

**City of Ramsey**  
**Agenda**  
**Park and Recreation Commission**  
**Thursday, July 11, 2019**  
**6:30 pm**  
**Pearson Park, 15070 Rabbit Street NW**  
**(Intersection of Rabbit Street NW and 150th Lane NW)**  
**In the event of inclement weather, meeting will move to City Hall**

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Citizen Input**
3. **Approve Agenda**
4. **Approve Minutes**
  1. Approve the following meeting minutes.
    1. Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes dated May 9, 2019.
    2. Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes dated June 13, 2019.
5. **Commission Business**
  1. Dedication of Pearson Park
  2. **Auxiliary Audio System for The Draw—a 2019 Capital Improvement Project**
6. **Commission/Staff Input**
  1. Ramsey's Closed Landfill Site
7. **Adjournment**

**Park and Recreation Commission**

**4. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 07/11/2019

**Submitted For:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**By:** MaryJo Warner, Engineering/Public Works

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**Information**

**Title:**

Approve the following meeting minutes.

1. Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes dated May 9, 2019.
2. Park and Recreation Commission meeting minutes dated June 13, 2019.

**Purpose/Background:**

Purpose: To review and approve meeting minutes.

Background: The attached May 9, 2019 meeting minutes are being resubmitted for approval based on a correction.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

**Funding Source:**

n/a

**Recommendation:**

To review and approve meeting minutes dated May 9, 2019 and June 13, 2019.

**Action:**

Motion to approve meeting minutes date May 9, 2019 and June 13, 2019.

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**Attachments**

May Minutes

June Minutes

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: MaryJo Warner

Final Approval Date: 07/03/2019

**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

07/03/2019 07:51 AM

Started On: 06/27/2019 04:20 PM

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on May 9, 2019, at Ford Brook Park, 5459 180<sup>th</sup> Ave 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  
   Ramsey Councilmember Nadine Heinrich  
   Nowthen Mayor Jeff Pilon  
   Nowthen Councilmember Dan Breyen

**1.      CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bennett welcomed those in attendance.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

This item was considered as part of item 5.01 of the agenda.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Bayer, Barnes, Barten, 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 Barten, to approve the April 11, 2019, Park and Rec Commission meeting minutes as presented.

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

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Conduct 'Listening Session' within the neighborhood on proposed renovations for Ford Brook Park**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated the purpose of the listening session is to gather information on any and all of the neighborhood's desires for parks and trails, and specifically for Ford Brook Park. He provided the history behind the park and noted the park has been in the CIP for a number of years. It is currently scheduled for some renovations in approximately 2020. The primary purpose tonight is to hear ideas about the park improvements from the neighborhood so the City does not make presumptuous about the playground. He also noted Rum River Central is a regional park, and is about a mile east from Ford Brook. It has a many amenities, including a shelter and a significant play structure. He noted that the Ford Brook equipment was salvaged from the City of Minneapolis a long time ago.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood acknowledged the presence of Ramsey Councilmember Heinrich, along with Nowthen Mayor Jeff Pilon and Nowthen Councilmember Dan Breyen.

An unidentified resident asked whether a proposed budget has been established.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded there is a planning dollar amount in the CIP. However, anything that moves forward has to be approved by the City Council. The project estimate is shown at \$70,000. It has also been suggested that other funding sources may be available due to proximity to Nowthen. Also, there is special program by the MN DNR for park improvements. Traditional playground equipment is exceedingly expensive. It's many tens of thousands of dollars for basic things. Any time public spaces are improved, they need to become ADA compliant. That means pathways along with parking spaces, for example, and that can add many several thousands of dollars just for the ADA elements.

Chair Bennett asked about Elmcrest, which has newer equipment. It has a good mix of equipment and inquired about the cost.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood recalled that the border around the playground as well as the playground itself was \$90,000. That did not include any parking.

An unidentified resident asked if the City of Nowthen has been contacted for partnership opportunities.

Nowthen Mayor Pilon introduced himself, along with Councilmember Dan Breyen.

Nowthen Councilmember Breyen stated Nowthen's Park and Rec Committee discussed this a few years ago.

Nowthen Mayor Pilon concurred this was brought up about three or four years ago. Discussion was held regarding extending the park into Nowthen, in order to help justify Nowthen's expenditures.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood added that staff reached out to the Nowthen Lions, who had expressed some interest in working with the Park Board.

An unidentified resident said this is the same equipment she grew playing on, over 40 years ago. She would like to see every piece of the equipment gone. The equipment has been painted 15-20 times. It would be nice to have all new equipment. Safety concerns were mentioned regarding the concrete pipes.

One unidentified resident has asked for the equipment to be tested for lead. She asked how many layers were tested when the original testing was conducted by the City. She is not clear how many layers deep were tested.

Chair Bennett asked whether there is a big enough safety concern that the equipment should be removed right now, and it would be a blank space until improvements 2020. Safety is his number 1 concern. If the neighborhood feels that concerned about safety, perhaps that is a real alternative.

One unidentified resident said new families are moving into these homes, and so it would be important to have a space for the kids to get together. A promise from the City would be needed.

One unidentified resident stated he can hear the kids playing and enjoying the park. Kids bike here and having a good time.

Chair Bennett asked for specifics for the previous lead testing.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded the City scraped paint and it was sent out for testing. Lead contamination would have shown up, given the vigorousness of the testing. He noted that falling on a sidewalk or concrete steps at a park would be no different than falling anywhere else. It is safe, though it is tired and merits replacement.

