

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
CITY OF RAMSEY
ANOKA COUNTY
STATE OF MINNESOTA**

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on January 11, 2018, at Ramsey City Council Chambers, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW.

Commission Members Present: Chair Shane Bennett
 Commissioner Andrew Andrusko
 Commissioner Russell Bayer
 Commissioner Jennifer Leistico
 Commissioner Jon Trappen

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Brandon Sis
 Commissioner Charles Tchuinkwa

Also Present: Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bennett called the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Bennett welcomed Andrew Andrusko as a new member of the Park and Rec Commission.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

Chair Bennett welcomed several students from Elk River High School in attendance.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to approve the Park and Recreation Commission meeting agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett, Commissioners Leistico, Bayer, Andrusko, Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Sis and Commissioner Tchuinkwa.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Trappen, to approve the following Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes:

1) Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes dated November 9, 2017.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett, Commissioners Bayer, Trappen, Andrusko and Leistico. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Sis and Commissioner Tchuinkwa.

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Approve Greenway and Recreation District Maps as Working Documents for Park Planning

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood indicated the Trott Brook Boardwalk project, is a currently missing link in the Greenway. He recalled that this Boardwalk project was previously recommended by the Commission to begin construction in August 2018.

Mr. Riverblood presented a map of the Trott Brook Boardwalk area, highlighting the boardwalk is beyond the Brookfield subdivision, in the area of parkland received by the City in 1994/1995. The proposed Boardwalk will also include a pull-off parking area, which will allow people to access the Trott Brook Boardwalk as well as the Trott Brook trail.

Mr. Riverblood reviewed the history of the Greenway and the trails that connect everything together. In 2002, the potential greenways were mapped in the City of Ramsey. These are areas with natural features and are largely contiguous. The Trott Brook greenway, then, rose to the top because it is the largest area of contiguous natural resources in the City. The City subsequently applied for and received a \$500,000 grant for conservation and trail easements from willing sellers. Most recently, the Council has approved plans and specifications for Trott Brook earlier this week. The Greenway connects to the larger community but also connects to desirable destinations: areas of retail, the community parks, the high school, and the library.

Mr. Riverblood noted that even as the City is in the midst of the 2040 Comp Plan, it is important to remember the context of the community involvement surrounding the 2030 Comp Plan. He emphasized how important this long-term planning is, as it is the mechanism by which the City moves things ahead and gets things done. He recalled a number of the park and rec goals completed as a result of the 2030 Comp Planning.

Mr. Riverblood provided a brief history of the conception of the City's Recreation Districts back in the early 1990s. Recreation Districts are basically larger neighborhoods, the boundaries of which are large county roads or streams that are not comfortable for young people to cross. He continued that the City of Ramsey does not have the resources to create and maintain community parks everywhere, throughout the city, so the goal is to create connectivity to these community parks, so there are not tiny parks scattered everywhere, but have high-quality community parks accessible.

Mr. Riverblood noted also that the February agenda for the Park and Rec Commission includes approving the County's plan to realign the Central Anoka County Regional Trail and connect greenways to retail, modes of travel, and parks themselves.

Mr. Riverblood noted that the Greenway touches every single recreation district.

Chair Bennett thanked Mr. Riverblood for the presentation and especially for the emphasis on the connectivity in this plan. He noted the plan meets the goal of connected community, maintaining rural green spaces, and allowing the City to leverage the larger, more centralized parks.

Mr. Riverblood responded that over the course of the last 18 months during the community engagement process, two themes have been repeated: residents want the City to keep its eye on maintaining its rural character and/or the balance between amenities and destinations with the rural character. The Greenway plan does that. It creates connectivity, and the Greenways provide the elements of rural character that residents value.

Chair Bennett stated he is open to entertaining a motion or further comments from the Commissioners.

Commissioner Andrusko recalled the goal to create connectivity with Elk River. He asked whether there is value in showing how the proposed Greenway connections relate to other communities.

Mr. Riverblood noted that is where the scale of the Recreation Districts come in. In the park system, it is at the level of the Recreation Districts where discussion is held regarding both opportunities within that district and also relationships to other community connections. For instance, with regard to the Mississippi Recreation District, that is exactly where staff wants to talk about goals and priorities within that area and how those reinforces the greater good.

Mr. Riverblood continued that another goal is to create a story map, so residents can visually navigate their way around the City of Ramsey. Along those lines, on January 23rd, staff is hosting an open house for the fall semester of the Resilient Communities project, and there are many dozens of 4-foot high posters that capture and illustrate these various projects. The lobby and hallway will be lined with these posters, to illustrate the interesting planning-level work that is happening.

Chair Bennett invited members of the public to the January 23rd open house.

Motion by Commissioner Trappen, seconded by Commissioner Leistico, to approve the Greenway and Recreation District maps as working documents for park planning.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett, Commissioners Trappen, Leistico, Andrusko, and Bayer. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Sis and Commissioner Tchuinkwa.

5.02: Recommend Developing a Schematic Design-level Plan for the Lake Itasca Greenway

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that the Itasca Greenway project relates to the Resilient Communities project previously discussed. Staff anticipates working with one or two professors on the schematic design. The purpose of this case is to get Commission direction to proceed however staff may need to, or have opportunity to, for that schematic design level for Lake Itasca Greenway.

Mr. Riverblood asked for feedback from the Commission to avoid misunderstanding or misinformation on what the Greenway is and where it could be. A schematic design-level plan will fill in the gaps, depending on what is received from the University of Minnesota project.

Chair Bennett confirmed it would be wonderful to work with the Resilient Communities group to move this along and encouraged a greater level of detail on the Greenway project.

Commissioner Andrusko concurred that a greater level of detail would be helpful, both to the Commission as well as the City Council who requested it during the previous discussion of the potential at Lake Itasca Greenway project.

Mr. Riverblood added that if the staff is able to get the schematic design so the goals are clear, staff will bring it back to the Park and Rec Commission, for recommendation that the Council adopt it as a formalized plan. If that can be accomplished before the completion of the Comp Plan, it can be inserted into that. As the Commission knows, the Comp Plan is gold. If a formalized plan is included, it will chart the course. The current landowner is willing to convey the Greenway. But if he/she sells to another group, it could become smaller parcels, and it would be more difficult, along with changes of land use. Adopting this plan as soon as possible would be very helpful.

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Andrusko, to approve the Lake Itasca Greenway as a priority for planning purposes, and develop schematic design-level plans.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett, Commissioners Bayer, Andrusko, Leistico, and Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Sis and Commissioner Tchuinkwa.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted he generally provides an update on the skating season at the January Park and Rec Commission meeting. He reported that hockey rink usage is down significantly due to the cold weather. Also important to note, is the slight downward trend the past couple years in ice skating. In past years, staff tried building a casual rink at Bear Park, which was discontinued due to lack of usage. Residents expressed some desire for it this year, it was opened, and a trailcam was installed about a week ago. In the past week, 22 folks have skated. Staff will continue to evaluate the usage alongside the labor and cost of installing that ice, but it probably does not look too promising in future years, as there is a significant amount of time and resources required.

Mr. Riverblood also noted that staff has finalized the concerts for the 2018 season.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett, Commissioners Leistico, Bayer, Andrusko and Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Sis and Commissioner Tchuinkwa.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Allison Burr
TimeSaver off Site Secretarial, Inc.