

Parks and Recreation Committee
Mon, Apr 10, 2023 6:30PM • 16:27

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 00:16

All right. I now call the meeting of Parks and Recreation for April 10 to order. Roll call of membership. All are present and attended for.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 00:28

All right. We need approval of the minutes from the previous meeting.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 00:32

Move for approval.

Alderson Israel Del Toro (District 4) 00:33

Second.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 00:34

All those in favor say aye. Aye. Chair votes aye.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 00:39

Moving down to public hearing appearances, we do not have any. So, we will go right down to action items. 23-0349 Irish Fest of the Fox Cities request permission to hold a ticketed private special event in Jones Park on September 15 to the 16th 2023 for Irish fest.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 01:00

Move for approval.

Alderson Israel Del Toro (District 4) 01:01

Second.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 01:03

All those in favor, say—oh wait, discussion.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 01:11

Thank you. Last year—you know, I think you noticed in the memo—in the memo, but if you—just refresh your memories that Jones Park is a special events park. So anytime a special event happens down there it goes through the special event process. But what we noticed in the policy is it skipped coming to this committee which was in the Houdini Plaza policy. So, to make them two consistent, we made that modification.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 01:44

If you have any questions for the organizer of Irish fest, he's here tonight, just in case you would have any questions. But from our perspective, it has gone well and the community seems to have welcomed it and glad that it's in our community versus I think it was south of here previously. So yeah, we just ask for your support. He asked for your support, to hold Irish Fest here again in the city of Appleton for this year.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 02:12

Any questions? Alderson Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 02:14

Thank you, Chair. I think this is a great addition, and I'm glad that we're able to give it the go ahead if that's obviously what we end up doing. I do have a question in regards to extending music. Will that go through the Health Department for a noise variance? Or how does that work?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 02:31

Yes.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 02:31

Director Gazza. Okay. Thank you. Again, I'm very excited about this. And I think it's a slam dunk we should rock on.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 02:40

Since you're here, I do have some questions for you as I told you, I'd grill you like Congress earlier. So, what type of vendors are going to be at the event?

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 02:50

As far as selling goods?

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 02:50

Yeah.

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 02:53

Food, merchandise? So, McGinnis Irish Pub is a primary sponsor. We will have—I'm the owner. My name is Matt Miller. I'm the Executive Director of the Irish Fest, but I also own McGinnis Irish Pub. We are one of the primary food vendors and then we also bring in two or three food trucks into the event. And then we also typically have about two or three strictly Irish merchandise vendors.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 03:18

Will there be whiskey?

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 03:20

No. Per city ordinance, we will not have whiskey however—

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 03:23

How could it be Irish then?

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 03:26

We did rent the Expo Center this year. We're in process of renting that which will allow us to have whiskey inside. We are going to be doing—we have two whiskey sponsors Jameson and Keepers Heart whiskey, and they will be providing a whiskey sampling event inside the Expo Center only.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 03:42

Nice. Is there anything that you'd like to share about the event that the public might find interesting to know?

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 03:51

All I say is that this is our third year and we've had very successful first two years. And it seems our feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. So, I thank you for your support.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 04:02

Of course. Thank you very much. Alderson. Schultz.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 04:06

Thank you Chair. I guess I'd direct a question to park and rec. So, I understand there's a change from the terminus of the event from an earlier time to 10pm. Is this different than last couple of years?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 04:21

No, we will extend to 10pm in community or event parks.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 04:28

So, this has happened previously?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 04:30

Many times.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 04:31

Okay. So yeah, I think given the fact that there's a great turnout, that we haven't any issues with the event, I'm fully support moving forward and approving this request.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 04:46

Anyone else? All right. We have a motion and a second to approve. All those in favor say aye. Chair votes, aye. It's unanimous.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 04:57

One thing for Mr. Miller. So, this—what that means is that that will go to the full Council next week. I don't anticipate any issues, but officially next Wednesday at Council would be the official permission, but I'm sure half of them attend. So, I don't think they'll be....

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 05:17

When I tell them, there's whiskey, we'll be fine.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 05:22

Thank you very much for coming.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 05:25

All right, moving down to 23-0350. Adopt the proposed revised athletic facilities rental and fees, schedule policy.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 05:36

Move for approval.

