

City of La Vista
Park & Recreation Advisory Committee Minutes
July 19, 2023

A meeting of the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee for the City of LaVista convened in open and public session at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 19, 2023. Present was Asst. Recreation Director David Karlson, Administrative Assistant Sue Tangeman, Parks Superintendent Jason Allen, Chairperson Pat Lodes, Members Jeff Kupfer, Jason Ryan, Brenda Mechels-Struby and Deborah Dogba. Absent: Denny Dinan, Kaily Stanley, and Brian Allen.

Notice of the meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Papillion Times on July 12, 2023. Simultaneously given to the members of the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of the notice is attached to the minutes. The availability of the agenda was communicated in advance notice to the members of the Park and Recreation Advisory Committee of this meeting. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the convened meeting was open to attendance of the public. Further, all the subjects included in said proceedings were contained in the agenda for inspection within ten working days after said meeting, prior to the convened meeting of said body.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Asst. Director David Karlson called the meeting to order.

- 1.1 Karlson led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 1.2 Karlson made an announcement of the location of the posted copy of the Open Meetings Act for public reference and read the Emergency Procedures Statement.

2. CONSENT AGENDA

- 2.1 Karlson asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 19, 2023 meeting. Motion made by Chairperson Lodes. Seconded by Member Kupfer. All aye. Motion carried.
- 2.2 Updates from Recreation Staff

RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Report by David Karlson, Assistant Director

Karlson announced that the City has hired a new Recreation Director. She is Heather Buller, coming to us from Killeen, TX. She will begin on August 7. Karlson gave a brief background on her professional career in Texas, and also stated that she graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, so welcome back to Nebraska!

SENIOR CENTER

Report provided by Kaily Stanley, Senior Services Manager

In June, a total of 2,072 seniors participated in Senior Center programs.

- 225 Lunches were served.

- 1,847 Seniors participated in various recreational activities.

Some special programs included:

- Outings to Boat/Fishing Trip, Safari Zoo, Lighthouse Pizza, Omaha Zoo and Azteca Mexican Restaurant
- Movies were “42” and “The Monuments Men”
- Music by Merry-maker’s Tim Javorski
- Seniors played Bingo, Happy Birthday Jingo, Pitch, UNO, Hand & Foot and Bunco.
- Other notable activities were Crafts with Bob and Cheri, Coffee Social Hour, Big Bucks Bingo, a pool tournament, Show and Tell, and our annual Farmer’s Market Coupon Distribution Day, where coupons valuing \$48 were given to 50 local Seniors.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

Report given by Brian Allen, Evens Coordinator

Salute to Summer was held on Saturday May 27, 2023 with thousands in attendance. The free event received an abundance of positive feedback via social media, City Council, staff, residents, vendors and volunteers. The drone show was a highlight as we were the first in the Greater Omaha area to do a combination of fireworks and a drone’s show.

Moonlight Movies (Top Gun: Maverick and Black Panther: Wakanda Forever) were shown on the 2nd Friday of the month in June and July. A free raffle with prizes from Alamo Drafthouse Cinema and City SWAG was held before the start of the movie. About 75-people attended each free movie with Kona Ice on hand selling treats. Moonlight Movies will conclude on the 2nd Friday of August (at the Library).

Live local music occurred on the 4th Friday of June at Central Park with Finding Dixie and Guitars for Vets. An employee after hours event was held in conjunction with the June event where City staff enjoyed free BBQ from the vendor. An estimated 125-people were in attendance for the free show in the park. The next installment of La Vista Live & Local is set for the 4th Friday in July at Central Park and the 4th Friday in August at the La Vista Library.

Trivia Night occurs on the 2nd Wednesday of the Summer months and is held at The Heights Draft Room in City Centre. The first two events drew a full house and a record number of teams compared to the last two years. The next Trivia Night is set for Wednesday, August 9 at 6:00pm. Santiago’s Mexican food truck will be onsite again.

Yappy Hour occurred on Wednesday, June 28, from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM at La Vista’s Dog Park at Southwind Park. This was a family-friendly happy hour outing to meet other besties and their dogs! Complimentary lemonade and donuts were provided by Sweet Treats Mini Donuts Food Truck and special treats from Long Dog Fat Cat and city SWAG items were given away to dogs. 90-people were in attendance as well as their dogs.

Splash Bash occurred on Sunday, July 9, from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM at the La Vista Pool. Attendees enjoyed a sun and fun-filled day at the pool with a live DJ, door prizes, and free hot dog lunches provided by the Mayor and members of City Council. The pool reached max capacity midway through the event.

