

CITY OF ROCK ISLAND
PARK BOARD MEETING
RIFAC, Room 5
Rock Island IL 61201

2/21/23– Minutes

1. Call to Order

President Fred Dasso called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

2. Attendance

Members Present: Fred Dasso, Bill Anderson (virtual), Mike Foley, John McEvoy, Paul Hansen, Venessa Taylor (virtual)

Members Absent: none

Staff Present: John Gripp, Executive Director; Todd Winter, Assistant Director; Kimberly Kruse, Parks Administrative Office Manager

Staff Absent: none

Audience: Gene Hast, Backwater Gamblers Rock Island IL

3. Motion to move to 11A by Mr. Anderson. Seconded by Mr. Hansen. All voted yes.

Gene Hast, Backwater Gamblers Rock Island IL

Presentation available on request. Mr. Gripp mentioned that this has been a great partnership. They take wonderful care of the area and the upgrades keep the environment in mind.

4. December Park Board Minutes

Mr. McEvoy motioned to approve the minutes as updated; Mr. Foley seconded. All voted yes.

5. Thank you from the RI/Milan Boosters was recognized.

6. Monthly Report from Finance Department as of December

This time of year, is crazy while the prep for audit is underway. This will be presented by Linda Barnes once all completed this summer. A note has been included concerning the Highland Springs Clubhouse that will take out the clubhouse expenses as it is a capital expenditure and then will have depreciation. Park Maintenance has pulled back several projects to help offset. One of the biggest shortfalls is dealing with a flat tax while expenses rise. Mr. Gripp is working with the City Manager to talk about how to address the challenges. Recreation staff and marketing are all doing well.

Whitewater Junction had a wonderful year. Highland Springs looks upside down but if the capital expense of the clubhouse is taken out, it is doing well too. Saukie is a little negative with minimum wage and supply costs and freight challenges. Mr. McEvoy asked about the amount for capital expenditures such as golf course equipment. This is \$10,000. Gaming fund are all going towards the city debt so no CIP is given. Something that helps golf courses are the pro shop sales. The courses stick to the basics and make a profit. Schwiebert Park will be a net zero at the end of the audit. A transfer will be done as it is covered by the city. This project was created by the council to improve the city line on the river. Equity in cash pool is around \$600,000. Recovery from Covid-19 is underway and finally on the rebound. January and February numbers will be negative in the beginning for several facilities as they are closed in the beginning of the year but still incur expense. Mr. Anderson asked if the Schwiebert Park docks are being repair. This will help with traffic to the park and potential revenue. Mr. Gripp is working with the marketing team and the District to get more traffic once it is done while keeping safety in mind. Some of the slips have been taken out to hopefully minimize the chance for further damage. Mr. Anderson asked about the impact of the new YMCA and YWCA and comparison. Mr. Gripp responded with RIFAC will keep doing what it does best and providing the best services possible. It will be addressed as it comes up. The ARPA funds for facility improvements will assist with this as well.

7. Approval of the Bills for the Month of January: \$168,957.96

Mr. Dasso: Aye Mr. Foley: Aye Mr. McEvoy: Aye Ms. Taylor: Aye Mr. Hansen: Aye Mr. Anderson: Aye

8. Director's Report and other reports

Work on the ARPA and Friends of Douglas Park for lighting project is close to being done. This will allow for evening programming at Douglas Park. Highland Springs First Tee meeting was at the Highland Springs Clubhouse. RIFAC ARPA funds are being evaluated to put together after bids are in. Rental opportunities are being reviewed and put together since the new clubhouse will allow for year round options. Denkmann Park has qualified for upgrades that will improve the area including ADA paths, basketball courts, shelter upgrades and spaces for kids play. Mel McKay Park will hopefully be awarded the OSLAD grant which will allow for several upgrades to the pickleball area. Program registrations are way up. Sports, preschool, rec programs, swimming are all full. Managers are preparing for the spring and to recruit summer staff. More than 50% of the staff are returning to Whitewater Junction.

