

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on April 11, 2019, at Ramsey City Council Chambers, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW.

Commission Members Present: Chair Shane Bennett
 Vice Chair Brandon Sis
 Commissioner Trixy Barnes
 Commissioner Nathan Barten
 Commissioner Russell Bayer
 Commissioner Jennifer Leistico
 Commissioner Jennifer Shoemaker

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 6:30 p.m. and welcomed to the Commission three new members: Trixy Barnes, Jennifer Shoemaker, and Nathan Barten.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

There was no citizen input.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to approve the March 14, 2019, Park and Rec Commission meeting minutes as presented.

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Land Acquisition North of Sunfish Lake Park

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented an overview of the possible land acquisition north of Sunfish Lake Park. There are 3.6 acres for sale currently. Recently, a member of the Ramsey Environmental Policy Board asked that the Park and Rec Commission review the parcel in question for possible inclusion in Sunfish Lake Park. In examining the parcel, staff has concluded it is not on the Commission's list for potential acquisition. The current list price is approximately \$400,000. There are other parcels that have been previously identified that should be added to the park system, so it is staff's recommendation not to investigate this parcel any further. He also noted that if that parcel was considered for further development in the future, the Commission would have an opportunity to look at it again as part of a subdivision process. It is possible, for example, that a trail could occur there as part of a subdivision process.

Commissioner Sis asked who is the current landowner.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded he is unsure who the current landowner is.

Commissioner Sis asked whether the landowner would be amenable to expanding the current park facilities.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded it may be usable as a play area or a parking area.

Commissioner Sis asked how long the property has been on the market.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood indicated he is not sure the length of market time; the property is listed at higher than the assessed value, which is not unusual.

Commissioner Bayer asked about the land's zoning and its buildable area.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood pointed to the staff report for some of that information, noting that the buildable area would not be significant. However, additional staff research can be put into it, if the Commission desires.

Commissioner Bayer commented that the particular park has heavy kayak and canoe usage, and he asked whether the City could build something that could be used by the City and residents.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood indicated that later in the meeting, capital improvements will be discussed. One capital improvement is canoe/kayak system for Lake Itasca. Sunfish is so well used for canoes and kayaking, and there about 1,700 people with proximity cards who have access to the system today. It is so well used that last fall, the existing parking lot was expanded to accommodate residents. Conceivably, more kayaks and canoes could be added to the 36 acres lake, though caution should be exercised not to crowd it. He noted that an investment would be better applied to lake Itasca, which does not have parking or a canoe/kayak system. Those factors are what led to the staff's recommendation.

Chair Bennett stated the Commission has not had discussion around this and does not have plans to do something different from the stated goals and priorities of the park and trail system. Additionally, this parcel would probably have to be acquired out of the park trust fund. If \$300,000 to \$400,000 is invested out of the park trust, that can impact the ability to execute on other projects that are much higher priority that the Commission already has plans for. He likes the idea of the land being developed, with possibly some fees coming back to the park and trails fund. He would rather move forward with other pre-planned projects.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood added that he has talked to the Realtor of the property, and so the seller is fully aware the Commission is considering this tonight. The opportunity certainly exists for the landowner exploring its use for park.

Commissioner Leistico stated this purchase would be a lot of money for something that Commission has not previously considered a priority.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood also noted that the Environmental Policy Board is keeping its eyes on the park and trail system, because it is such an important part of the natural resource preservation. He acknowledged the Board for thinking about the park system.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to take no action at this time, but to keep the land in question on the Commission's radar for the future.

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

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reported on the City's recreation programs for the spring and summer, noting the marketing materials and website are continually being updated. He noted the skating statistics have slowly declined over the years, and those numbers will continue to be monitored. He also provided an update on the Capital Improvement Plan for the park and trail system, including the improvements at Pearson Park, where the Commission is scheduled to meet in July. He also noted that staff met with a sound engineer for the purposes of adding speakers to the Amphitheatre. Permanently mounted speakers would tremendously help with sound quality during park events.

Chair Bennett reminded the public to stay off the ballfields until they are released by the City, because the fields can be ruined for the entire season if they are used prematurely. He also noted that the outdoor meeting schedule begins next month at Ford Brook Park.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Allison Burr
TimeSaver off Site Secretarial, Inc.