



STAFF REPORT

DATE: 04/2/2024

CONSENT

TO: CITY COUNCIL
AGENDA ITEM: Sally Manzara Nature Center – Star Gazing Event
FROM: Adam Swanepoel, Assistant Public Works Director
REVIEWED BY: Marty Powers, Public Works Director

BACKGROUND:

The Sally Manzara Nature Center has been providing community programming since 2017. Programming provided by the center focuses on community activities related to outdoor life for all ages. Current programming is ran by the center’s program manager Verity Davis and include; summer camps, family nature day, buckthorn removal festival and adopt a tree program. Along with programs the center provides a number of exhibits and activities that include, bee, butterfly, tree, bird and aquatic life resources.

Normal business hours for the center currently in the winter are 9am- 3pm. Sunfish Lake Park is open from dawn to dusk with the gates closing to the park at 9pm.

ISSUE BEFORE CITY COUNCIL:

Would City Council allow Sally Manzara Nature Center to hold a star gazing event on October 19th?

PROPOSAL DETAILS/ANALYSIS:

The Sally Manzara Nature Center is requesting to host a star gazing event to be held on site the evening of October 19th with (October 26th being the backup). The event would start around 7pm and would conclude at 10pm. Attendees would hear from the MN Astronomical Society about star constellations and be able to use telescopes in the prairie area for viewing.

Consideration for this event is being brought forward for the purpose of extending the hours of the park for the event. Currently the park closes at 9:00pm and volunteers are requesting extension of the hours for their event. The Center is planning for approximately 20-25 people to attend the event.

The Parks Commission reviewed met on 03/18/2024 and were provided additional information on the event. Verity Davis a program coordinator at the Sally Manzara Nature Center provided a handout and description of the event being help. The Commission voted 5-0 in favor of having the hours of the park extended for this event.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the following motion:

“Move to approve the request to extend Sunfish Lake Park hours until 10:30pm on Oct. 19, 2024 with Oct 26 being considered to host a star gazing event held by the Sally Manzara Nature Center.”