

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

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

Commission Members Present:      Chair Shane Bennett  
   Vice Chair Brandon Sis  
   Commissioner Russell Bayer  
   Commissioner Jennifer Leistico  
   Commissioner Jon Trappen

Commission Members Absent:      None

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 6:35 p.m.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

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

Motion carried.    Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Leistico, Sis, Bayer, Trappen.  
Voting No: None. Absent: None.

**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, as presented:

- 1) Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes dated October 11, 2018.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Bayer, Trappen, Leistico, Sis. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Recommend Proposed 2019 Facility Use Policy and Rental Rates**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood introduced a discussion of the 2019 facility policies and rental rates. He noted that the Council reviews these policies and rates each year for all City facilities, and will consider them again at the Council meeting next week. There are some minor revisions suggestions for the rate structure. He noted that many 501c3 non-profits have been requesting to use the facilities, and many were not located in Ramsey. In doing so, they were able to use a large meeting room for the \$5 minimum maintenance fee. That has become a concern because some of these groups would cause a great deal of demand for maintenance. One group a few weeks ago left bags and bags of garbage in addition to ordinary wear and tear. The policy revision requires a 501c3 physical facility in Ramsey or requires the organization to have some other recent, significant contribution to Ramsey. The other change increases the \$5 minimum maintenance fee to \$10. He also pointed out some other minor changes in facility use of for-profit businesses.

Commissioner Trappen commented that the proposed \$10 cleaning/maintenance fee is still too low and suggested \$20 may be more appropriate.

Commissioner Leistico noted that she leads a youth group that meets at the Central Park building, and they meet twice monthly for an annual fee of \$90. Now the fee will be \$180, which is a sizable increase. Increasing it more than that would cause her group to look elsewhere.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated there is definitely a difference between the Anoka/Ramsey Athletic Association with a \$800,000 budget and the Girl Scout group which may have an operating expense account of \$200. There is not a good way to find that balance. But the \$5 fee was not even covering paper towels and basic supplies. Staff is recommending a \$5 increase. In special circumstances, it is appropriate to consider a waiver of fees. If a Scout group uses a building, for example, and they sponsor the park, there could be room for negotiation.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to approve the Facility Use Policy and the rental rates structure as indicated within the attachments to the staff report and as discussed.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Bayer, Leistico, Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

### **5.02: Recommend Cash Contribution Rates for Park Dedication and Trail Fees for 2019**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood introduced a discussion of development fees associated with new development in the community. These fees will also be

considered as part of the facility usage fees, which Council will consider next week. He explained the purpose of park dedication fees, which have been set at \$3,000 per new dwelling unit. He explained the nexus between new residents coming in and these same residents needing recreational facilities. Staff reconsiders these fees each year and makes necessary adjustments. For this year, staff is recommending minor increases for these fees that amount to approximately 2%.

Chair Bennett clarified that this is not a new tax and will have no impact on existing residential. This fee is for new development only. He noted that when compared to other communities, Ramsey generally has lower fees.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood added that park dedication and trail fees, pursuant to State statute, have to be indexed to the real demonstrated need. Park dedication is intended to provide community an offset for what the new demand is on the same facilities from the new residents. These fees are only applicable for new development. These are developer dollars, not tax dollars.

Commissioner Sis noted that Ramsey's fees are equitable and do not seem to be out of line. In addition, as compared to some other communities, a lot of them are jumping with a lot higher percentage than the proposed 2%.

Commissioner Leistico asked about prior year's increases.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded that for 2017, there was about a 3% increase. He stated that parks and trails are a high priority for residential valuations.

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to recommend to City Council a 2019 cash Park Dedication rate per residential unit of \$3,050 - with a \$100 and \$75 increase per acre respectively, for the commercial/industrial subdivision of land.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Leistico, Bayer, Sis, Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

### **5.03: Consider the 2019-2028 Parks Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that the Parks CIP is almost exclusively funded from the development fees. He noted the full report is several hundred pages long and includes all the details, if anyone in the public would like to look. This is a planning document; it is not authorizing funding. It is intended to set up the discussion and provide project forecasting so Commissions Cnd councils can think about how all these projects come together and the timing for them.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood highlighted several projects recommended in the CIP in 2019, including a phase of development in the waterfront/splash pad

area, a shelter shade at the off-leash area in Alpine Park, as well as amphitheater lighting and sound system improvements.

