

City of Van Meter, Iowa

Parks & Recreation Board Meeting – June 5, 2025

1) The Van Meter Parks & Recreation Board met on June 5, 2025 for a meeting. The meeting started at 5:58 pm.

2) Parks & Recreation Director Chia called the meeting to order & roll was taken.

Board Members Present: Rhonda Baldwin, Janice Miller, Rona Jacobs

Staff Present: Jess Drake – Van Meter City Clerk, Sam Chia – Parks & Recreation Director

3) **Approval of February 6, 2025 minutes:**

Rhonda Baldwin approve agenda ~ Janice Miller second approval

4) **Discussion: City of Van Meter Entry Sign – Plant/Landscaping Recommendations**

RJ Lawn & Landscaping Representatives: Jason Barney & Bree Van Meeteren (Lead Designer)

Presented a color scale of proposed work around signage. Some proposed plants (all low maintenance):

- Dogwoods - Have a nice fall & winter color
- Dwarf Alberta Spruce (in front of the Van Meter sign & corners)
- Drip roses (don't spread)
- Dwarf Burning Bushes (very easy to care for. If needs trimmed, you can trim back to the base and it will regrow)
- Junipers (three different types – evergreens – blue, green & dark green)

Throughout will have stones for decoration but they also hold everything in.

We will amend the soil with compost so the plants have a better chance of survival.

Watering needs to be done. Can hire RJ to do it or have the city staff do it.

Question: Rhonda – Is there any plan for lighting?

Jason: There is already a bright light shining on the sign. It is possible to add uplighting.

Rona: It looks like there is room behind the sign for a large evergreen to be used as a Christmas tree.

Jason: Agreed. Can plant one there without any problems.

Jess: Add in the lighting design and Christmas tree as an option. We will put the proposal in front of the council this month but not take action until July. This project is driven by Mayor Joe Herman.

Jess: I will make note to make sure our lease for the land is still in effect.

5) **Discussion: Raccoon River Days Update:**

Sam: I am helping to run the bags tournament and new this year a kick ball tournament.

Rona: The seats to the toilets in the restrooms near the concession stand need to be tightened or bolted down. Jess will make note for the city crew to take a look.

Rhonda: What is our involvement in both tournaments? Are we providing any type of prizes?

Janice: Is there an entry fee?

Sam: Yes \$20 for bags. Prize - winner take all and small medals. 2:00 pm to completion

For kick ball \$20 per team of 10. Prize is a medal. 11:30 am – 2:00 pm

Rona: Handicap parking?

Jess: I will text Joel after our meeting to confirm. We can print Handicapped signs and they are enforceable.

Rona: 5K Run – as of this meeting, we have 106 runners. Our goal is 185. We have volunteers but can always use more. We have extra bubbles. 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes.

Janice: P&R usually donates the chips for the meal. We can do that again.

Janice: Move to donate the chips. Rhonda 2nd motion.

6) **Discussion: Keep Iowa Clean:**

Event is a state-wide initiative. We selected Sunday, June 8 as our event date. Has been posted to social media.

Meet at the soccer fields. Lisa Benton will bring gloves. Will use the city dumpsters to put the trash in. If we don't get a lot of volunteers, we can hold another event in the fall and engage different groups to assist (ie: boy scouts, youth group, churches, etc).

7) Discussion: Rec Complex Signage and Parking:

Lisa Benton said it was brought to her attention that some visitors from another town were having difficulties finding the complex due to lack of signage. In addition, there is no handicapped parking.

Janice: I feel we are due for a new sign. The current one at Casey's has no arrows.

Jess: We just got an actual address for all of the parks. The address for the Rec Complex is 100 Sports Park Dr. We can look at an option for a new sign with an arrow that says Van Meter Rec Complex or we can look a directional sign that would be smaller that points you to the library, post office, etc. We can put together a handful of options and present to you.

Rhonda: Who owns the traffic lanes that takes you to the rec complex?

Jess confirmed that the city owns it.

Rhonda: I am surprised that an accident hasn't occurred by the traffic coming off of Debra Drive and into Casey's parking lot. The vehicles cut across both incoming/outgoing lanes to the rec complex. We do need better signage for that reason. The residents of Van Meter are pretty well versed on where to turn in but not visitors.

Jess: There are plans to repaint the lines. Possible we could build a large overhead sign that vehicles drive under like at the Des Moines Cownie soccer fields.