National Night Out will be held Tuesday, August 1 from 6:00pm-8:30pm at Central Park. The event will consist of a fun evening of games, activities and friendly conversations with community safety partners! There will be equipment displays, safety information as well as face painting, balloon artists and free treats from Kona Ice, Starbucks and Alamo Drafthouse Cinema! You'll also be able to play a little disc golf! Join at 8 p.m. for a special proclamation from Mayor Kindig and then a safety walk around the small pond near the clubhouse.

Save the date for Saturday, September 16, 2023 for the La Vista Loop, a 2k Fun Run at Central Park from 10:00am – 12:00pm. This all-ages fun run will include activities and challenges along the way as well as a costume contest.

YOUTH AND ADULT SPORTS

Report provided by Denny Dinan, Youth & Adult Sports Manager

Youth Sports:

Youth Baseball, Softball, Flag Football: All wrapped up their seasons at the end of June.

Coed T-ball: We have 6 teams playing in the league and the season ends on July 15.

Senior Softball: Spring seasons will finish up at the end of July/early August. Fall seasons will begin in late August.

Fall Programs:

Fall Youth Leagues: registration started on June 1, for flag football, soccer clinic, soccer academy and league.

Fall Football: coaches are being assigned teams are being formed, uniforms are being ordered, equipment is being handed out and practices begin the week of July 17. Games start August 12th.

Soccer: Registration ends in mid-August and the season will begin September 5th.

June Events:

Triple Crown/SlumpBuster Youth Baseball Tournament:

The tournament ran from June 14 through June 25 on La Vista, Council Bluffs, and other Omaha fields. There were 635 teams this year. In 2019, there were over 700 teams, which is the most they have had.

There were 186 games played in 12 days (avg. 16 games per day) during this tournament on La Vista fields this year.

\$8,435 of revenue was brought in for this tournament.

Upcoming Events:

July 15-16: Cornhusker State Games - Adult Softball Tournament

August 26: Punt/Pass/Kick Event

RECREATION DEPARTMENT UPDATES

Report provided by David Karlson, Assistant Recreation Director

Karlson introduced Debra Dogba, our newest Park & Recreation Advisory Board Member. Originally from Africa, she has lived in Nebraska for 19 years, and in La Vista for 6 of those years. Debra works at the Dept. of Education for the State of Nebraska.

Karlson discussed what has been keeping him busy, mostly pool stuff and hiring staff for the pool, which has been difficult. Karlson said they are having meetings discussing pay rate and incentives that could be offered. A manager has been hired, Henry Belik, a college student that has grown up in La Vista.

2.2.2 UPDATE FROM PUBLIC WORKS/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Report from Jason Allen, Public Works Parks Superintendent

Allen discussed the CIP (Capital Improvement Program) in relation to improvement of the park projects. The internal Parks Committee is in the process of ranking projects by building a matrix of the parks, in order to prioritize and budget for the improvements. These will in turn be brought forth to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Board for review, feedback and recommendations for approval to Mayor and Council.

Member Kupfer asked if this is an evolving project. Allen stated that it was, and will be added to, modified, etc. in the coming years, and will be used beyond the current Board and Staff has a basis for budgeting and prioritizing projects in the parks.

Chairperson Lodes asked about the lighting at the ball fields. Allen stated that it was requested in the CIP budget for 2024. It is a much larger project than what the normal budget would allow, so Allen explained how that money will be obtained through the CIP to allow that project to go forward.

Member Dogba asked if this would be in stages. Allen said yes it would be in stages. Some years may see many improvements in the parks, and some not as many, depending on the budget and what else is going on in the City.

Member Ryan said he liked the matrix and outline of the plan. He asked where the parking lot at City Park fell into this. Allen said it is in the budget for 2024 also.

Allen also updated the Board on the Park monument signs. The ones up now will be wrapped on Friday. The larger monument signs for Val Verde and Central Park will be reviewed by Council and hopefully approved, then will be installed.

Allen also discussed the finishing of the Astro, saying that he thought our part (the Link) would be done by the end of August.

Allen reported that Central Park playground project should be started in mid-August and take possibly a couple of weeks.

3. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

3.1 Recreation Dept. Revenue

3.2 Senior Activities, Meals

3.3 Special Services Bus Revenue, Ridership

3.4 Pool Revenue, Visitors

4. COMMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson Lodes told Allen that he heard from a baseball coach for a youth 13 team that they had played at our field, it was the best he had ever played on in the Omaha area.

5. COMMENTS FROM THE FLOOR

None.

6. ADJOURNMENT

Member Mechels-Struby made a motion for adjournment. Seconded by Member Kupfer. All aye. Motion carried. Adjourned at 7:40 p.m.