

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on March 8, 2018, at Ramsey City Council Chambers, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW.

Commission Members Present:      Vice Chair Brandon Sis  
   Commissioner Andrew Andrusko  
   Commissioner Russell Bayer  
   Commissioner Jennifer Leistico  
   Commissioner Charles Tchuinkwa

Commission Members Absent:      Chair Shane Bennett  
   Commissioner Jon Trappen

Also Present:                              Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

**1.      CALL TO ORDER**

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

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

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

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

**4.      APPROVE MINUTES**

**4.01:    Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes**

Motion by Commissioner Andrusko, seconded by Commissioner Leistico, to approve the following Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes, as presented:

- 1) Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes dated February 8, 2018.

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

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Recap – 2017 Photo Contest**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reported that the 2017 photo contest winners were awarded on February 28<sup>th</sup>, and he highlighted the various categories in the photo contest. The Commission congratulated the participants for their talent and excellent contributions to the contest.

### **5.02: Consider New Recreational Amenity – Proposal by Girl Scout Troop #15293**

Representatives of Girl Scouts Troop #15293 gave a brief presentation on their initiative to help build a gaga ball pit in North Commons Park. Pictures of gaga ball pit were presented to the Commission.

In response to questions from the Commission, the Girl Scouts representatives explained the diagram shows 8-foot-wide sections of wood walls, in the shape of an octagon. Additionally, gates would be added for entry and exit, which will make the pit ADA accessible. It was described as a game appropriate for multiple ages to play together, from young children to older teens.

Vice Chair Sis asked about the proposed timeline for the gaga ball pit.

The Girl Scouts representatives explained the materials will be gathered by June, and construction should take a couple of days.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood added that maintenance staff will be able to use push mowers to maintain the grass. The octagon could also be relocated if the grass becomes damaged due to heavy usage. He commented that this will be a good companion piece to the playground for younger children.

Vice Chair Sis noted the City has been asked to contribute \$500 from the City's Lawful Gambling Improvement Fund towards the gaga ball pit, with remaining funds to be raised by the Girl Scouts Troop.

Motion by Commissioner Andrusko, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to recommend to the City Council that \$500 from the City's Lawful Gambling Improvement Fund, be appropriated as a match to fund a Gaga Ball Pit, constructed by volunteers at North Commons Park.

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

Mr. Riverblood added that the Lawful Gambling Improvement Fund is established from a small fee off pull tabs in the City. Those funds can be used for primarily recreational or nonprofit uses. This program has been in existence for more than two decades and is intended to address small projects, especially those that have a match of labor or cash. The Girls Scouts project met the terms of the program ideally. It is a neat way to leverage interest in a unique recreation and have a funding source for it. This funding recommendation will go to the City Council this spring.

In response to a question by Vice Chair Sis, Mr. Riverblood explained that the program is intended to be capped at \$5,000. Thus, \$4,500 is still available for 2018.

### **5.03: Recommend 2018 Parks Capital Improvement Project(s)**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood introduced the Parks Capital Improvement program, which is a 10-year listing of projects in the City. The City Council adopts the capital improvement program in December or January, and then the year's projects (2018) come forward individually for project development or construction. Under consideration is a selection of park projects that are ready to move forward for further development. The Commission may choose to advance all of them now, one at a time, or one or two at a time, based upon the individual projects. Once a project is approved by the Park and Rec Commission, it advances to the City Council.

Mr. Riverblood provided an overview of five proposed projects:

- Replace fencing and dugouts (#5-7) at Central Park, at an estimated cost of \$75,000
  - Dugouts, netting, replacing some fencing, and adding a concrete maintenance strip under the backstops and sideline fences
- Sunfish Lake Phase 2 Parking Lot at an estimated cost of less than \$30,000
- Central Park – Football Field Enhancements at an estimated cost of \$15,000
  - Drainage and grading modifications to the football field, between ballfields #3 & 4
- Amphitheater Lighting at an estimated cost of \$40,000
  - Lighting enhancements and audio conduits at The Draw
- Aeration for Sunfish Lake and The Draw at an estimated cost of \$40,000
  - Two separate aeration systems at The Draw and Sunfish Lake. Elements include contracted installation, electrical power supply, signing, permitting and public notification

Mr. Riverblood added that the funding comes from a fee charged to new developments in Ramsey. The aeration system may qualify for funding from the Lawful Gambling Improvement Fund, which has to be youth-oriented or non-profit. This may fall in that category, as it is used so heavily by youth.

Vice Chair Sis commented this is a worthy list of projects.

Commissioner Bayer asked about the depth of the ice on the pond at The Draw.

Mr. Riverblood stated the max water is 6 feet. The ice depth varies, but it can be between 12 and 18 inches.

Mr. Riverblood noted that the idea of collecting a couple of hundred dead fish is also a factor in this project. The aeration will also help with reducing the amount of algae in the summer.

Commissioner Andrusko asked about the Parks CIP, and whether these are projects in addition to those projects already programmed.

