

**Willmar Community Education & Recreation  
Joint Powers Board Meeting  
February 26, 2016**

**Members Present:** Matt Dawson, Abdiraham Ibrahim, Ross Magnuson, Audrey Nelsen, Pablo Obregon, Rachel Skretvedt, Darin Strand

**Staff Present:** Steve Brisendine, Casey Hagert, Ryan Harper, Tammy Rudningen, Becky Sorenson, Jena Tollefson, Pam Vruwink, Jodi Wambeke

Darin opened the meeting by stating that we would not be breaking up into Program Committee and Park Committee meetings due to the need to discuss the Rice Park renovation plan which was approved by the City Council.

First on the agenda were the program reports by Tammy Rudningen and Pam Vruwink. Tammy started by discussing her duties and program responsibilities such as youth and adult enrichment. A PowerPoint presentation showed various aspects of youth and adult programming, including marching band, HAWK (Healthy Active Willmar Kids), MnAqua (DNR's fishing camp) Reading Corp, and PWELC programs to name a few. Numerous adult classes are also offered from computer classes to CPR/First Aid classes, Star Watch classes to photography and more. Various activities at the Community Center are included in her duties along with the Community Garden at the Center.

One of the main concerns is finding instructors to offer classes and qualified leaders for the youth activities. Instructors generally receive 70% of the class income with CER receiving 30%, except for Star Watch and Split Rock Lighthouse class instructors who receive a lump sum. Enrollment is down due to Pinterest and YouTube. We advertise our classes connect you to people with the same interests as you creating a great social outlet for participants.

Ross Magnuson asked if we receive requests for certain classes that we don't offer. Tammy replied that we occasionally receive a few requests but not a large number. Rachel Skretvedt asked if we look into what other communities are offering. Tammy said she is on the mailing list for several communities and receives their brochures regularly and if instructors can be found we duplicates successful programs.

Pam Vruwink gave a report on aquatics. Her PowerPoint presentation showed the enrollment numbers for swim lessons for the last three years. The numbers have stayed fairly consistent with the enrollment numbers for the younger students increasing a bit. Level 4 students are eligible to participate in Sting Rays which shows in the decrease of our enrollment numbers at that level and above.

The Aquatic Center offers adaptive swim lessons, Lucky Duck Thursdays in July, penny carnival, People First Swim Night (adaptive program), Willmar Fest Queen's Splash, before and after hour rentals for youth and daycare groups. Darin Strand asked about the noon opening and whether the pool could open earlier. Pam responded that we do have activities in the mornings such as adaptive swim lessons but could certainly look to expand morning opportunities.

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Pam reported that the Aquatic Center was open 75 days in 2015 compared to 73 days in 2014. There were approximately 200 more in attendance in 2015 compared to 2014. Concession sales were also up approximately \$3,000. Pam stated she was not sure if that was due to switching to Bernick's Pepsi but mentioned that the kids appreciated having Mountain Dew available.

Audrey Nelsen asked about sunset nights. Pam responded that she would look into having some during the season, maybe once or twice a month. Pablo Obregon asked if the pool has been full to the point of people not being allowed in. Pam said that has happened occasionally but a wait list is kept so people are let in as others leave according to the wait list. Rachel Skretvedt said she thought it would be a good idea to have some open mornings.

A question arose about lifeguards. Pam said that last year she had quite a few returning lifeguards so there was no problem at the Aquatic Center. She has proposed an increase in hourly pay to make our lifeguard positions more desirable. Currently the County pays more per hour. Ross Magnuson stated he had heard lifeguards telling other lifeguards to work for the County instead of the City due to the pay difference. Pam is hopeful our pay increase will help alleviate that problem. Audrey Nelsen asked if our lifeguard pay was equal to the YMCA. Pam responded that we will be with the pay increase. The main advantage the YMCA has is that they have year round positions.

Audrey Nelsen also questioned about the early end dates of the Aquatic Center. Pam stated that most of the lifeguards have sports commitments or early college starts which is why we close early. She needs at least 7 guards on duty for the various stations. Audrey asked if that couldn't be taken into account when hiring guards, making sure they were available later in August. Pam said that, if enough lifeguards applied, that could be a requisite.

**Park Committee Program:**

Darin Strand stated that last Tuesday he, Rachel Skretvedt and Steve Brisendine were at the City Council meeting to discuss the park proposal. They addressed the JPB's recommendation to use the \$704,000 to upgrade Rice Park.

Rachel then spoke about the concerns that the City Council expressed.

- 1) Parking – A section of angled parking was discussed. But the consensus was that parking around the whole Rice Park block would be sufficient.
- 2) Competition for DOAC – There might be some competition but the majority of DOAC users are older than the splash pad participants would be.
- 3) Flow thru system versus recirculating – Installation and maintenance costs are higher for the re-circulating system.
- 4) Management – The Park Committee feels it is important to hire a general manager to oversee the construction of the project.

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- 5) Three season shelter versus open shelter – The Park Committee recommends an open shelter with restrooms and change area. A three season shelter creates questions: do we keep shelter locked unless there is a reservation, do we have a staff person at the park, to name a few concerns.
- 6) Donations – An easy way for people to donate should be created. Some people are concerned their donation would go to miscellaneous city projects if there is no special park donation category.

Darin Strand asked about the next step and if SRF has general contractors. Steve Brisendine stated that we are in the process of putting together a proposal to contract with SRF to lead us in this project. The first step is removal of existing shelter, wading pool, basketball and sand volleyball courts and possibly move the horseshoe courts. The playground equipment, being fairly new, will remain.

Steve said that decisions about Rice proposals need to be done in a fairly fast fashion if we plan to start construction this year resulting in good progress for a 2017 spring opening. Demolition will happen as soon as weather permits.

The proposed plan is that the splash pad will be placed south of the shelter (existing basketball court area). The idea for the shelter is to pick a style that will be repeated in other parks.

Steve stated that a free flowing splash pad will use 5-8 million gallons of water per year. The cost for a free flowing splash pad is less up front and typically does not have as many break downs as a recirculating system.

The cost for the splash pad is \$200,000 to \$250,000. A 30' x 50' open shelter is estimated at \$60,000. Audrey Nelsen stated that she wants a three season shelter, she doesn't want to see us short change ourselves for the future.

Pablo Obregon asked if this is something we want the Park Committee to work on or should the whole Board be involved. Steve responded that the whole Board would be kept in the loop as things progress but timing might dictate how many board members might be involved in final decisions.

As our next meeting would fall on Good Friday, the question was asked if we should meet the Friday before or after. It was decided to meet earlier to keep on track with the park project. It was felt by the group that SRF should be present at the next meeting if possible. Steve will contact them and find out which day between March 14-18 would work for them and will let the Board know.

As there was no further business, the meeting adjourned.