

**Meeting Minutes
New Prague Park Board
Tuesday, January 11, 2022
6:00 PM**

1. Call Meeting to Order

The regular meeting was called to order at City Hall at 6:00 PM by Chair Joe Barten. Members present were Joe Barten, Brian Molitor, Maggie Bass, and Al Hansen. Absent was Youth Representative Hailey Calliguri. Staff present was Ken Ondich – Planning / Community Development Director and Joshua Tetzlaff – City Administrator.

2. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

A motion was made by Molitor, seconded by Hansen, to approve the November 9th, 2021 regular meeting minutes. Motion carried (4-0).

3. Review Financial Reports

Planning Director Ondich presented the financial reports to the Park Board noting that during the month of October, an additional \$509.01 was added to the Park Equipment Fund from new residential home permits and commercial permits. He also noted that there was 1 new home permit issued in December for a total of 27 housing unit permits issued in 2021.

A motion was made by Bass, seconded by Hansen, to accept the financial reports as presented. Motion carried (4-0).

4. Outdoor Performance Facility – New Prague Area Arts Council

Planning Director Ondich stated that Den Gardner, Chair of the New Prague Area Arts Council and temporary chair of the Outdoor Performance Committee, was present along with Bruce Wolf and Steve Frost to discuss the idea of an outdoor performance facility being constructed in New Prague. Mr. Gardner referenced a packet of information that was included in the Park Board packet about an outdoor performance facility, other facilities in the area including one in New Ulm and finally information regarding the forming of an ad-hoc Outdoor Performance Committee. He indicated that the cost of such a facility might be upwards of two million dollars and that all potential locations would be on the table at this point as they do not have a preference, but certainly are aware of noise, parking and traffic concerns regardless of the location that may be chosen.

Bruce Wolf stated that the idea of building a bandshell has been around for quite a while and that New Prague had one from 1934 through the 1960's in Memorial Park.

Steve Frost stated that he is a member of the New Prague Area Arts Council and was also involved in the development of Greenway Park and the brana in the past and fees that getting everyone involved, including the naysayers, was important in that project.

Mr. Gardner stated that the School District will be involved on the committee as well. He noted that they have an outdoor concert series planned for the summer of 2022 at the Broz Hotel in their tent/open space area which expects to draw many spectators.

Maggie Bass questioned if the site should be chosen, or the design of the outdoor performance facility should be chosen first.

Mr. Gardner indicated that they wanted Park Board buy in regarding the idea first. He indicated that bathroom facilities as a part of or nearby the outdoor performance facility would be necessary, but that something like concessions would be lower priority as a food truck could just get brought in as needed. He stated that they have some funds already raised and believes the funding can be privately raised.

Mr. Frost indicated that the New Prague Area Arts Council could fund a feasibility study.

Mr. Wolf asked if a location or design should first be selected and wondered if the city should be involved in selecting a feasibility study consultant.

Planning Director Ondich stated that he does not believe the city needs to select the consultant, but rather provide guidance to the committee. He stated that outside consultants were selected for the FAC and even for the improvements to the baseball field and that the city is involved in the preparation of the studies by supplying information so it's not unusual that the city wouldn't lead the process in selecting a firm.

Chair Barten stated that he believes its important for the committee to determine what the community and user groups would need in an outdoor performance facility.

Al Hansen stated that he believes the facility would need to be in Memorial Park and that he has concerns about other locations such as Sliding Hill Skate Park.

Mr. Frost stated that figuring out the needs of the user groups in an outdoor performance facility is something they need to determine.

Chair Barten stated that the outdoor concert series at the Broz Hotel could be a good place to gather input from users and attendees.

Planning Director Ondich stated that as was indicated in the past, the Park Chapter of the Comprehensive Plan does include a bandshell as a future project in Memorial Park and that in the 2004 failed referendum, a bandshell was also part of the design so there is a long history of the idea in an approved planning document already in place.

