Hiawatha Parks and Recreation

Business:

Park Board Meeting Time Adjustment to 6:15pm- I would like to recommend adjusting our park commission meetings to 6:15pm in the City Hall Council Chambers. We have not had quorum since February 2017. To keep our commission moving in a positive direction and hear every one's feedback and opinions on topics, I think pushing the meetings back 15 minutes will help our cause.

Hodge Land Opportunity- As you recall from last months meeting the City recently purchased the parcel of land west of Tucker Park from Hodge Construction for the cost of $1. Hodge approached the City last fall asking if we would be interested in the land and would donate it as they saw no future use. The purchase was officially made before the end of 2017.

The City and MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) have had plans of adding a trail that connects from Tucker Park to Northwood Drive and eventually out to Boyson Road. These connections will help benefit the metro area making more connections for personal transportation. This project has not been added to the CIP yet as plans weren't anticipated for a few years out. This trail extension will be added in next year's CIP project listing and we will work with Cedar Rapids to make sure our connections are in line with one another. Right now, they have fiscal year 2022 in their CIP, but will be revisiting their trail connectivity prioritization. Fortunately, since the City now owns the land we will not have the additional expense of asking to put the trail through this area. (Maps Attached)

With this information, as a board, I am coming to you to ask if you would believe this parcel, which is nearly 11acres, would be a good area for park development. After taking a glance at the property, we noticed many man made trails and open walk ways. These trails are being used as cut throughs, along with mountain bike trails for riding. The police department has not had any calls on substance abuse but a total of 4 calls on people being back there recreationally. We are in the process of putting "No Trespassing" signs up for legal and safety purposes until a plan is developed and there is a safe access point for users.

By looking at the parks and recreation comprehensive plan, our City currently has 60 acres of parkland which translates to 8.9 acres per 1,000 residents. Based on the level of service, the City should have approximately 80 acres of parkland or .01 acres per person. That is a 20.5 deficient of total parkland. As the City's population increases the deficient will continue to go up. After looking over our Citizen Survey, we found residents are overall happy with what we currently have but with new development happening we will continue to outgrow our parks.

44.1% of residents had stated that Multi-purpose trails should be added and are in high demand. With the potential trail connection going through this property it would not only add more multi-purpose trail, it would allow the residence further north in the area of Robins Road and Coral Drive an easier access to park facilities (Tucker Park).

As many of you have probably heard the Cedar Rapids School District will be closing Nixon Elementary around the year 2022. Right now, the school playground if offering residents near Nixon a place to play; by eliminating the school, it will take away an area of recreational family fun. It will be important that we focus on ways to make recreation accessible no matter where you reside at in town.

Over the next 10 years we have the possibility to minimize our deficient and maximize our priorities. With the potential of adding an additional 11acres of park land that the City just purchased, 15 acres north west of town, and a 3-acre dog park near the Cedar Valley Trail, that is an additional 29 aces of park land we could add for our Hiawatha Residents needs. Our main priorities from our Comp Plan and Citizen Survey will be to focus on:

- accessibility and connectivity of trails
- adding an event center
- taking care of our programming needs (space, facilities, fields, etc.).

These three opportunities will help expand our community needs.

I believe these 11 acres could be a great location for added park land. We can physically see recreational activity happening already from people riding their bikes and using it as a "playground". By turning this into park land it will entitle our department to future maintenance, which we believe is manageable, and allow users to be on this property from 6am-10:30pm (designated park hours). By turning this into a park and adding in potential trails it has the potential to:

- Adjoin Hiawatha with Cedar Rapids
- Give people more accessibility and transportation options
- Open up more recreational opportunities

As a board we will need to come up with ideas and suggestions together to find the best fit for this land.

With the information given is there interest in keeping this area an active off-road bike trail? With the activity already happening, man-made trails already being built, and presence in a flood plain, it would be an opportunity to keep things natural (add possible pollinators) and build off of what other people are currently doing. There is an active group in Cedar Rapids called the Linn County Mountain Bike Association that has currently been helping complete trails around the metro area. Squaw Creek has an active trail along with the City of Vinton. The members of this group have helped develop these trails and have been a large support. If we have the opportunity to fit both a public hard surface trail and an off-road trail in the area it opens up more economic opportunities for our community and connectivity to the metro area.