An unidentified resident asked about people with access to machines who would be willing to help tear things out free of charge.

Several residents mentioned it is difficult to watch other neighborhoods get new play equipment when Ford Brook receives nothing.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated the new playgrounds are usually associated with new subdivisions, which are required to pay a substantial fee to the Park Trust Fund for every new home. The new playgrounds are almost never paid for by tax dollars, but are fees collected from developers.

Chair Bennett noted that is a challenge of the Park and Rec Commission. The question is how to get on a plan to address aging equipment. There is a strategy adopted to focus on the larger

regional parks and to build connectivity over time. The smaller “pocket” parks like Ford Brook are hard and costly to maintain, and they are not utilized by everyone either. There are a lot of factors. He commended the neighbors for coming out to voice their concerns. That makes him want to be committed to getting this project done.

Councilmember Nadine Heinrich stated this is something that residents told her when she door-knocked this summer. Residents have also told her about the prior advocacy for this park; thus, this park is a priority for her. The great collaboration that is happening here is exciting. Decisions need to be made on the cement safety piece. She thanked Commission members for coming out to the park and interacting with the site and the residents. She also thanked the City of Nowthen for its willingness to collaborate. She asked the residents’ opinion on considering something different for this park. Walking trails have been mentioned through Nowthen and through this space. Should this also be something different and unique? Should something more nature-based be considered? There are other things that can be done with the space that could lower the cost but still make it functional for children from infancy to teenagers. She recently visited the Kansas City Science Museum, where there is a simple flat wooden surface with many levels. There were a number of people playing on this simple structure. She was also in Washington, DC, and saw the structure that you walk under. There are unique things that promote imaginative play. She asked for resident feedback.

An unidentified resident stated they don’t expect to have a several-story high play equipment -- just some updated traditional play equipment.

An unidentified resident added that the wooden structure would be a great alternative to the concrete pipes. There are so many things they could imagine.

An unidentified resident asked about the brainstorming process.

Chair Bennett stated when Elmcrest was constructed, a session was conducted just like this. Multiple vendors came in, and the community came in, and everyone looked at the different play structures. Ultimately, the Park and Rec Commission will approve a plan and send it to the Council City for final approval and execution.

An unidentified resident stated a partnership with the City of Nowthen would be wonderful.

Nowthen Councilmember Breyen stated Nowthen has installed a park with the Lions, with much volunteer support in the community as well.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented this is a good segue to the next steps. Regarding Elmcrest, a detailed RFP was developed. That process lends itself very well to deciding what has to be done by professionals, and what can be aided by volunteer partnerships. There is an opportunity to be part of the evaluation process of the RFP’s.

An unidentified resident asked how residents will be informed about upcoming meetings.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated there are comment cards available tonight, and he encouraged everyone to complete those cards with contact information.

For tonight's meeting, a flyer was sent out to 75 homes. If people can submit contact information, then a group email list can be built, so there does not have to be a mailer ahead of time, which can be a bit of a laborious, and costly process.

Multiple residents stated walking and/or biking trails would be very welcome.

Several unidentified residents stated that maintaining the neighborhood park would be important. The fact that there are parks within a mile is nice, but that does not replace the importance of this neighborhood park.

Several residents expressed support for staying committed to the park and not letting it go.

It was agreed that the community support expressed for the park improvements will help keep it front of mind.

One unidentified resident asked about a timeline.

Chair Bennett responded that these things do not always follow the stated timeline. He stated it could be in the plan in 2020, but it could be earlier or later. The RFP process can be lengthy. Adding in volunteer elements can add more time.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood again encouraged the participants to complete the comment cards so they can be on the email list for updates.

Chair Bennett thanked Mayor Pilon and Councilmembers Heinrich and Breyen for attending the meeting. Chair Bennett also stated that his biggest takeaway from this meeting was the residents' passion for the park. He then asked if a motion is in order.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated there is a good consensus input. He proposed that staff organize the thoughts in bullet point fashion, identify what collaborative efforts might exist, and map out a timeline that would deliver a project for early in 2020. He would also like to look at the National Night Out in August 2020, and that could potentially serve as the ribbon-cutting.

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

There was no Commission/staff input.

## **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 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'MR', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

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

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on June 13, 2019, at Elmcrest Park, 16303 Quicksilver Street NW.

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

Commission Members Absent:      Commissioner Trixy Barnes  
   Commissioner Jennifer Shoemaker

Also Present:                              Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

**1.      CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Bennett welcomed.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

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

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

**4.      APPROVE MINUTES**

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

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Sis, to approve the May 9, 2019, Park and Rec Commission meeting minutes as presented.

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

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Recap Listening Session for the Renovation of Ford Brook Park**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood recalled that the listening session held last month resulted from the CIP including a renovation of Ford Brook Park in approximately 2020. There is a placeholder dollar amount of \$70,000. The project may present itself to a good opportunity for a collaborative approach for funding and construction. He would like to discuss some of the comments made at the listening session, which are included in the report. He noted there were neighbor comments about a desire to help with concrete and possibly assembly. Also suggested was a desire for imaginative or “non-conventional” play. Two images were presented that would lend itself well for imaginative play, and no opposition was expressed. He also concurred with the resident comments that swings are always a popular option.

