

City of Evansville
Park & Recreation Board Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 17th, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Park board will be held in person at City Hall located at 31 S Madison St on the third floor.

Copies of the packet and/or agenda are available at
http://www.ci.evansville.wi.gov/city_government/public_agendas_minutes/park_board.php

AGENDA

1. Call to order

Made by Chairperson Lewis at 6:05 pm

2. Roll call

Lewis, Pooch, Espinosa, Fuson and Merritt, Prudhon was absent. Also in attendance was Marissa Miller, Chad Renly, Ray Anderson, Arlene Larson, Dean Ballmer and Kris Evans.

3. Motion to approve the agenda

Fuson/Espinosa 5-0

4. Motion to waive the reading of the December 20th, 2022 minutes and approve them as printed.

Espinosa/Fuson 5-0

5. Citizen appearances other than agenda items listed

- None

6. New business

- **Leash Ordinance – Discussion and possible motion to recommend to Common Council.**

Chairperson Lewis started the conversation by saying that the Safety Committee has been reviewing this and has been brought to Park Board to discuss the parks aspect of this before it goes back to the Safety Committee. Lewis opened the floor to residents in attendance for comments.

Arlene Larson was in attendance and provided the Committee with a letter addressing the new leash law and stated that she was in favor of the current leash law and not the proposed one. She did not see reason to change it from its current standing. Arlene stated that they live at 126 N 2nd St and in their experience, residents have done an excellent job of maintaining control over their dogs. She said that it gives her dog a chance to socialize and exercise in a manner that is not doable on a leash. They have an off-leash dog walk at Lake Leota Park every Saturday morning and work very hard that the group and their dogs do not disturb other people using the park.

Norman Barker spoke next and stated that he had a husky that needed a lot of exercise. He said that the dog park in town is too small for his dog to get sufficient space to run. He also stated that he believes most instances from dogs being off leash are on private property and not in parks. He has his dog very well trained and always comes back when called.

Dean Balmer was next to speak and lives at 245 W Liberty St. He stated that he really enjoys taking walks with his dog off leash and his dog listens well but at times dogs will be dogs. He typically waits to he gets to a park area that has very few people around before he lets his dog off leash so they do not disturb others around.

Lewis stated that the police and the Safety Committee are looking at various options like allowing / posting certain areas of the park to be off leash areas. He also mentioned having time restrictions and only allowing dogs to be off leash at specific times or days. Lewis said that the current ordinance is very vague and doesn't adequately define control.

Espinosa said that he walks his dog 5-6 miles per day but is always walked on a leash and is not a fan of dogs being allowed to be off leash. There have been instances where issues have occurred, there is always an exception. Espinosa stated that it can be hard to manage when there are so many activities on going at Lake Leota Park. He is uncertain of what a good option is currently. He asked the question if something could potentially be done at West Side Park if there would be room there to place a larger area for dogs.

Dean Palmer stated that he heard from the Safety Committee Chairperson that not dogs would be allowed at the West Side Park.

Espinosa stated that there are a lot of good dogs and responsible owners but sometimes things happen and that's what we need to prevent.

Merritt asked if anyone had anything negative to say about dogs being off leash.

Renly said that Anderson spends more time at the park than anyone and asked what his experience had been over the years.

Anderson said that he knew all of the dog owners in attendance and they have all been great dogs. For the most part the dogs have been well behaved but he has seen it both ways. Even a dog that is very well trained if it decides to run it's going to run.

Poock said that he wishes the current dog park was larger but it's still new. He wished that there was something more for dogs there like training/obstacle/agility equipment. Something like that might make it more attractive for dog owners. Lewis agreed and said that wouldn't be a bad idea.

Poock also said that he would like to see the current ordinance stay in place but maybe better define what being in control means.

Lewis said that this was all good information and discussion to have and he will be bringing it back to the Safety Committee for further discussion.

7. Park's report

- **General report**

Anderson said that he had nothing to report.

- **Lake Leota Dam repair – (place holder)**

Renly stated that the cofferdam is installed, the sluice gate has been closed and issues with the installation were minimal. Water is now coming over both spillways. Currently still working with the DNR on the plan set review and still hoping for a February bid.

- **Ice Rink – Update**

The weather hasn't been great for the ice rink with large fluctuations in the temperature. The rink is currently closed as the ice is very thin. The liner ended up with some damage too it. Kris Evans said that he has been updating the community on it condition. We have a few days coming up where the temperature is going to drop. The water department will be adding several more inches of water to the rink with hopes that we have some steady colder temperature in the future.

The new light that was installed at the rink has been working well as has the timer. It's set up to turn on automatically at dusk and then stay on for 4 hours which has been turning off at around 9pm.

8. Pool report

- **General Report**

Nothing to report currently

9. Old business

- **Park & pool design update**

Poock said that they are meeting with groups and people. Contributions are coming in and has been going well. They have been picking out color schemes recently. They will continue to meet with members of the community.

10. Other

- **Meeting reminder:**

Regular meeting on February 20th, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

11. Motion to adjourn

Fuson / Espinosa 5-0 at 6:35pm