A motion was made by Bass, seconded by Hansen, to support the continuation of efforts to develop an outdoor performance facility in a City Park as the idea of a bandshell has been a goal of the City's Park Plan for many years. Motion carried (4-0).

The Park Board members provided input regarding specific locations and their thoughts on those locations.

Brian Molitor stated that he was involved in performing arts in high school and believes having a shelter for performing arts would be nice to have, but worried about locations in Memorial Park.

Maggie Bass stated that the outdoor pool location could be considered. She stated that she fears Memorial Park will get too crowded with amenities, is concerned about the removal of trees in Memorial Park, some of which are remnants of the big woods, and that sliding hill skate park could be considered as there is the high school parking lot adjacent for overflow parking.

Mr. Gardner indicated that New Ulm's facility has no dedicated parking and that his understanding is that it has not been a concern.

Chair Barten stated that he prefers a location in Memorial Park and that he believes the east portion of the park needs rehabilitation as there are two old picnic shelters, little use horseshoe pits and volleyball courts. He stated that there is the ability to have a sort of natural amphitheater setting near the east side of the park near Lexington Ave. S.

Planning Director Ondich noted that the Park Ballroom had approached the city regarding a possible deck or patio addition from their building for possible events like having movies in the park or performances and suggesting contacting them regarding the outdoor performance facility idea.

Bruce Wolf and Maggie Bass both noted that the ultimate authority rests with the City Council for a site in a City Park.

Mr. Frost indicated that they need to know the needs of potential users as their next step.

A motion was made by Bass, seconded by Hansen, to appoint Joe Barten to serve as the Park Board's representative to on the outdoor performance facility committee. Motion carried (4-0).

5. Miscellaneous

- a. Towering To Our Future Art Piece – Consider Moving to Library** – Planning Director Ondich stated that at the November Park Board meeting the consensus of the Park Board was for Mr. Dennis Dvorak to check with the artist and the library staff about moving the art piece to the library property and for staff to investigate the costs of moving it and creating a new concrete footing. He stated that Mr. Dvorak was able to confirm with the artist Kiersten Dahl-Shetka that she is in support of moving the art piece up near the library and that Library Manager Lori Weldon also believes the art piece would be a wonderful addition to the northwest corner of the library site. He stated that the New Prague Utilities Commission is willing to donate labor to move and reinstall the art piece, but there is about \$400 of anticipated expenses for materials to create the new footing that would have to be covered somehow. He stated that he would like input from the Park Board regarding the moving and proposed location.

The Park Board discussed the moving of the art piece and indicated that it would be a good idea to move it by the library for better exposure.

A motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Barten, to approve of the moving of the Towering To Our Future Art Piece to the NW side of the library site nearest Main Street with the exact location to be determined by City Staff and with costs for the footing materials to be covered by others. Motion carried (4-0).

- b. Warming House Use Reports** – Planning Director Ondich stated that the warming house opened for the year on 1/3/22 and that he would provide daily use reports in the February Park Board packet for review.
- c. 2022 Budget / Project Updates** – Planning Director Ondich stated that the last remaining 2021 project to install the drinking fountain at Southside Park will be completed in 2022 due to winter weather. He stated that the City Council had approved all the requested 2022 Park Board projects.
- d. Splash Pad Feasibility Proposals Update** – Planning Director Ondich stated that he has solicited proposals from Aqua Logic as well as USAquatics for a feasibility study for a splash pad at the former outdoor pool site and that no proposals had been received at this time.
- e. Central Plaza Update** – Planning Director Ondich stated that the City’s Engineering firm SEH had held one construction plan meeting since the project moved to the construction plan phase and that the project is still on schedule for construction starting in the spring of 2022.
- f. 2022 Meeting Calendar** – Planning Director Ondich stated that the meeting calendar for 2022 was included in the packet as information.

6. Adjournment

A motion was made by Hansen, seconded by Barten, to adjourn the meeting at 7:18PM. Motion carried (4-0).

Respectfully Submitted,



Ken Ondich
Planning / Community Development Director