Chair Bennett noted that clearly the neighborhood has a passion for that park and wants to be engaged. It is therefore important for the Commission to show its commitment to the project and the fact that resident requests are taken seriously. He would love to do something at Night To Unite. He would love some progress to have been made at the event, since he has committed to attending. Perhaps there may even be an opportunity to do some engagement that evening.

Commissioner Sis concurred. He also stated that he has been contemplating whether the park should be geared towards younger children or pre-teens and teens. Imaginative play would be a great option. It would add diversity to the mix around the City.

Commissioner Leistico commented that the residents seemed to express a desire for a lot of traditional elements at the park: swings, slides, and benches for parents. From the creative side, there perhaps was not as much enthusiasm. Perhaps both of those can be combined.

Commissioner Barten added there may be a way to do both traditional and imaginative.

Chair Bennett recalled residents loved the open play space as well. There seemed to be concern about ADA parking and accessibility and possibly taking away from green space. They do not want to lose the simple, classic neighborhood feel already present. In engagement sessions, there can be discussion about what they want. He also recalled the overwhelming concern for the safety of the kids. With that said, modern play equipment is inherently safer than the concrete tube present.

Commissioner Sis asked if there has been follow-up from the City of Nowthen.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded that staff has not heard anything at this time.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood continued that staff can develop an RFP. The Night to Unite events are pretty distracting and chaotic. Perhaps a draft RFP can be issued to the people for whom staff has email addresses. At the Night to Unite, a board could be set up and folks can be encouraged to place dots on priorities. He also added that in terms of ADA requirements, staff will want to make sure to identify in the RFP that the play structure can be moved closer to minimize the ADA cost to access it. Imaginative play may provide a connection to those ADA requirements, like a wooden boardwalk, for example.

The Commissioners discussed how best to communicate the price tag of various proposed items at the Night to Unite.

Commissioner Sis asked about usage of State contracts for bidding out play structures.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded many or most of the playground vendors have a State contract, so usually 12 – 18% can be saved off catalog items. The RFP can make note of that. Basically, it will be a discount for their list price.

#### **5.02: Auxiliary Audio System for The Draw – a 2019 Capital Improvement Project**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided an overview of the current audio system at The Draw. It was built as a 350-person Amphitheatre, but there are now events where several hundred people are present for an event. Auxiliary speakers are now needed to extend the sound of the events. The problem is that staff has had significant trouble getting vendors with any interest in the project. One vendor proposed a \$100,000 project. Tonight, staff has nothing for the Commission to look at, other than to communicate that it is going to be much more expensive than the originally \$40,000 budgeted for. At a minimum, it may be cables with speakers that have to be set up and taken down on the evening of the event. He noted so many contractors have labor shortages or have all the work they can handle, so prices are high and responsiveness is low. Showing up when appointments are set have been an issue.

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

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented a draft flyer for the Pearson Park dedication that is scheduled for the evening of the Commission's July meeting. Staff is following up closely to get that park done. Like most projects, it will come down to the wire. There will be some amenities like face painting and a few other fun items.

Commissioner Bayer commented that there has been resident feedback about one of the boardwalks that has been under water for the past three previous seasons.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that the contractor was supposed to have worked on those repairs this past week. Hopefully the date of the repairs will be repaired within another week or so.

### **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

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

**Park and Recreation Commission**

**5. 1.**

**Meeting Date:** 07/11/2019

**Submitted For:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**By:** MaryJo Warner, Engineering/Public Works

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**Information**

**Title:**

Dedication of Pearson Park

**Purpose/Background:**

The purpose of this case is to acknowledge the dedication of Pearson Park on Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 6:30 pm.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

Attached is the flyer for Dedication of Pearson Park.

**Funding Source:**

na/

**Recommendation:**

n/a

**Action:**

n/a

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**Attachments**

Flyer

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**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: MaryJo Warner

Final Approval Date: 07/03/2019

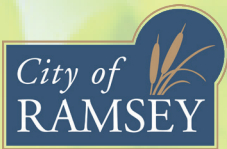
**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

07/03/2019 07:54 AM

Started On: 06/28/2019 04:05 PM



Join your friends and neighbors for the

# DEDICATION OF PEARSON PARK

Thursday, July 11, 2019 at 6:30 pm  
Pearson Park, 15070 Rabbit Street NW

Head to Ramsey's newest park to experience nature-based play,  
and an array of activities between 6:00 and 7:30 pm including:

- ~ Face painting
- ~ Light refreshments
- ~ Naturalists from Tamarack Nature Center!

Special guests invited include:

- ~ Scutes, the Blanding's Turtle
- ~ Rooter, the Hog-Nosed Snake
- ~ Gopher, the Bull Snake
- ~ Sarah Strommen, MN DNR Commissioner



*(Please leave your pets at home for this evening's Dedication)*

# DID YOU KNOW...

Nature-Based Play creates opportunities for outdoor play and immersion in nature which is essential to our health and wellbeing, including these benefits:

- *Children who spend more time outside tend to be more physically fit.*
- *Children who play in natural settings are more resistant to stress; have lower incidence of behavioural disorders, anxiety and depression; and have a higher measure of self-worth.*
- *Children who enjoy natural settings play in more diverse, imaginative and creative ways and show improved language and collaboration skills.*
- *Natural, irregular and challenging spaces help kids learn to recognize, assess and negotiate risk and build confidence and competence.*
- *Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other and healthier social behavior.*



**Park and Recreation Commission**

5. 2.

