

**PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD***Wednesday, May 5, 2021 – 5:00 p.m.*

WebEx Meeting

MINUTES

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Shannon Crouthers, Chair, Rick Eriksen, Marty Tessmer, Danielle Lammon, Nick Kinney, Mike Ely, Steve Sundberg, Angela Zbikowski, Bobbie McClure, Vice-Chair

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space; Joe Sack, Manager of Recreation Services; John Wesolowski, Manager of Parks and Forestry; Beth Yacono, Acting Recreation Superintendent; and Lauren Morales, Recording Secretary

OTHERS ABSENT: Nancy Freed, Deputy City Manager

I. CALL TO ORDER: By Parks & Recreation Board Chair Crouthers at 5:01 p.m.

II. INTRODUCTIONS: None

III. ADOPTION OF AGENDA: The Agenda for the May 5, 2021 meeting was approved after a motion was made by Member Zbikowski and seconded by Member Eriksen.

IV. ADOPTION OF PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES –
The April 7, 2021 meeting Minutes were approved after a motion was made by Member Ely and seconded by Member Tessmer.

V. BOARD DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS/REMINDERS

A. John Wesolowski, Parks & Forestry Manager, gave an overview of the Forestry Division activities/programs and an update on Emerald Ash Bore. The Forestry Division is responsible for maintaining all city trees. Pruning is done by a grid pruning system. 4 areas in Aurora are currently being pruned and 7 areas are schedule for future pruning. Since 2010, a total of 23,263 trees out of 33,034 have been pruned with current completion rate at 70%. Plans are to also inspect every city tree in inventory within a 2-year frequency.

- Tree Preservation Policy and Black Forest Ordinance. The Black Forest is made up of ponderosa pines and is located south of Smoky Hill Road and east of E-470. This ordinance states 70% of the forest must be preserved in every development project and staff work with contractors to maintain preservation.
- Forestry Inspectors – Provide free tree information to Aurora residents on both public and private tree issues; prescribe work needed for public trees, manage contractors through the grid pruning system; work with developers on tree preservation; manage the planting program and monitor insect and diseases in our urban forest, to name a few. Approximately 2,000 inspections are completed each year and 16,500 trees were visited last year to update inventory. 380 city trees were planted in 2020.

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- Arborist Apprenticeship Program – Used to recruit skilled labor by offering an 18-month tree trimmer apprenticeship to train people with no experience; 3-year arborist apprenticeship for full-time employees. Forestry Division partners with Front Range Community College for related learning courses. Currently, there are 3 apprentices in the program and 4 technicians on payroll that were former apprentices.
- Emerald Ash Bore (EAB) – This is an insect that feeds on and kills all species of North American Ash trees and is responsible for the loss of millions of trees. The spread is primarily through movement of firewood. In 2013, it was detected in Boulder, CO and has since spread to other communities. EAB has not yet been detected in Aurora but is anticipated that it will be at some point. There are 6,000 city-owned Ash trees and 110,000 private Ash trees in Aurora. The treatment (drench, injection, spray) cost for 12' diameter tree is approximately \$108 every other year for the life of the tree. Removal and stump grinding cost is approximately \$480 and replanting for a 2" caliper tree is around \$500. Treatment for EAB is being discussed by staff and city leaders but is not included in the 2022 budget currently.

B. Recreation Programs – Beth Yacono, Acting Recreation Superintendent, gave an overview on the following Recreation programs:

- A.C.A.A. (Aurora Center for Active Adults) – This center has been closed since March due to the pandemic and is due to re-open in May. This will be a gradual re-opening starting with the workout room and the billiards room the following week with fitness classes soon to resume after. More in-person programming will begin in June. Staff is planning some special events for Valentine's Day and St. Patrick's Day.
- A.R.I.S.E. (Adaptive Recreation & Inclusion Services for Everyone) - This program is designed for individuals with disabilities and has been offering some virtual programming over the last year. This program will also move to in-person programming this summer with running camps, swimming lessons, sports and fitness.
- Cooking Program – This program has been offering virtual classes for individuals, groups and families around the world for the past year and in-person classes and camps are going to resume. Some virtual classes will continue. Summer camps are almost at full capacity already.
- Fitness Program – In-person fitness classes are now offered and are starting to gain more interest as restrictions ease. Classes are offered at A.C.A.A. and other recreation centers. Recruitment is taking place for both full-time and part-time fitness instructors.
- Morning Star – Morning Star adult day program provides recreational opportunities for older adults with cognitive and physical challenges by providing activities and ongoing outreach by providing meal pick-up and



delivery, programming/care packages and health checkups. The center has been closed since March of 2020.

