

City nixes pool, baseball for summer

(KNZA)--The Hiawatha Aquatic Park will not open this summer and organized baseball games will not be allowed at city-owned ball fields.

The Hiawatha City Commission made the unanimous decision during their meeting Monday evening.

Commissioner Becky Shamburg said she didn't think it was a safe idea to open the pool this summer and worth the risk due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Commissioner Toni Hull said by the time the city would be able to open the pool, the season would be half over.

The Commission voted to allow the opening of the city's ball fields, parks and playgrounds when Phase 2 of the Governor's re-opening plan is reached. While no organized baseball games will be allowed on the ball fields, team practices will be allowed.

The Commission also voted to keep the public restrooms at Bruning and Noble Parks closed until phase 4 of the Governor's plan is reached.

City Parks and Recreation Director Stacy Jasper said she plans to open the Fisher Center when Phase 2 of the Governor Plan is achieved, abiding by the guidelines of gathering sizes and social distancing.

Jasper earlier this month announced a tentative plan for opening up the city's parks, ball fields and pool, but a final decision was tabled until Monday's meeting.

Editor's note: Hiawatha Parks and Recreation Director Stacy Jasper released the following statement

During tonight's (5/18/20) Commission Meeting, some tough decisions were made.

The City of Hiawatha Commission has voted to not open the Hiawatha Aquatic Park for the 2020 summer. They also voted that no home games will be played at Bruning and Noble Parks for HYBA, HYSA, the Bravos, Legion Baseball and HP&R. I cannot speak on behalf of any of these organizations for what their summer plans may now be, but for HP&R, this means we will not be hosting T-Ball or Coed Softball for the summer of 2020.

Once Phase 2 of the Governor's Orders has been reached, HP&R facilities will become open for public access, still following the Governor's guidelines of mass gatherings and social distancing. This means ball fields, the skate park, all playgrounds, batting cages, shelters and basketball courts will be open for the public and (available for team practices) once the Phase 2 is achieved.

All public bathrooms at Bruning and Noble parks will be locked until Phase 4 is reached. The

City of Hiawatha does not have the means to keep restrooms properly sanitized for public use 24/7.

The Fisher Center will open at Phase 2, still abiding by the Governor's guidelines of gathering sizes and social distancing.

*Please understand these decisions WERE NOT EASY. In fact, today has been one of the hardest days of my 15 years in Recreation. But A LOT of time, conversations and research were invested in these decisions, and I appreciate anyone who is willing to support them although they are not what we had ALL hoped for. There are SO MANY factors that go in to opening and hosting summer recreation now with COVID-19.

I 100% stand by the Commission and their decisions tonight. We landed on a great compromise to still allow for so much outdoor recreation.

HP&R will continue to work on programs and events through the summer that meet the guidelines set for us. Stay tuned and STAY SAFE!

Thank you for your continued support through this unknown time. We are doing the BEST we can!

-Stacy Jasper, HP&R Director

Many Signals Communications