**Meeting Date:** 07/11/2019

**Submitted For:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**By:** MaryJo Warner, Engineering/Public Works

**Information**

**Title:**

**Auxiliary Audio System for The Draw—a 2019 Capital Improvement Project**

**Purpose/Background:**

One of the proposed 2019 Park's Capital Improvements would be auxiliary audio for the amphitheater.

Staff is working on project scope, and may have a proposal for the Commission to forward for City Council's consideration.

**Notification:**

**Observations/Alternatives:**

The attached CIP worksheet page has additional detail on this proposed project.

**Funding Source:**

Funding for this proposed improvement(s) would be from the Park Trust Fund.

The entire approved Capital Improvement Plan is on the City's website:

<https://www.ci.ramsey.mn.us/DocumentCenter/View/1977/FINAL-Capital-Improvement-Plan-2019-2028-PDF?bidId=>

**Recommendation:**

Staff is attempting to have a quote or estimate available at the meeting.

**Action:**

Based upon discussion.

**Attachments**

[page from 2019 CIP](#)

**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: MaryJo Warner

Final Approval Date: 07/03/2019

**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

07/03/2019 07:46 AM

Started On: 06/27/2019 11:13 AM



**Park and Recreation Commission**

6. 1.

**Meeting Date:** 07/11/2019

**Submitted For:** Mark Riverblood, Engineering/Public Works

**By:** MaryJo Warner, Engineering/Public Works

**Information**

**Title:**

Ramsey's Closed Landfill Site

**Purpose/Background:**

The MN Brightfields Initiative is a program exploring the potential and feasibility of developing renewable energy on Closed Landfill Program (CLP) sites. There are a number of organizations and agencies contributing information to this program (including both the Metropolitan Council and the MN Pollution Control Agency), which is attempting to identify and understand what obstacles may exist that are preventing utilizing CLP sites for installation of renewable energy systems. The Council of Development Finance Agencies (CDFA) identified Ramsey’s CLP site as ideal for further analysis and their Brownfields Technical Assistance Program has selected the Ramsey CLP for free technical assistance in assessing the site’s solar potential. The CLP presently cannot be developed for any purpose; if solar could be installed on that site, it could convert that land into an economic asset. The only commitment of the City’s is to identify local stakeholders (e.g. City Council, Environmental Policy Board, Parks and Recreation Commission, Chamber of Commerce, etc.) and extend an invitation to participate in a stakeholder meeting, including a site visit to the CLP. The program will occur July 17 (full day) and July 18 (half day). The stakeholder meeting will be held in the Lake Itasca Room.

**Notification:**

n/a

**Observations/Alternatives:**

n/a

**Funding Source:**

n/a

**Recommendation:**

n/a

**Action:**

No formal action required. For Commission review and discussion purpose only.

**Attachments**

Solar on Closed Landfills

MN Brightfields Initiative

**Form Review**

**Inbox**

Grant Riemer

Form Started By: MaryJo Warner

**Reviewed By**

Grant Riemer

**Date**

07/03/2019 07:52 AM

Started On: 06/28/2019 01:10 PM



**CDFA Brownfields Technical Assistance Program & City of Ramsey Anoka-Ramsey Closed Landfill**

**DAY 1 AGENDA**

**July 17, 2019. 8:15am – 4:30pm.**

**Ramsey Municipal Plaza (7550 Sunwood Dr NW, Ramsey, MN 55303)**

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**8:15am. Registration. Ramsey Municipal Plaza.** Register, coffee and light snacks, find seating.

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**8:30am. Workshop Kickoff. Ramsey Municipal Plaza.** Introductions, meet the team, review agenda, and frame the purpose of the site visit and stake-holder meetings later in the day. **Lead:** Cameran Bailey, Met Council, MN Brightfields Initiative; City of Ramsey

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**9:30am. Site Visit. Anoka-Ramsey Closed Landfill (14787 Sunfish Lake Blvd NW, Ramsey, MN 55303).** Travel to site, get overview of site characteristics, history, current status, and any future plans for closed landfill from MPCA. Walking Q&A of site. **Lead:** Mark Umholtz, MN Pollution Control Agency, Closed Landfill Program

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**11:30am. Lunch.** Patronize an establishment nearby to Ramsey Administrative Office.

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**Return to Ramsey Municipal Plaza by 1pm**

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**12:30pm. Stakeholder Focus 1: Localized Natural Environment Goal.** Integrate the most innovative pollinator, vegetation, soil, and stormwater pollution prevention BMP's. **Facilitator:** Cameran Bailey

- Key Stakeholders: MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Board of Water & Soil Resources, MN Pollution Control Agency, University of MN, MN Brownfields, City of Ramsey Officials

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**1:45pm. Stakeholder Focus 2: LMI-Household/Societal Goal.** Develop the project to utilize a portion of the financial revenues of the project to assist energy-burdened homes in the City of Ramsey. **Facilitator:** Cameran Bailey

- Key Stakeholders: Connexus Energy, Anoka County Community Action Program, Anoka County Housing & Redevelopment Authority, City of Ramsey Officials, City of Ramsey - Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce, Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, Neighborhood Associations, MN Department of Commerce

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**3:00pm. Stakeholder Focus 3: Development Goal.** Identify the most feasible development scenario(s) for this landfill to become the first true "Brightfield" in the state of Minnesota, and to be developed in a manner that informs replicability for the other 113 sites in the state. **Facilitator:** Cameran Bailey

- Key Stakeholders: Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, MN Brightfields Initiative, MN Pollution Control Agency, MN Brownfields, City of Ramsey Officials

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**4:15pm. Closing Remarks.** Discuss how workshop from today will inform plans for Day 2.