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Trappen, to recommend a 2019-2028 Parks Capital Improvement Plan to City Council.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Bayer, Trappen, Leistico, Sis. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

#### **5.04: Consider the Issuance of an RFP for Ford Brook Park's Renovation**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood began discussion of issuing an RFP for Ford Brook Park's renovation, which would bring the aging into compliance with the ADA. He noted the play equipment was salvaged from another park system many decades ago. It is a little tired and uninspiring, and so it has been in the CIP for a few years. Residents would like to see improvements to the park. He noted some of the work could be done by volunteer groups. Staff would issue the RFP with a not-to-exceed amount and parse out elements that would be conducive to be done by volunteers, such as landscaping. He noted that in this park, about 19 homes to the north and northeast are actually in the City of Nowthen. Staff has initiated discussions with the City and the Nowthen Lions about collaborating on this as an area community project.

Commissioner Leistico asked whether anyone has gotten back to staff.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded that the Lions are bringing the topic to their full board. They do want to do a park project; they are probably more inclined do one in the City proper, but this is a neat project where they may participate on a smaller scale. It would be a great opportunity for Ramsey Lions and Nowthen Lions to collaborate. One of the Lions was on the Nowthen Park Board as well, and she's going to bring it to that Board. Previously, staff has brought it to the City's clerk. As one might expect, they are more inclined to invest in something that is clearly their own park. However, there are 19 households that are separated from Nowthen that require residents to drive through Ramsey streets in order to get to their homes.

Commissioner Sis asked how this proposal fits into the broader scope of the stated priority of not investing in smaller parks but rather prioritizing regional parks.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded that the policy calls for the City to be mindful about thinking about the value of new small parks, such as a tot lot, and instead focus on larger parks and connections. In this case, however, Ford Brook is in an existing park and in existing neighborhood, and it is tired. The City has been examining this for a long time. At the same time, staff does need to refine its policy on playground replacements so smaller, older playgrounds are not neglected. Sometimes neighborhood parks can be underwhelming. They don't always have a tremendous return on investment as community parks or trails that connect neighborhoods and destinations.

Commissioner Sis asked whether it is worth the investment in this play equipment. He suggested Ford Brook could be a play area, rather than include a play structure. Also, the surrounding demographics of the area begs the question of whether the City should be investing in this park.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded this is an excellent point. Before firming up or proceeding with an RFP, staff can hold an open house with a mailer to the neighborhood to gauge interest, and then if there is interest, it will help staff understand the priorities for play equipment.

Commissioner Sis suggested that route, rather than just directly proceeding to the RFP.

Chair Bennett commented this proposal does fly in the place of the policy, but at the same time, some aging parks do need updates. Engaging the community in and around this park is a good first step. Continuing forward with an RFP to even determine what the potential scope or cost would be is also a next step. He expressed agreement that an open house is a good option to start with.

Commissioner Leistico asked if there is a park that is comparable in size. She noted that some parents or caregivers like to visit different parks, depending on amenities.

Commissioner Sis noted that these days, people may not always drive to the closest neighborhood park, but rather the regional park.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that is what staff has observed: parents or caregivers have playdates and they meet with one another at the parks that are worth visiting. It is often not a big draw after they have played on a park with little amenities. The problem is, a very nice playground costs a lot of money. Elmhurst cost \$90,000 and it is not that big of a park. That also relates to the policy that Chair Bennett and Commissioner Sis referred to, where staff has to be careful about little pocket parks, because they can limit the City's ability to do destination-park locations.

Commissioner Sis agreed the open house is a good idea.

Chair Bennett noted that as part of the open house and engagement process, perhaps staff can determine whether there can be partners brought on board and creative ways can be found to get this done. A couple years ago, the City talked about a tough decision about removing the equipment from a park. Staff did some research and determined it was being used a lot more than originally thought, and there was resistance to removing the equipment. He asked whether usability can be studied for this Ford Brook Park as well.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded stated the park referenced was Peltzer Park. A mailer was sent out, suggesting it was to be decommissioned and the land sold for single-family use. Trail cams were then installed and they found the park was being used quite a bit. However, that may have been used because of the mailer. Winter is not a good time to make that assessment. That can be reviewed in the spring. At the open house, it might be useful to have available the other things the City is looking at in the system.

Chair Bennett noted that in public engagement, he rarely hears people expressing a desire for new equipment in the park. But rather, everyone talks about a splash pad and a community center.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Leistico, to recommend an open house or public comment period for the Ford Brook Park that then could ultimately lead into an RFP after the fact.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Leistico, Bayer, Trappen. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

## **6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that typically, in December, there will be a year-end bullet point wrap-up and talk about winter programming. He noted that there is a vitality arts project at Central Park, where folks 55+ will be making a pair of kiln mugs. There are other things coming up like the tree lighting and the ornament class.

Chair Bennett noted there are usually 7 members of the Park and Rec Commission, but there are only 5 currently. There will be a posting going out in January for all the City's Boards and Commissions.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Bayer, Trappen, Leistico, Sis. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

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