Alderson Alex Schultz (District 9) 05:37

Second

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 05:38
Discussion?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 05:40

Thank you chair. The main driver of updating the policy was just basically updates in the amenities that we have and we are providing as a park service. For example, green meadows park now as a basketball park—basketball court and one less tennis court, because we did the combo just like we're doing a lot of the parks. The pickleball courts were added to Telulah Park so that had to be reflected in here.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 06:06

And then we're getting questions about tournaments at the new pickleball courts and could that be rented for that? So, we came up for with fees, looking at comparative, in fact we're much we're cheaper. And then increasing the ball diamond tournament field and concessions rental fees. Just overall the chalk, the labor, the toiletries and things like that. So, \$15 a field for an entire day, thought it was a very minimal increase. And then Erb Park adding the multi-use field. So, nothing in there of significance other than kind of updating to get it to correctly reflect our facilities now.

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 06:53
Alderson Hartzheim.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:54
Thanks, Chair, may I direct to Director Gazza?

Alderson Nate Wolff (District 12) 06:56
Yes.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 06:57

Do you anticipate that allowing pickleball tournaments is going to negatively impact those who are just, you know, wanting to recreationally play? Is that going to—like are there going to be that many opportunities for not being able to play because there's a tournament scheduled?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 07:18

We would always have the ability, if that would get to that point, where we would be able to turn them tournaments down in regards to, you know, if it affected regular play. We don't think that'll happen. If we get one tournament, maybe two tournaments, that would be just a particular day. And that's one of the reasons we didn't have—we don't allow people to rent the pickleball courts as an individual, because you could get a person, one individual, rent one for the day, and it would—you would get quite a bit of them rentals, especially at the rental fees were charging. Typically, a complex doesn't do that. We do allow them to rent a pickleball court, which is a tennis court striped as a pickleball court. Also, they can rent them individually and have been for years, but we don't get many rentals on those either.

Alderson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:05

Okay. Is there a threshold in mind somewhere in your staff that would say after six tournaments a year we're going to limit ourselves to allowing more tournaments? Because, as you know, this is the most popular thing happening these days.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 08:18
I would think it'd be less than that, probably about three.

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 08:21

Okay. So, the staff is prepared to say at some point in time, we have to cut this off.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 08:26

Absolutely.

Alderman Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 08:26

Excellent. Thank you.

Alderman Nate Wolff (District 12) 08:28

Alderman Schultz.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 08:30

Thank you, Chair. I guess I'd direct this one to the city attorney. Just looking at a couple of the revisions to the language here. "Require insurance coverage with limits established by city Risk Manager for activities or events that are determined to be a risk for the city." And then this one following those "requires security deposit and or liability insurance for activities." So, I'm curious to know if changes were precipitated by actions that we're taking I guess the city with, you know, things that happen on our properties, or if this is just sort of preemptive language to cover the city in the event that something does happen to these properties. I guess I'm just a little curious to know why the language changes are occurring for these couple of definitions as they apply to liability and determine to be a risk for the city. Could you comment on that a little bit?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 09:30

I can just note real quick one thing that what we do is now that we have Brian Margan our risk manager, he's looking at it with a different set of eyes. So he is, in many of our policies and many of our contracts, adding language to, I think, you know, protect the city. But we have had no previous litigation in this area.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 09:48

Okay, I guess that's that. I was—my interest was did something happened to precipitous it. Or was just really just looking at language saying "We should tighten this up a little bit and protect ourselves."

Attorney Christopher Behrens 09:56

Grabbing the mic to say what he said. But yeah,

Alderman Nate Wolff (District 12) 10:00

That's easy.

Attorney Christopher Behrens 10:01

There's nothing that I'm aware of that precipitated it. When the policies are updated, they go through review by various departments, and the risk manager within the HR department plays a key role, taking a look. And a lot of these policies haven't been updated with respect to liability and the insurance for a long time. So, Brian is getting those. Brian Margen the risk manager's getting those updated. Wouldn't surprise me as more of these come through.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 10:29

We're gonna see more of it

Attorney Christopher Behrens 10:31

...in the future, too.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 10:32

Thank you for that response. It's good to know that it's not like a response to something that's happening rather than, like we're just trying to keep an eye on the ball and updating our policy, make sure the language is tight. Thank you.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 10:52

Alright. Let's take a vote. All those in favor say aye. Chair votes aye. It is approved.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 11:01

Moving on to number six information items. 23-0351 2023 seasonal employee staffing updates. Director Gazza.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 11:14