- **Leading:** CDFA and Cameran Bailey

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**4:30pm. Day Concludes.**

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**CDFA Brownfields Technical Assistance Program & City of Ramsey Anoka-Ramsey Closed Landfill**

**DAY 2 AGENDA**

**July 18, 2019. 8:15am – 11:30am.**

**Ramsey Municipal Plaza (7550 Sunwood Dr NW, Ramsey, MN 55303)**

- 
- 8:15am. Registration. Ramsey Municipal Plaza.** Register, coffee and light snacks, find seating.
- 
- 8:30am. Team-Work Group Time. Ramsey Municipal Plaza.** Intentional workshopping and creative thinking to address issues, priorities, opportunities, and barriers raised in Day 1 focus groups. **Lead:** CDFA and Advisors.
- Key Stakeholders: Rural Renewable Energy Alliance, MN Brightfields, MN Pollution Control Agency, City of Ramsey Officials, Connexus Energy, MNSEIA, State Agencies
- 
- 10:30am. Key Stakeholders Download. Ramsey Municipal Plaza.** Final questions CDFA’s advisors may have and for CDFA to give group a rough outline of their report and what it will look like based on the discussion from the past couple of days. **Lead:** CDFA and Advisors.
- 
- 11:30am. Closing Remarks, CDFA Site Visit Concludes.**
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**Confirmed Representatives from CDFA & Advisors:**

**Cayla Matsumoto**

Brownfields Program Manager  
Council of Development Finance Agencies

**James Metz**

Brownfields Program Coordinator  
Council of Development Finance Agencies

**Charlie Howland**

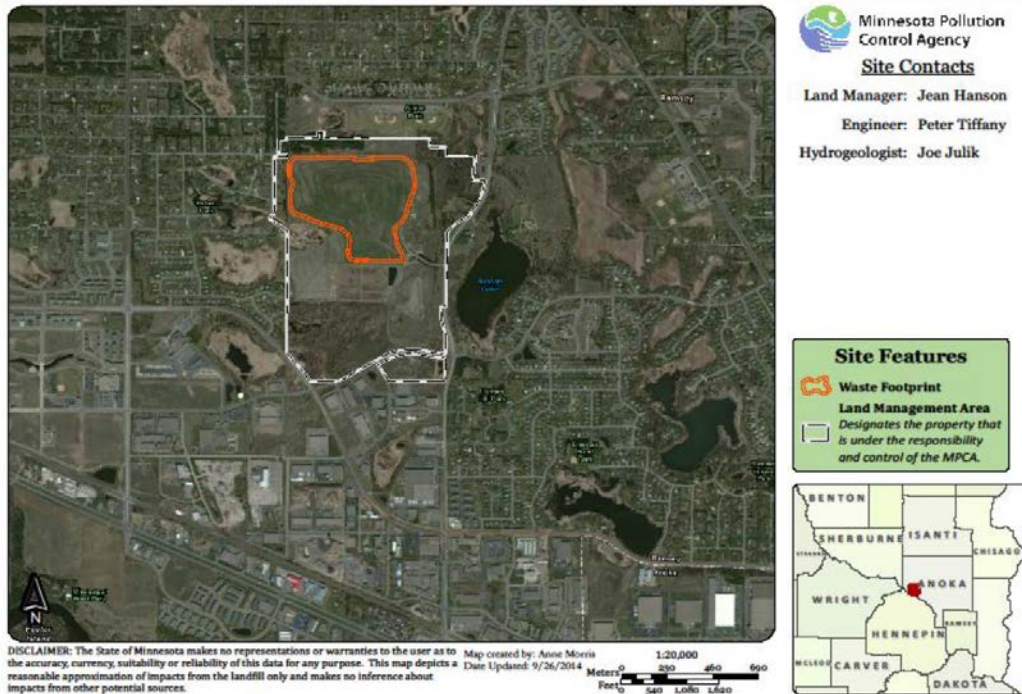
Partner, Environmental Practice Head  
Curtis, Mallet-Prevost, Colt & Mosle LLP

**List of Attending Organizations**

- MN Dept. of Natural Resources
- MN Board of Water & Soil Resources
- MN Pollution Control Agency
- MN Department of Commerce
- MN Management & Budget Office
- University of Minnesota
- Minnesota Brownfields
- City of Ramsey
- Connexus Cooperatively
- Anoka County Community Action Program
- Anoka County Housing & Redevelopment Authority
- City of Ramsey-Anoka Area Chamber of Commerce
- Rural Renewable Energy Alliance
- Neighborhood Associations
- MN Brightfields Initiative (GPI, CERTs, Met Council, MN SEIA)
- SolSmart Program Partners (TSF, National League of Cities, ICMA, Cadmus, EPRI, RAP)

**Project Site Description:** 267.4-acre “Anoka-Ramsey” closed landfill site located in the southeastern quadrant of the City of Ramsey. The site is located 1 mile due north of the Mississippi River. The site is directly adjacent to active light commercial, light industrial, and “multi-optional development” land uses to the south of the site, light single-family residential to the west of the site, Alpine Park to the north of the site, and undeveloped shrubbery, forest, and City-Owned Sunfish Lake (30-acre) & Park to the east of the site. The site is zoned “Institutional” and owned by the State of MN’s Pollution Control Agency. The site was officially closed as a landfill in 1993. The “cap” of the landfill is approximately 64-acres in size, with approx. 3,419,316 tons of waste within the cap.

