never done that before. We went through this process over a year ago and a compromise was reached. Pets are allowed on the Riverwalk and trails, at festivals, Farmer's Market, etc so wants to keep some areas for those who choose not to have pets. Please have some compassion for those that have been attacked by dogs and bear the scars.

Jennifer Gibbons, 2999 St. Anne Drive: favors pets in parks. She had her young daughter with her. Stay a home mom that would like to be able to take the dog to the park with the children.

Bobbi Smrcina, 1960 Avalon Road: against pets in parks. She thought this issue was settled but some people keep bringing the issue back thinking the rest of us will just give up. She likes dogs and had pets all her life on the farm, she dislikes the owners. If you take a baby somewhere you take a diaper bag; people don't take bags for their pets. There are 14 places you can take your dog and 3 peaceful parks for those who don't want pets in parks.

Dean Rampson, 670 Cleveland Avenue: against pets in parks. He was tripped by a 15' dog leash; bitten by a Chihuahua; somebody's dog jumped on their boat and

started eating their food. He sees people with pets in Cleveland Park all the time and dogs urinate in play areas and kids play there. It's nerve racking to sit in a park and see a dog coming at you, not knowing what the dog is going to do. Should not change the ordinance for a small minority of people who own dogs.

Lisa Johnson, 206 Southgate Drive: favors pets in parks. She supports licensed, leashed pets in parks. The City Council changed the ordinance to allow pets in 9 specific areas over a year ago. In the fourteen months since has there been a large increase in calls to the Police Department, health issues, dog bites, etc related to allowing the pets in these areas? Pet owners have waited since 1969 to have pets in parks. Sixty percent of the people that responded to the Telegraph Herald poll responded that leashed pets should be allowed in parks. Every other large city in Iowa allows pets in parks and nationwide, the All America Cities allow pets.

Carla Siegert, 2530 Elm Street: favors pets in parks. She has lived in three different states and was able to take her dog everywhere. She understands that some people have a fear of pets in parks but you can walk down the street and some person can do something to you – there is fear everywhere. She is single person that likes to take her dog with her, especially when she takes her nieces to the park and she is being discriminated against.

Peter Kirkendahl, 1215 Valentine Drive: favors pet in parks. He lived in Dubuque all his life before he moved to Des Moines. When he found out his dog was allowed in parks in Des Moines he went three times as often. It is a quality of life issue. The city's mission statement says they would like to deliver excellent municipal services and citizens getting services and value for their tax dollar – he wants the best for his tax dollar by allowing pets in parks.

Jennifer Tigges, 2947 Wildflower Drive: favors pets in parks. Feels it is a quality of life issue and economic development issue – pets bring money to our city. Left Dubuque and then moved back; pets are family; need attractive outdoor attractions and spaces to attract young professionals; need to be known as pet friendly. Other national, state and county parks allow pets on leashes not to exceed 6'. We cannot allow negative fear to drive our thoughts on this issue.

Ray Werner, 2595 Greeley Street: favors pets in parks. Some families cannot have children so they count on a pet to bring joy and happiness and fill the void; the pet is a member of the family. He and his wife have do not have children but have a dog and they hike at Mines of Spain and along the Riverwalk. Every day he walks by Gay Park and almost never sees people in that park. He enjoys going to Eagle Point Park to have lunch but can't take his dog. Please change the ordinance and let him picnic with his family.

Carolyn Smemo, 3366 Arrowhead Lane: against pets in parks. People like their animals and she understands that but there are plenty of places to go with pets – give it another year before changing the ordinance. Pets are dogs not people. She was at the Arboretum and a truck pulled up with 5 dogs that the driver let out of the truck to run loose in the park – not everyone is responsible, think rules don't apply to them.

Kip Hoffmann, 1012 Kane Street: favors pets in parks. Originally from Cedar Rapids, then Iowa City and California. When he moved to Dubuque he was surprised to learn of the ban on pets, he had never heard of that before. Mines of Spain and Swiss Valley allow pets. He works around it as best he can but there are two parks within a four-minute walk of his house and he can't take his dog there. He wants to be able to take his dog to the same park he takes his children to. He feels this issue is a make or break decision for whether people move to Dubuque.