8) Discussion: Park Board Events

- Art in the Park – Jonatha has supplies. Just needs volunteers to help.
*** Update following this meeting: Rhonda went to the library and checked in with Jonatha. She has the following crafts packaged and ready to go. Just needs volunteers to assist:
June 14th: Sand Art ~ June 28th: Pin Wheels ? July 12th: Kites ~ July 26th: Magic Water Elves
Rhonda has placed the AITP signs around the city.
- Concert on the Corner: Rhonda – Our original person scheduled (Corey Jameson) is now unable to perform. Jess: I may have someone that can help. His name is Josh Rosenbloom and has played at Booneville a couple of times. He's a junior in college, graduated from VM and lives in Wildwood. Jess will get contact information. All of his friends attend.
Rhonda: I have Lick Skillet on desk. Ryan Sherlock is consulting with his band to see which date works. We could also entertain having Tim Cox DJ one night.
- Yoga in the Park: Starting on Saturday, June 7th. Signs will go up tomorrow. Led by Margo Sucko.

9) Discussion: Disc Golf:

Janice: Would like to ask about the maintenance of the Disc Golf in Johnson Park I would like to see an upgrade of the maintenance, possibly start a league and be sure to advertise its existence. People do use it and generally not from Van Meter.

Jess: Drew McCombs is in a traveling disc golf league and told us about a grant opportunity to refresh the entire course. It's not a super competitive grant. It will no take care of immediate needs but it is on our "to do" list. Sam has reached out to the community to get feedback regarding formation of a league.

10) Discussion: Plant Sale Update:

Janice: We cleared \$2,113.00 which is a little more that we did last year. This does not include the \$100 in plants used to fill the containers at the corner of Main Street.

Rhonda: Signs for the plant sale helped. The metal stands for the activities signs are very flimsy and they blow over in the wind. I would like to ask the VM School shop teacher if they could possibly fabricate some frames that are heavy duty and if so, get a bid on what it would cost. Something that the current signs could slip in and out of to change with the activity.

Jess: Yes ok to get a bid and present to city hall.

11) Discussion: Fall Sports Update (Sam):

- Flag Football: We will partner with Winterset to offer flag football for 3rd/4th grades & 5th/6th grades. Registration was released last week.
- Fall Soccer Registration: will be released tomorrow morning (June 6th) along with social media posts.

12) Discussion: Master Park and Master Trail Plan Update:

Bolton & Menk handling both Master Park and Master Trail. We are also doing a comprehensive plan refresh for the city holistically. The reason we're doing Master Parks plan at the same time is because that was identified as such an area of focus during the original comprehensive plan 5 years ago, that we wanted to give it its own space to be fully engaged and then just put it into the comprehensive plan so that it is more part of community development. With that being said,

- Phase 1: Bolton & Menk will have a tent at Raccoon River Days and they would like to attend a Concert of the Corner. They will have a QR code that people can express their thoughts on a survey. What are your thoughts on what we currently have, what would you like to see the city have, etc. They will then compile their data and present it to the Parks & Rec board 3 times, and will also provide monthly updates to the city council. It's an approximately 7-month process. They will look at our current space, what needs to be done to bring it up to date, how do we utilize our current space, are we missing anything, if there is a gap, what we are projected to need based on our growth pattern for both indoor and outdoor facilities.
- Phase 2: Asking for a handful of community members to walk the city and pinpoint things such as
 - ✓ Is there a sidewalk needed in a location
 - ✓ Is the current sidewalk in need of repair
 - ✓ Is a ramp needed (handicapped or otherwise)
- Phase 3: will be a conceptual plan of what we could do, what it will cost, what does it look like for your overall capital improvement plan for 5 and 10 years.

There are planned milestones and a packet will be sent to the Park and Rec board. There will be subsection that will be a liaison with the other board members such as Lisa, Brooke, Blake Joel.

Roan: For the Master Park Plan, what park are you referring to?

Jess: All parks.

A preliminary map was reviewed by the board members in attendance.

13) Discussion: Social Media Promotion:

Rona: It is not my forte. I have begun using Chat GPT and it has changed my life. If you have your calendar organized, it makes it easy for everyone to get on board with things. The easier we can make it, the better it is.

Jess: When I am in the Facebook page, click on events, you will see every event that we have. The difficult part is being separate entities for audit purposes. There used to be a bunch of city pages but with the exception of the fire department, they are now all rolled into one. We are working with the VMFD to include them. Also, the library is governed under their own separate legal entity of a board so will remain a little autonomous. They have their own website and Facebook page. All department heads have access to add content so don't hesitate to ask one of them to add your content.

14) Adjournment: 7:19 pm.

Next meeting scheduled for 7 pm on Thursday, April 3rd at City Hall.

Preparer of minutes attestation: Rhonda Baldwin