## Appendix B: Site Location Map Anoka-Ramsey Landfill



## Project Outcomes

1. The City of Ramsey’s “Anoka-Ramsey Closed Landfill” to become the first true “Brightfield” developed in the state of Minnesota, and to be developed in a manner that centers the benefits of the project on LMI-Households in the City of Ramsey and the city’s natural environment as a replicable model for how the other 113 closed landfills in the state may be redeveloped in a socially and environmentally just manner.
2. Additionally, this site will serve as a sort of “living lab” for different ways in which environmentally responsible and just practices may be incorporated across the site.

## Project Goals

1. **Localized Natural Environment Goal:** Integrate the most innovative Solar pollinator, vegetation, soil, and stormwater pollution prevention plan Best Management Practices from the MN Department of Natural Resources, MN Board of Water & Soil Resources, MN Pollution Control Agency, University of MN, and the National Renewable Energy Lab.
2. **LMI-Household/Societal Goal:** Develop the project in coordination with the cooperatively-owned electric utility, Connexus Energy, to utilize a portion of the financial revenues of the project to finance a long-term, LIHEAP-eligible (low-income) household, electricity tariff to financially assist the energy-burdened homes in the City of Ramey.
3. **Development Goal:** The City of Ramsey’s “Anoka-Ramsey Closed Landfill” to become the first true “Brightfield” developed in the state of Minnesota, and to be developed in a manner that centers the benefits of the project on LMI-Households and the localized natural environment. Identify the most technically plausible development scenario.

### **Why is this project important?**

- *The City of Ramsey had a population of approximately 10,100 residents in 1980 and was a predominantly an agriculture-based economy. The City grew to 18,510 by 2000, and 26,000 residents by 2016. The City is projected to see a further 50% growth in population by the year 2040 (39,000 people). Looking over the horizon we see an increase in electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging, electrified homes and businesses, and autonomous and connected vehicles. With population growth and increase in density and diversity in land use types and economic sectors comes a greater need to remain vigilant as sound environmental, social, and fiscal stewards of our community's resources. Through our recent participation in the University of Minnesota's "[Resilient Communities Project](#)" (2017-2018) we identified ways to further our strategic planning priorities, which include financial stability, a connected community, smart citizen-focused government, and an efficient organization. We view the Brightfield redevelopment project as having great potential to support these strategic priorities, which support the short and long term livability, prosperity, and resilience of our community.*

### **What challenges has the community faced?**

- *The closed landfill is an eye-sore and has historically had very limited redevelopment potential. However, Solar PV development has emerged within the last 3 years as one of the only viable options for redevelopment. The local electrical utility, Connexus Energy Cooperative, initially had interest in developing a "solar + storage" development at the site, but was stymied by state agencies, which led them to [developing at a different site in the City](#). The MN Pollution Control Agency and the MN Management & Budget Office are extremely wary of this sort of development for federal tax law, state statutory, federal and state financial regulation, state agency regulation, staff time allotment, general obligation bonding safe harbors and allowances, private investment and ownership, and technical risk considerations. The site is also owned by the MN Pollution Control Agency, and the State would like to own the REC's generated by any renewable development at the site, but that could negate the financial viability for interested investors/developers. Additionally, the site is regulated by the City of Ramsey's local zoning code. The combination of these areas lacking clarity has stifled the ability for the city and other actors to legitimately analyze what sort of finance, ownership, PPA, virtual net metering, net metering, and operations & maintenance considerations would allow for the development of the site.*
- *MPCA: "A point to keep in mind when planning a location for solar is that the waste is currently undergoing active remediation and management and will be into the future. Because of this we do not allow anything to be installed on the landfill cap, and due to the methane that is being generated during the decomposition process there is a 200 foot setback requirement from the waste. [However] The program is in the process of re-evaluating what types of installations could be workable on waste areas. The restrictions outlined below are open for discussion." MPCA's Mission: Protect and improve the environment and enhance human health.*