- Perfect Mind Program Coordination – Perfect Mind is a registration software used by the Recreation Division to allow patrons to register for programs offered by the PROS Department. Staff programmers work with the PROS marketing team with overall programs department wide. The website to register for PROS programs through the Perfect Mind system is Auroragov.org/Recreation

C. PROS Update – Brooke Bell, Director of Parks, Recreation and Open Space Department reported on upcoming events. Smores on the Shores at Aurora Reservoir was held at Aurora Reservoir and was a sold-out event. There will be another event on May 14th which is also sold out. The Colorado Remembers event is May 29th at the Colorado Freedom Memorial park. It is the only large in-person event that is scheduled for the near future and attracts between 100 to 500 people. This event is in recognition of veterans with a free pancake breakfast. In June, Art in the Parks events are scheduled. This event is held at four different locations. Fletcher Plaza, June 2nd; Tollgate park on June 9th; Hoffman park on June 16th and Expo park on June 23rd. Square pieces of a large community transportable mural are handed out to the community to decorate at each park location. A decision to hold the Fourth of July Spectacular event has not yet been made. This event draws large crowds and is a concern that is currently being discussed. Global Fest in August will be a virtual event this year. Punkin Chunkin event has been cancelled for this year. Staff will be focusing on the smaller pop-up events this year: Movies in the Parks, Boos Cruise and pumpkin patch events. The 4th of July Firecracker National Girls Softball Tournament is still scheduled to take place at Aurora Sports Park and other Aurora ballfields in July. Brooke announced the upcoming retirement of long-time Deputy City Manager, Nancy Freed. Nancy has been instrumental with her many contributions to the city over her 27 plus years of dedicated service.

VI. BOARD MEMBERS REMARKS

A. Comments from Board Members

- Member Ericksen remarked he was riding his bike on a path through an underpass and noticed homeless camps. He almost ran over a cardboard house that was on the path. He asked if Aurora Police could patrol the underpasses to make sure they are clear from a safety point. Director Bell responded the city has a policy that must be worked through and involves different city departments. The encampments are under observation and because of Covid, staff do not move encampments under the current policy unless it gets to a point where it meets certain criteria such as a fire danger or an increase in crime. The Open Space staff are aware of these locations and work closely with Community Services Department who offers outreach programs. If the trail runs under a highway viaduct, it falls under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Transportation (C-DOT), who is contacted when issues arise. She recommended Member Ericksen reach out to Manager Schuler of Open Space and Natural

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Resources Division to provide her with this particular location. Member Ericksen asked how the City of Aurora compares to the national averages of 1 park for every 2,277 residents; 9.9 acres of park land per 1,000 residents; and operating expense of \$88 per capita, per year. Director Bell responded PROS participates in a Trust for Public Lands Survey each year. Information provided through the survey is compiled and published which she will share with board members following the meeting. She reported PROS finished 25th out of the top 100 large cities in the United States. Member McClure reported Central High School was given 10 million dollars to build a fieldhouse. She went to Nome Park and spotted a family of fox. She shared NRPA has a website that offers podcasts and signups to receive email news.

She commented she liked the water bottle fillers at Settler’s Park. Director Bell responded staff are making an effort to replace traditional water fountains with these bottle fillers as they are much safer. She reminded members if they see any repairs that are needed in parks, to contact her via email.

VII. FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Wednesday, June 2, 2021 – Virtual meeting – Webex

VIII. ADJOURNMENT – Member Erickson made a motion to adjourn and Member Zbikowski seconded. The motion passed at 6:37 p.m.

Shannon Crouthers

Shannon Crouthers, Chair;
Parks & Recreation Board

Suzie Jaquith

Suzie Jaquith, Recording Secretary

ADOPTED Jun 25, 2021

Signature:  Shannon Crouthers (Jun 25, 2021 18:05 MDT)

Email: shancrouthers@gmail.com

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PRAB May 5 2021 Minutes_FINAL

Final Audit Report

2021-06-26

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