Our staff—staffing at this point of the year compared to last year is significantly better. The rate increases had a big impact on that. And all the surrounding commu—communities have followed suit, which I wish they wouldn't because I want to remain as the most competitive competitor.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 11:32

Yet again, Appleton leading the way. Right.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 11:34

But anyway. So, on the recreation side, interviewing, hiring is completed for tennis court camps, playground leaders, and our two coordinator positions, and so we're full already for our playground coordinators. Our baseball/softball umpire interviews are ongoing. That probably—umpires are always the toughest to get. You actually hear radio ads for the high school basketball umpires and so forth, trying to encourage people to get involved. The numbers drop dramatically.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 12:06

Blame the parents.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 12:08

Yep. Cashiers and concessionaires for the pools are both fine, and many returning staff at the new wage. Managers and assistant managers for the pools have been hired, which is great. We're still looking to fill lifeguard roles for summer as well as waterslide attendants, not many. I think we're pretty close. They like to actually over hire a little bit, because what happens is between now and the time the pools will open, there will be people that will, you know, say "I took another job" or "I decided to do something different."

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 12:46

On the ground side, we have 12 of 17 hired, and two are in the process of being hired. So, they're in the system background check. So that'd be 14 of 17. And Greg says he has some other applications to review. There was a lull, and then he said they start picking up again. So, he's not that concerned.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 13:05

And then golf. We are actually good at the golf course. We had, I think one of the—one person step aside. So, I think Jeff will be looking for one person, but that's—in all practical matters, you know, we're in really good shape. That happens anytime.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 13:25

So, and I just really wanted to bring that up, because it was a big deal for us. And we didn't know how the funding would, you know, come about and, you know, approaching the 2023 budget, you know, challenging and—but we knew we had to do it otherwise we just would be closing programs or pools and or other opportunities. So unfortunately, yeah, it's costing more, but you know, we'll we keep providing a service, and the people keep attending. In fact, we're starting to exceed lot of the numbers. I think Nikki mentioned that. So, attendance is high.

Alderman Nate Wolff (District 12) 14:03

Alderman Schultz.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 14:06

Thank you, Chair. Just could you just help us understand the numbers little bit on what like an, a lifeguard for example, a base level lifeguard starting salary might be hourly?

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 14:17

Yeah, they're right around the I believe, right around the \$15 rate range.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 14:23

So, I mean, across the board, essentially, that's essentially the target because \$15 seems to be that magic number.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 14:30

\$15 and up. If a person has been a lifeguard and has returned several years, it could be higher than that.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 14:37

Okay. And so like, generally speaking across the board, if we're hiring for any position within parks and rec or other facilities essentially, that's our target is \$15.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 14:45

I saw Green Bay, had posted this weekend. They had their position titles. They had the old wage with a red X through it, and then their new way

Matt Miller (Executive Director - Irish Fest) 15:00

Yeah, I saw that on Facebook as well.

Alderman Alex Schultz (District 9) 15:04

Sorry, that was purely my benefit. I wanted to understand what—

Alderman Nate Wolff (District 12) 15:07

Always let the cat out of the bag.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 15:08

We'll give them credit. But yeah, DePere did a nice job. They were valuable in helping us look at our rates too. So gotta give others credit when credit's due. So.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 15:18

If the general public is interested in any of these open job opportunities, you can search for governmentjobs.com. And look for Appleton, Wisconsin, and all of the seasonal information is right there as far as rates, what's available.

Director Dean Gazza (Parks, Recreation, and Facilities) 15:33

Thank you.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 15:36

Anything else? All right, before we move on to number seven, just like Aldersperson Siebers in the previous municipal services meeting, I would just like to say thank you to this committee for all your work. Thank you, Director Gazza, and the IT slash Attorney's office. We truly appreciate it. This is the fun committee. And I've hope everyone's had a little bit of fun while doing this good work for the city of Appleton. Is there anything else anyone would like to say?

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:08

Move to adjourn. Oh, sorry. Go ahead. Move to adjourn.

Aldersperson Joss Thyssen (District 8) 16:16

Second.

Aldersperson Nate Wolff (District 12) 16:18

All those in favor say aye. Chair votes aye. We are adjourned.

Aldersperson Alex Schultz (District 9) 16:23

No more fun.

Aldersperson Sheri Hartzheim (District 13) 16:24

I didn't mean to cut you off.