### **Why is this reuse strategy the one chosen?**

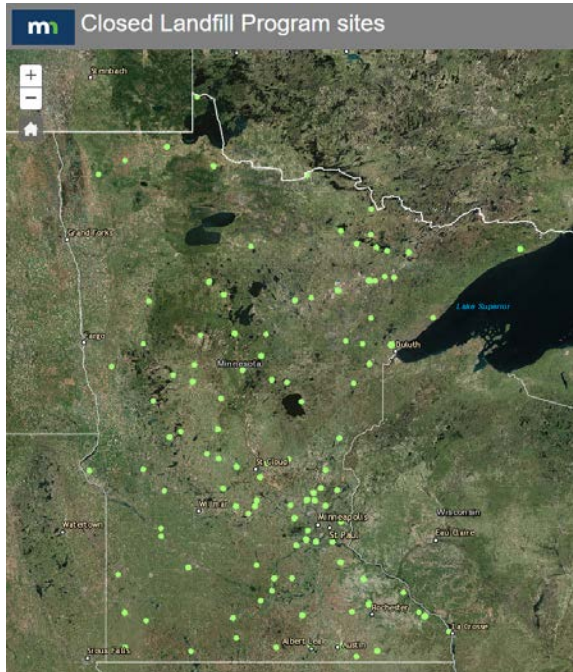
- *The City has been home to this closed landfill for years and has attempted to find ways in which the land, which would be quite valuable and ripe for development were it not for the closed landfill, could be redeveloped. The Landfill was operated as a dump from 1967 until it was permitted in 1972 and closed in 1993. The MPCA took over responsibility for the Landfill in 1997 when the MPCA and Waste Management signed the Landfill Cleanup Agreement and the MPCA issued the Notice of Compliance. Since 1997, the "Brightfield" concept for redevelopment has been the most feasible and realistic one to date. It has tentative support in the community, is something the electric utility is interested in, and is something we have explored a pathway to since 2014. ("Closed Landfill Use Plan, Anoka-Ramsey Landfill" page 5, page 15: [http://156.142.212.178:8080/docs/2015/PR/20150409\\_1055/5257\\_Anoka-Ramsey%20CLUP%20Report.pdf](http://156.142.212.178:8080/docs/2015/PR/20150409_1055/5257_Anoka-Ramsey%20CLUP%20Report.pdf))*

### **What are the financing sources the community has identified?**

1. *Because the site is technically owned by the MN Pollution Control Agency, there is the possibility of raising **Revenue Bonds** to pay for the Brightfield.*
2. *There is also the possibility for the **electric utility, Connexus Energy Cooperative, to source their own funding** to pay for the development of the site, especially considering they just did so at another location in the city last year.*
3. *More **traditional third-party investment and ownership** is also a possibility, depending on how the legal landscape around the GO Bonds used to finance the closure of the site, as well as the safe harbor laws around GO Bonding in MN, are interpreted.*
4. *The Rural Renewable Energy Alliance also has their emerging business **model, “Community Solar for Community Action” (CS4CA)**, as another potential finance and ownership model. This model is more flexible in its financing as projects in this program have **used Community Action Agencies, Grants, and/or traditional accredited investors** as financing sources.*
5. *The **Pay-For-Success model and its finance mechanism** is another possibility as one of the main desired outcomes of this project is addressing systemically energy-burdened homes by slating Brightfield Development in MN to be tied to paying for a reduced electricity tariff rate for LMI households qualifying for LIHEAP, EAP, and/or WAP.*
6. *Financing sources would also be driven by the ability to execute Virtual Power Purchase Agreements (VPPA’s), Virtual Net-Metering Agreements, and/or*
7. *Lastly, the aggregation of grants from universities and research organizations should we actually be able to develop the site as a sort of “living lab” for environmentally-sound practices as ground-mounted solar sites, as well as closed landfill sites (pollinators, surface and ground water quality, increased vegetation density, vegetative carbon sequestration, etc.)*

## Minnesota Brightfields Initiative – Solar Development on Closed Landfills

The Metropolitan Council, the SolSmart Program, and their organizational partners have aggregated a state-wide, regional, and national team of public, industry association, and non-profit solar and energy professionals to support an initiative termed the “MN Brightfields Initiative”.



(MPCA – Closed Landfill Program Sites)

<http://mPCA.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Solutions/s2.html?appid=6470bb44bd83497993da5836333d1cb3>

The Minnesota Brightfields Initiative offers cost-free professional, technical, financial, and regulatory expertise, analysis, and aggregation to assist local Minnesota governments and Minnesota state agencies develop solar energy projects on closed landfills enrolled in the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s (MPCA) “Closed Landfill Program”. The desired outcomes of this initiative are:

1. Streamlining and increasing development of solar energy production at the 110+ Closed Landfill Program sites through a unified, state-wide, permitting pathway;
2. Creating a replicable framework that can be applied to various situations where there is interest by state or other entities in developing solar energy production projects on such sites; and
3. Mitigating greenhouse gas emissions from such sites, with a specific consideration for mitigating impacts on low income and environmental justice areas, fulfilling the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency’s (PCA) mission to protect human health & the environment.

## Overview of the Barriers to Developing Solar Energy on MN Landfills and Mitigating GHG Emissions

According to a PCA study, its Closed Landfill Program (CLP) sites’ methane and other greenhouse gas emissions constitute 18% of all State agencies’ collective emissions of greenhouse gases. CLP sites are often sited near low income and environmental justice communities, whom bear disproportionate exposure rates. Since October 6, 2017, the MN Brightfields Initiative has been working with the PCA and other state agencies to identify a pathway forward to mitigate the issues found at closed landfills and realize their mutually shared goals. The first step was identifying the major existing barriers:

1. To date, there is no clear and uniformly identified "brightfield" development pathway for either (a) all sites in the closed landfill program, or (b) for each individual site in the closed landfill program. This lack of clarity inhibits greenhouse gas emission progress and business certainty for would-be markets to develop in the state. Investment risks are high for industry participants that try to develop brightfields on a case-by-case basis