First Tee is planning a soft opening event at the Highland Springs Clubhouse. This will be inviting the park board, sponsors and so one for a cocktail evening and ribbon cutting. The RFP for the golf equipment lease is being put together. This is a five year lease that is up for renewal that allows to get equipment changed out on a more regular basis which lowers maintenance costs significantly. This recommendation will be brought to park board.

RIFAC submissions were received for RIFAC locker upgrades, window in the pool and other items. This recommendation will be put together to come in front of park board. Hoping to get started on this in the summer to show movement in facility

improvements. Mr. McEvoy asked about little league. Mr. Winter said that they have presented Old Horace Mann Park as a place to use and they were pleasantly surprised at the amount of time available so much better partnership now. Mr. Foley mentioned usage down at Hodge Park. Mr. Winter said that T-Ball and summer programs are held there.

Over 50 trees have been taken out at Highland Springs. These are mostly ash trees and others identified as needing to come down. Tree inventory will be done. Saukie has some to take down still but not near as many.

Deb Bowman, a long time instructor, has announced retirement from teaching. She has been with us since the 1980s and has provided many many programs over the years. After suffering an injury, she decided it was time.

RIFAC is doing sweat equity cards. These are fill out and turned in after so many uses for Whitewater Junction passes, Golf passes or fitness punch passes. There are 268 participants in the basketball program giving a record number of registrations.

David Driskill, Marc DeMarlie and Evan Hillyer are working on cleaning out Douglas Park. Reservoir Park fields are having the dirt scraped off to the ag lime in and then will work on Hodge Park. Rock Island Girls Softball have asked about wi-fi but they are going to use a square reader instead to better track concessions inventory. Ag Lime is being added to the upper field there. Poison Ivy in the area is being addressed. Sylvan Slough is using equipment to take out a bunch of dead trees. There is a lot of use by Augustana and volunteers have painted one of the walls that had several graffiti on it.

9. New Business

An agreement has been entered with Augustana to refurbish areas of Lincoln Park in exchange for use. This will be new tennis courts and parking lot. It will be a 10 year agreement with a \$1/year lease. Citizens will be able to use the upgraded tennis courts. Mr. Foley asked about the restroom building. This structure will most likely come down as it is beyond repair and a new one built in it's place. This restroom will be kept locked. Plans are discussed to eventually put in new softball fields. This will be discusses with Alleman so students can use as well. Augustana will maintain the courses. This will go to council for approval as well.

Motion to endorse Augustana and parks partnership for this project at Lincoln Park by Mr. McEvoy. Seconded by Mr. Foley. All said yes.

Mr. McEvoy asked when the work will begin. Mr. Gripp said in about 30 days.

Staff recommends Van Wall for the bid winner for the top dresser purchase. Motioned made by Mr. Hansen. Seconded by Mr. Anderson. All said yes.

10. Other Business

There has been an interest in having a campsite at Sunset Park. Mr. Gripp has reached out to consultants who are experts in this area. Nothing has been approved or official however after talking to a forester and experts about flood concerns, it has been stated that it would provide a decent revenue stream. Mr. Hansen asked where and Mr. Gripp responded throughout the park.

11. Items Not on the Agenda

Mr. Anderson asked about the contract for Jeff LaRue. This is now between First Tee and Jeff. Questions were also asked about the thoughts on Douglas Park tabling the demolition of the Firehouse. HUD money will sunset in April but it has been extended due to contradicting evidence and will be revisited. Douglas firehouse has been on the CIP list for renovations and each year unfunded since 2005. All the funds to renovate parks and so it has been taken off the list in 2016. The next and best option is to take it down and put a memorial along with some additional parking. The Preservation Society was one of the first people to contact about the firehouse and no one wanted to support the project and now it is beyond repair.

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Anderson. Mr. Foley. All voted yes.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Kimberly B Kruse,
Parks & Recreation
Admin Office Manager