

**Hiawatha Parks and Recreation
Regular Meeting
February 9, 2021**

Charles Uthe called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. virtually via Google Meet. Present: Charles Uthe, Chris Klostermann, Heather Gibson, Dan Wilkes and Michelle McIllece. Employees: Kelly Willadsen, Director of Parks and Recreation, Kim Downs, City Manager, and Ambyr Severson, Administrative Coordinator.

Motion by Michelle McIllece, second by Heather Gibson, to approve the February 9, 2021 agenda as amended. Motion carried.

Motion by Chris Klostermann, second by Heather Gibson, to approve the minutes of January 12, 2021. Motion carried.

Turtle Creek Park Phase 2:

Willadsen informed the group that the Turtle Creek Committee met on February 3, 2021. Surveys were sent in the beginning of January to 152 residents near Turtle Creek Park and, thanks to the home owners association in the area, she received 107 responses back for a return rate of 70%. There was a lot of great feedback. The respondents made it clear that they would like to add additional trail, plant trees and keep the park natural with native grasses. She informed the commission that she will be taking the results back to MSA who will use the feedback to update the concept plan and compare them with the Phase 2 budget. If the trail comes in below budget the committee would like to add a playground.

Wilkes noted that the response rate was crazy and that it showed the influence of social media and the homeowners association.

Willadsen responded that it was impressive considering 90% of the responses were collected online and 36% collected was the older population.

Wilkes asked how many rooftops are currently on the ground and what's projected?

Willadsen answered that there is a potential to build 700 rooftops.

Downs added that there's already 300 in the area. Dell Ridge, Pines of Turtle Creek, Turtle Reserve, Todd Hills and Rolling Prairie are current developments and there's still more development opportunities.

McIllece added that the current homes have all been added in the last eight years.

Downs replied that the people that live in the area run, walk, bike and are very active. They currently utilize the wide shoulder on the roadway that they call a “trail”.

Willadsen responded that 99% of those who completed the survey said they would use the park to walk and run.

Guthridge and Tucker Park Playground Equipment Discussion:

Willadsen advised that the department is moving forward with updating the playground equipment at Tucker and Guthridge Parks. We’re looking at equipment from Cunningham Recreation and Boland Recreation. As a reminder, we have \$400,000 set aside to replace Guthridge by the Green Pavilion and the equipment that was damaged at Tucker as it cannot be replaced due to its age. Boland Recreation came in with lower bids but is not as developed in inclusive playground options as Cunningham is. She stressed that she thinks the parks should be as inclusive as possible. Boland’s options would work but they’re not as inclusive.

Willadsen showed the commission pictures of options for Guthridge Park from Boland Recreation.

Option one offers single panel features and sensory play. There’s a swing that’s solid so children can be set inside of it. This option is \$150,000 and includes surfacing.

Option two is a structure with panels. The structure is not accessible for those with mobility disabilities. Overall, not all kids can play. Miracle is starting to build ADA compliant structures but they’re big.

She continued by showing the pictures of options from Boland Recreation for Tucker Park.

Option one is \$130,000 and staff would have to do the groundwork. It offers side structures and features.

Option two is unique and has a cool climbing feature.

She explained that Cunningham Recreation in Ankeny works with Utah State University and partners with Center of Disabilities. They sent two options, one for Guthridge and one for Tucker. Guthridge’s option is all inclusive with ramps so persons in wheelchairs or even grandparents can follow children on to the structure and does not include any side features.

They recommend a concrete subbase with rubber tiles and they do all the demolition, spacing and grading work. This option came in at \$268,000. She added that she prefers the rubber tiles because they can be replaced. Pour in place surfacing can only be patched or repoured. Tucker's option is ADA compliant. There's not ramps around the whole thing but there's still so much for each ability to do, including a teeter totter. This structure would also have a concrete subbase with rubber tiles and comes in at \$311,500.

With our municipality discount Cunningham Recreation's total for both parks is \$447,000 and is still below budget. Boland would be under budget no matter what. She then opened it up for discussion.

Wilkes asked what the timeline was?

Willadsen answered that we still have some time but will need to move forward before July.

Gibson mentioned she showed the options to her children. Both like the ladder and the side options Boland offered. She also liked the umbrellas but did not like the dark slides.

Willadsen replied that we can pick the colors we want.

Gibson mentioned that Cunningham's looks a lot like Noelridge which is always packed.

Wilkes added that he likes the flat surfaces for people with canes and walkers and that the surfacing is soft. He mentioned that 1 in 8 people have an IQ below 85 which means that 1 in 8 people have a disability. The ramps appeal to him from a safety standpoint but the benefit of Boland's option is that as the multiple piece structures deteriorate, we could replace them individually as opposed to having to replace the entire structure.

Klostermann added that he's also a fan of the ramps but understands the advantages of separate pieces, as well. He also asked his children and they both went with Cunningham's options. He also favors them because when his child was little, he was on fulltime oxygen and he was the one following him all over the playground, carrying it for him.

McIllece mentioned that she's a huge fan of a universal structure that everyone can enjoy regardless of their physical ability. She'd rather do something accommodating for everyone.