Recreation Reports:

- **Farmers Market SNAP program:** We have been working with Back in Line, Horizons, HACAP and the Mount Mercy Enactus group to encourage individuals and families with SNAP benefits to buy fresh produce at our Farmers Market. The SNAP organization will have a table at each Sunday market and allow individuals and families to exchange their benefits for tokens that they can then exchange with registered vendors for fresh produce. Once each market is complete, the market vendors will turn in their tokens they received and the SNAP program will reimburse them for their selling's. This will allow more people the opportunity to get fresh produce and benefit our daily farmers.

- **Lil Cougar Dance Clinic:** Coach Miranda and the Kennedy Cougar Dance team for teaching the Little Cougars some AMAZING routines to Moana's "How Far I'll Go" and Sing's "I'm Still Standing"! New friendships were made and fun was had by all! We're looking forward to 2019's program!

- **Zumba:** FOURTY FIVE dancers showed up to the first Free Zumba of the year! These take place the second Wednesday of every month! The next class takes place March 14th.

- **Whispering Pines Classes:** Donita and friends will be painting a beautiful red cardinal on February 21st in the Hiawatha Community Center at 6pm. Fee is $35 cash or check only. To register text Donita at 319-270-1112. The next class takes place March 21st.

- **Cooking with Carol** – Kids in the Kitchen - Valentine Cookie Workshop Bring your 6-10 yr. olds for a fun night of cookie making. Adult must accompany each child. Take home your Valentine cookies and kids mixing bowl. Cost: $25 per child, Minimum 5, Max. 10 Monday, February 12th Fee: $25.00 per child, adults free, includes class, kids mixing bowl and Valentine cookies. 6:30pm in the Hiawatha Community Center Registration Deadline: February 6th.

- **Yoga 2018**: TWENTY-FIVE yogis showed up for our first free yoga of the year! These take place on the last Thursday of the month at 6pm in the Hiawatha Community Center. The next class takes place March 29th.

- **Super Sitters:** Young people 11 and older are welcome to take a six hour babysitting class taught by Mercy Medical Center Staff. This class follows the guidelines set by the American Red Cross. Registration is done through Mercycare.org and the fee is $20

Parks:

- **Branching Out Tree Grant:** We received $1,650 from the Alliant Energy and Tree Forever Branching Out Grant for Spring 2018. We will be adding more trees to Tucker and Guthridge Park. The parks guys have been trimming and removing trees that are on our priority list from our completed inventory.
- **Trees for Kids Grant:** I am currently working with the Hiawatha Elementary School principle to apply for the Trees for Kids Grant through the Iowa DNR. This grant is valued up to $5,000.00 for planting trees in our community along with educating children. This grant would be completed before the end of May when the students get released.
- **Seasonal and Adventure Camp Posting:** Seasonal Staff positions are now posted. Please spread the word if you know of any great candidates for Park Maintenance or Adventure Camp Staff.
- **HKL Solar Panel:** Hiawatha Kids League is continuing to work with us on the construction of a solar panel on the concession stand roof. They did not get the project completed after last year and will be

revisiting the idea with their board. If approved through their board the item will come back to you for recommendation and sent off to council for approval.

- **NW Territory:** The City Administrator, Engineer and I meet with Sharon Taylor in regards to her parcel of land in the NW Territory on Friday, February 9th. We mapped out some park options for Sharon and her family to look over. Right now, we are looking at 15 acres, which would provide us all the park amenities we foresee in the future. These of course are not set in stone, but gives the family an idea of what potential development could look like. With an additional 200 residents in the NW territory, trail connections and park amenities will be huge.
  The Taylors mentioned that they would like to keep the park near the back of the property so that they could keep the Edgewood Road frontage for future residential development. With the potential of the park in the back, it would be visible from the interstate and all activity would enter from Fitzroy Road keeping traffic moving along Edgewood Road. There will be another updated proposal sent to the family for their discussion but we gained a very positive response. Once the family comes to an agreement and negotiates on price with the City, I will get your ideas and suggestions on the layout and development of this park. Attached you will see the favored map that was presented to the Taylors on the back portion of their lot.