Mr. Riverblood clarified that the Parks CIP contains ten years of projects lined up. The next year (2018) are projects pretty certain to move forward this year. The five projects just covered are just a partial list. These are the ones ready for development. The Park trust fund currently has \$2 million in it. Tonight, the Commission would be recommending that the projects move forward for development or construction.

Vice Chair Sis asked whether staff has had a discussion with ARAA regarding facilities that are co-utilized.

Mr. Riverblood responded affirmatively. Staff asked ARAA to prioritize the projects, and that was reaffirmed in March 1, 2018. Their top priority was improvements to ballfield 5 and 6 in the baseball field at Central Park. The second priority was to fill the swale in the football fields (#2). and another project was to solve for the drainage concerns at Elmcrest Park after big rain events that occur before tournaments. There is currently no solution for that one.

Commissioner Andrusko inquired whether additional projects will come in before the end of 2018.

Mr. Riverblood responded a few more of the 2018 projects will likely come forward. Some projects require development, and then they might be bid on in 2019. With the ballfields, they will happen this year. The aeration might get pushed out a little bit. The amphitheater might even be bifurcated where audio is provided and the lighting is resolved in 2019. These are sometimes placeholders, but they are authorizing staff to get the Council's approval.

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Tchuinkwa, to recommend to City Council that the five park projects proceed for development/construction, at a not-to-exceed amount and funding source specified within the Capital Improvement Plan worksheets.

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

#### **5.04: Check in – Schematic Design Process for Municipal Plaza and the Water-Centric Park in The COR**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reported that in 2016 the schematic design was agreed upon for Municipal Plaza (\$3.5 million) and the Water-Centric Park (\$6 million). Tonight, the purpose is to provide an update on concept-level park planning as it moves into schematic design to be sure the Park and Rec Commission concurs these are the best ideas.

Mr. Riverblood presented several slides showing aerial, overhead, and street level views of both the Municipal Plaza and the proposed Water-Centric Park. He commented that once The COR is built out, wayfinding will become not an obstacle, but rather an opportunity for people to describe where they will meet at the park. He pointed out the hardscape, the plaza, landscaping, the pedestrian way, parkland, parking, and more. He recalled previous discussions about “fire and ice” which would constitute little hearths with gas lights, alongside some ice skating. He also showed a proposed area for a “forest walk,” as well as proposed picnic areas. He pointed out boulevards with trees. He pointed out that once the pond shape, depth and topography identified, staff will know the value of the fill sand, which may be worth tens of thousands of dollars. When the City goes in to dig, it will only have to be done once. Mobilization to move soil around is a big cost. That can be \$5,000 to \$50,000, so the City only wants to do it once. There will also be a loop trail around the lake. He noted municipal pools are expensive, but wading pools are a different experience. There will also be a pavilion space, restrooms, and concession stand. There will also be cabanas with umbrellas, able to be reserved.

In response to a question by Commissioner Andrusko, Mr. Riverblood emphasized this will be a great place to host parties of all size, possibly even weddings, which would help with the revenue stream.

Mr. Riverblood discussed the water elements, the boardwalk, and the plaza overlooking the pond.

Vice Chair Sis and the Commissioners expressed support and excitement for the ideas and vision presented.

Commission Andrusko noted the plan reminds him of the Macnamara Alumni Center at the University of Minnesota campus.

Vice Chair Sis noted the plan lines up with the desire to be very nature-centric in Ramsey.

Mr. Riverblood recalled the staff report reflects the years of public engagement. People want a lot of feel of natural resources, even in the downtown area. Staff appreciates the opportunity to do some interpretation in the park.

Mr. Riverblood invited further feedback from the public about the plans.

Commissioner Tchuinkwa asked about the previous public input.

Mr. Riverblood listed the various outreach efforts by the City over the past couple of years. He noted that one overwhelming point of feedback is a desire for a splash pad.

Vice Chair Sis asked about the timeframe going forward.

Mr. Riverblood responded the schematic design has to be completed. At the same time as the City is completing the Parks system plan, priorities will be identified and various financing options will be sought.

## 6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided an update on the Comp Plan, a copy of which he handed out to the Commissioners. He is looking for input from the Commission in April at the regularly scheduled meeting. April 9<sup>th</sup> will be the last piece of formal community engagement, after which it will go to the Park and Rec Commission and then the Council for review.

Mr. Riverblood provided a brief update on the realignment of the Central Anoka County Regional Trail, noting the Council recommended approval of the realignment. It will now go before the Parks Committee of the Anoka County Board and the larger County Board in April and then on to the Met Council offices for consideration.

Mr. Riverblood also wrapped up with a final tally on the skating seasons. Up until the last couple weeks, attendance figures were looking dismal, but the final figures were on par with the last three-year average: 3,817 persons. However, the overall trend is significantly down, as the season totals used to be 5,000 to 7,000 persons.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Allison Burr  
*TimeSaver off Site Secretarial, Inc.*