Jon Schmitz, 3598 Crescent Court: favors pets in parks. Dogs are a big part of his family and he wants to share activities in the parks with his pet. There are a lot of irresponsible pet owners but the same could be said for drivers. Give the responsible

pet owners a chance, there are a lot more of them than people think.

Kim Oberbroeckling, 2152 Golden Eagle Drive: favors pets in parks. The majority of pet owners are responsible and they should not be penalized. She takes her dog to A.Y. McDonald Park a lot and has never seen dogs off leash or dog waste. Give dog owners a chance. Pets are a boom to tourism. A lot of dog owners would like to go to Eagle Point Park.

Kimberly Pope, 495 Edith Street: favors pets in parks. She is a new pet owner and was not aware of the ordinance until after she got her dog. She has no children and wants the opportunity to celebrate Dubuque with family and her pet at Eagle Point Park.

Stacy Weires, 2556½ Washington Street: favors pets in parks. There are several groups in Dubuque that have started educating people in Dubuque about pets in parks and good dog ownership. She goes to Galena a lot because they are pet friendly. She grew up behind Gay Park and it is barely used. Maybe don't allow pets at Arboretum or Eagle Point but there are a lot of other areas where pets should be allowed.

Russell Pope, 495 Edith Street: favors pets in parks. Give pet owners a chance; educate people more.

Melissa Wonser, 2055 Schiller Street: favors pets in parks. There are a lot of good dogs and good dog owners out there and they need more places to go.

Elysa Wonser, 2055 Shiller Street: favors pets in parks. She wants dogs to be allowed in the parks so they can go to the parks and exercise and not be cooped up inside.

Brian Carpenter, 1635 West 32nd Street: favors pets in parks. It would be nice to have places to take your dog for a walk. He wants to go to Murphy Park but can't take his dog. He knows a lot of people that own pets and there would be a very large group of people that would make use of the parks if they could take their dogs.

MANAGER
REPORT:

Leisure Services Manager Marie Ware shared the following:

- Manager Ware shared information on the proposed **park** at the **Port of Dubuque** called Creative Commons. This area is the green space at the corner of 5th and Bell Streets on the south side of the McGraw-Hill building. There was always slated to be a park at that location but now an arts group is working on a design and fundraising plan. The Commons is meant to be a gathering space used for artistic expression and could be used for many different types of events so a lot of the focus is on the multi-purpose usage. The arts group will be seeking some funds from the city. The concept/plan for the park will be brought to the Park and Recreation Commission when ready. *Commissioner Lyness* asked if any of the area would be enclosed and Ms. Ware said no.
- Leadership team received the management agenda today that has the rest of the list of **City Council goals and priorities**, several relating to Leisure Services.
- **ITC Transmission Company** came to the city with a plan to possibly donate \$15,000 per year for five years – they want to support an initiative that supports environment and asked Leisure Services to put together a proposal for how the money would be used if received. *Ms. Kennicker* asked what was ITC's goal or what do they want in return? Ms. Ware said you had to include in the proposal how you would recognize the company for the donation.
- Ms. Ware and Division Manager Fehsal are

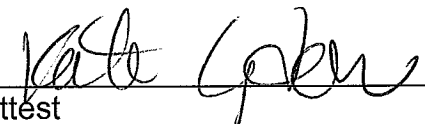
working with the **Parks to People Initiative**. At the end of September the Governor presented the first award for the state of Iowa to the Jones/Jackson/Dubuque region. The region is being called the Grant Wood Mississippi Region because there are connections to that in all three of these counties. The project has \$1.9 million available. The region must match 5 to 1. There are city, state, county and tourism people from the region all working together. They are looking at the region to see what compliments, what makes us unique; what do we have to offer and then how does it connect with others. This region has a rural / urban component.

ADJOURN;
VOTE:

It was moved by Blocker, seconded by Hoffmann, that the meeting be adjourned at 6:18 p.m. The motion passed unanimously.



Chairperson



Attest