Willadsen agreed. She does like the idea of adding some side features but overall favors Cunningham's accessibility. She showed the commission another option that has towers, ramps

and side features but did not have the details on price or size. She added that in her research she's found that pour and place is about the same as what used to be at the splashpad.

McIllece asked if both surfaces are squishy?

Willadsen answered yes, they have to be. Boland recommends crushed subbase and her hesitation with that is washout.

Uthe agreed that he likes the ramps that allow for more people in more space and is unique.

Willadsen asked if they liked what they saw from Boland.

Wilkes said Boland's comes down to color because the sun will be beating on it 24/7. Any parents considering moving to Hiawatha will see the playground right across the street from the elementary school and it needs to be eye catching. It doesn't have to be a monument but needs height and contingency.

Uthe asked how extensive grading will be and if there's any talks on leveling the area at Green?

Willadsen responded that we have to talk about that. Gameplay and some structures can be put on a hill or slope but any new playground will have to have accessibility.

Willadsen continued that she would go back to the companies to make sure the projects are a little more budget friendly, have side structures and tile surfacing and bring it back to the next meeting and go from there.

Adventure Camp 2021: Willadsen explained that it is so hard to know how to move forward with Adventure Camp. She's talked to teachers and the Fire Chief and looked at schools' websites to get an insight on how to structure the summer program. A survey was sent out to parents of previous years participants and 78% responded that they would still send their kids to camp this summer. Parents made it apparent that they want their kids outside and doing things. She took the current parent packet and added COVID-19 protocols. At this point she is thinking we would still require masks by both participants and staff, unless the world completely changes by then. Drop off would require staff to take participants to and from cars. The program usually has 50 kids but this year is looking like two groups of 15 with six staff members as usual. She advised that the groups would stay separate and would not have field trips so that children could maintain distancing, which they wouldn't be able to do on a bus. In severe weather, one group could go to the multipurpose room and one in the community

center. Her only hesitation is sending participants to the splashpad since it's open to the community. She asked if there were no field trips and only guest speakers, is it worth offering to the community? Are the families going to get the best bang for their dollar? Are we going in the right direction? This is a program we have to plan for. It's not something that can be thrown together overnight. We have to hire staff and plan. She asked for the commission's feedback. Are we going in the right direction?

Gibson replied that she would be fine with the program the way it's been modified. Her friend is looking for camp because they don't go to a daycare and parents are working from home. This would be a great option for this family. She also knows another family interested because they don't have summer plans for their children. Their kids are too old to hangout with babies all day at a daycare but not old enough to stay home by themselves. This is a great option for them. Finding staff would be an area of concern but find speakers and keep it fun. This is a program people would want.

Willadsen advised that she's looking at themed weeks and doesn't think staff will be hard to find. She hopes that last year's applicants will reapply.

Gibson continued that daycares are changing. Indian Creek is offering an outdoor experience. Parents will be interested and won't be surprised with no trips to the splash pads or field trips.

Klostermann added that this is the advantage of a cultural shift. People will understand. Both parents and children are looking for something to break monotony. Some ideas he had were geocaching, disc golf. The effort to move forward with protocols in place is appreciated. Kids are fragile but he would feel safe with these mitigation strategies in place.

Willadsen explained that she just wants to make sure that everyone feels comfortable.

McIllece added to not present the strategies as negative. Present it as every week is different. This is how it is this year and with some creativity it could end up even better.

Willadsen replied that there will be a lot of arts and crafts, life skills and we'll still entertain activities.

McIllece suggested separating the participants by age group or interest groups. There's a lot of positives to doing it this way. The parents who are ready will sign their kids up and the parents who are not, won't do it.

Willadsen replied, that is her hope. She feels better that the program is set up the same way the Cedar Rapids School District is set up. She received a daycamp packet from a New Jersey camp director and merged it with our Adventure Camp packet and Cedar Rapids Community Schools recommendations to create what we have now.

McIllece suggested that since we have to keep the kids busy, why not put them to work in an age-appropriate way? There's a need for trees.

Klosterman added they'll receive a mask and a hard hat with their registration.

Gibson added that they'll be really tired when they get home.

Willadsen appreciated the commissions comments and feedback and will move forward with offering Adventure Camp this summer.

Parks:

Tucker's light project has started and we foresee that project being completed much faster than anticipated.

Parks seasonal positions have been posted. Please send potential applicants our way. The applicant must be 18 years old or older.

Ambyr has been staying busy with administrative tasks and offering craft kits to the community. We sold 21/24 Valentines kits. St. Patrick's Day Kits are next months. She sent out a survey on the kits and received very positive feedback so we'll continue to move forward with those.

We will not offer a 5k or egg hunt this year. Instead, the Friends Foundation will be offering Egg my Yard. We have plenty of eggs and candy and will egg yards on the morning of Easter. Be on the lookout for a post about that.

Motion by Charles Uthe, second by Michelle McIllece, to adjourn at 7:20 p.m. Motion carried.

ATTEST:

Charles Uthe, Chair

Kelly Willadsen, Director of Parks and Recreation