2. Similarly, MMB does not have well-versed solar energy experts on their staff, which makes them hesitant to recommend solutions to the complexities of approval for solar projects on CLP sites with General Obligation bonding restrictions
3. Minnesota is the only state that does General Obligation bonding for closed landfills, which may threaten the bonding status of the site if used for a separate, private purpose, such as solar development. New England, on the other hand, is developing large closed landfills with solar and serving the load of adjacent towns and cities with streamlined permitting and other approval processes, with access to private Superfund PRP funding
5. With the entry of Freeway Landfill into the Closed Landfill Program there are now 113 closed landfills in the program. There is 1 more facility that is eligible but has not yet entered the program, enhancing a significant market opportunity in Minnesota for renewable reuse
6. Only about half of the 110 landfills are constrained by the use of state General Obligation bonds, but data is lacking on which portion of each site is GO bond restricted, and what percentage of the land coverage of each site is GO bonded

### **Overview of the New Opportunity: “MN Solar on Closed Landfills Study”**

On May 31, 2019, Governor Tim Walz signed Minnesota’s two-year budget into state law to take the necessary second step: financing a study to overcome the identified barriers. As a part of the Environment and Natural Resources Appropriations portion of the budget ([Sect. 2, Subd. 9](#)), the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB) was given a one-time appropriation of \$300,000 from the PCA’s remediation fund to “...conduct a study of the potential to deploy solar photovoltaic devices on closed landfill program sites.” By December 1, 2020, the EQB and PCA must consult with the state’s Administration, Commerce, and Management & Budget agencies to provide a “report on the use of properties in the state’s closed landfill program for solar energy production. The report must include:

1. identification and assessment of properties in the closed landfill program with the highest potential for solar energy production;
2. identification of potential barriers to solar energy production and potential ways to address those barriers; and
3. policy recommendations that would facilitate solar energy production on closed landfill program sites in a manner that would contribute to state and local government sustainability goals.”

These three components are straightforward, but there are many potential barriers to realizing them. The third, and final step, to realize Minnesota’s brightfield goals requires three primary, interrelated functions to be performed as a part of the Study (See appendix 1 for expanded details):

1. **DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS**
2. **LEGAL REVIEW & ANALYSIS**
3. **PERMITTING PATHWAY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**



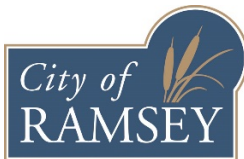
Workers install the last panels as the sun rises over the City of Hutchinson's new solar PV project, the largest on a landfill in Minnesota, and the first ballast-mounted on a brownfield. (<https://www.ci.hutchinson.mn.us/december-2-grand-opening-ceremony-landfill-mounted-solar-pv-system/>)

The Minnesota Solar on Closed Landfill Study is the culmination of 1.5 years of collaboration across the state and nation. \$300,000 is a necessary starting point, but just that, a starting point. The state has until December 1, 2020, to maximize that \$300,000 by identifying and bringing in the right partners, experts, and perspectives to execute this Study and inform development. Contact Cameran Bailey of the Metropolitan Council and MN Brightfields Initiative if you and your organization are interested in aiding.



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### Partners



## Appendix 1 – Primary Topical Functions Needed in Execution of Solar on Closed Landfill Study

1. **DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS:** new fact collection & preexisting agency data analysis, spanning across multiple agencies
  - a. POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY: Closed Landfill Program site suitability analysis including but not limited to:
    - a. Parcel ownership and delineations
    - b. Landfill “settling policy” status
    - c. General Obligation Bond applicability to each Closed Landfill Program site and bond terms
    - d. Solar suitability assessments, including but not limited to:
      1. Solar potential and feasibility
      2. City, county and citizen education about the solar potential on their landfill sites and polling of interest in developing renewables on the unused land
      3. Local permitting processes and hurdles, if any
      4. Proximity to substations
      5. Proximity to and impact on environmental justice and low-income areas
      6. Proximity to potential public load / public sector energy off-takers
      7. Voltage line rating
      8. Potential project funding and cost savings estimates
  - b. Data collection as needed from the following agencies: MN Management & Budget (MMB), Dept. of Administration, Dept. of Commerce
  - c. Other data collection and analysis as necessary to accomplish Objective
2. **LEGAL REVIEW & ANALYSIS:** A third-party neutral consultant and/or legal counsel to:
  - a. Compile data, review, analyze and report on Closed Landfill Program sites’ legal statuses, with specific consideration of General Obligation Bonding restrictions and safe harbors
  - b. Suggest actions to overcome General Obligation Bonding, and other tax and financial hurdles, at Minnesota’s Closed Landfill Program sites, considering information gathered herein and other resources such as the Minnesota Department of Revenue, the Internal Revenue Service, and other states with existing landfills developed with solar
  - c. Other legal review and analysis as necessary to accomplish Objective
3. **PERMITTING PATHWAY PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT**
  - a. Utilize findings of data collection & analysis, and legal review & analysis, to develop a consistent set of environmental, structural, regulatory, administrative, and other criteria as necessary, by which developers of solar energy at closed landfill program sites may apply for and be granted construction permits
  - b. Coordinate with the relevant local governmental units and agencies to develop the appropriate underlying land use, zoning, and ordinance language and standards to support solar energy development at closed landfill program sites
  - c. Design the permitting program and its associated administrative functions to streamline the permitting process in a way that permit issuance and construction approval are done within a consistent and reliable timeframe
  - d. Utilize the State of Massachusetts’ “SW 36, 37: Landfill Post-Closure Use Permit” program as an end-goal example