

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on March 12, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Commission Members Absent: Vice Chair Brandon Sis

Also Present: City Council Liaison Nadine Heinrich
 Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood
 Recreation Specialist Abby Proulx

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bennett called the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Barten seconded by Commissioner Barnes to approve the following Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes:

- February 13, 2020

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Presentation: Bluebird Recovery Program of Minnesota

Carlyn Erion introduced the Bluebird Recovery Program seminar that she will be conducting in Ramsey on April 22nd from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. in the Alexander Ramsey Room at City Hall. She stated that the Bluebird trails in Ramsey are in disrepair and explained that refurbishing the trails reinforces the value Ramsey places on its natural resources which includes habitat, provides lost habitat for birds, and presents an opportunity for the public to learn about this bird and critical habitat. She explained that refurbishing and expanding the Bluebird trails provides more opportunities for successful nesting and provides opportunities for people. She stated that volunteers are needed to help with refurbishing the trails and to monitor and report the results. She reviewed the topics that will be reviewed during the seminar. She explained that the Bluebird Recovery Program has been established for over 40 years but is now recognized as a nonprofit organization.

Chair Bennett thanked Ms. Erion for the presentation and for sharing the information about the seminar.

Commissioner Leistico asked what stops other birds from nesting in the boxes.

Ms. Erion stated that any cavity nesting bird will compete for that space and described the strategy in the placement of the boxes.

Commissioner Barten asked if the birds nest well in more heavily populated areas.

Ms. Erion replied cautiously yes, noting that if the habitat is provided, the birds will come.

Commissioner Barten asked if the information that will be provided in the seminar will also be available online.

Ms. Erion noted that the Bluebird Rescue Program does have similar information on its website for those that are unable to attend.

Chair Bennett asked what would be necessary to refurbish the trails and asked the ideal number of boxes for Ramsey.

Ms. Erion replied that the existing post could remain but would need to have new boxes installed and should also have baffles installed to protect the birds from predators. She provided more specific details on the different locations and more ideal locations for some boxes. She stated that perhaps a workshop could be held that would focus on making the boxes.

Chair Bennett stated that Ms. Erion mentioned that she applied for a grant but was unsuccessful and had made the comment that the City's program would need to be more established in order to be awarded grant funds. He asked how the City could become more established in its program to be considered for grant funding.

Ms. Erion replied that it would be helpful to have an organizer, which she would do, and provided additional details on elements that would be helpful for grant applications. She stated that the grant is not financial but is instead boxes.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if there could be an opportunity for families with young children to build the Bluebird boxes in a workshop format.

Ms. Erion confirmed that would be a wonderful opportunity. She commented that the monitoring should not be completed by children but noted that an adult could bring a child with to observe when completing the monitoring.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the City could donate the materials for the boxes. He explained that the adults could cut the wood and do that type of work with children completing some of the other work. He confirmed that could be a good idea for a spring workshop.

Chair Bennett asked if there is an urgency to get boxes in place.

Ms. Erion stated that she would love to have a few boxes up as soon as possible in order to photograph the bird on top of the box before the end of April.

Commissioner Barten referenced a citizen science website that has webcams available and asked if that technology would be applicable to the nesting boxes.

Ms. Erion commented that she did not believe that the birds would be rattled by that inclusion.

Chair Bennett thanked Ms. Erion for attending and sharing the information. He reminded residents that the seminar will be held at City Hall in the Alexander Ramsey Room on April 22nd from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. and encouraged them to attend.

5.02: Consider Park and Recreation 2020 Outdoor Meeting Schedule

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented the staff report noting that traditionally the Commission has held the summer meetings in different park locations, when the weather is conducive. He stated that each year the Commission ratifies that decision. He suggested holding the May meeting in Alpine Park.

Chair Bennett commented that it would be great to hold a meeting at Alpine Park.

Councilmember Heinrich asked the parks that were visited the previous year.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed some of the locations that have recently been visited. He noted that Commissioner Sis recommended Emerald Pond Park as one of the locations. He commented that perhaps Ford Brook should also be an opportunity, noting that the Commission could align the August meeting with Night to Unite at that location. He stated that once the locations are selected, staff can advertise the locations in *The Ramsey Resident*.

Chair Bennett stated that it has been some time since the Commission has been to Riversbend and noted that with the previous discussion of the Bluebird trails, that would fit nicely.

Commissioner Barten agreed that would be a good location because of the discussion the previous year with the shelter as well.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if there are planned park improvements to occur during 2020 that the Commission could visit.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the Commission could return to Pearson Park in September as there will be native plantings in May and therefore the Commission could review the improvements that occurred along with the plantings.

Chair Bennett reviewed the proposed meeting schedule: Alpine Park in May, Emerald Pond Park in June, Riversbend Park in July, Ford Brook Park in August, and Pearson Park in September.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that the Commission would be comfortable leaving the August date flexible to perhaps align with the Night to Unite party for that neighborhood.

5.03: Ratify Chapter 3 of the Park System Plan – Recreation Programming & Partnerships

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that the Parks Commission has been working on the Park System Plan, most recently Chapter 3, and stated that staff is asking the Commission to ratify the content.

Recreation Specialist Proulx reviewed the intent and impact of the recreation programs and partnerships. She provided an overview of the different sections of the chapter including the introduction, trends, and impact of recreation.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced section three, page 25, and asked for additional input on the mention of video game programming.

Recreation Specialist Proulx replied that there are different applications that encourage park interaction such as Pokémon Go and geocaching.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if the Commission would find it more reader friendly to rephrase that to make it clearer.

Recreation Specialist Proulx confirmed that could be helpful and examples could be provided.

Chair Bennett agreed that it could be helpful to provide clarification that shows the intent, as video game could be confusing.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided additional input on how content from an app could possibly be used by the City to provide additional photos and location information on different species.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced page 34 noting that the bottom paragraph mentions safety orientated parks programs and asked if some of those programs would be more suited under the Police Department program and it's budgeting.

Recreation Specialist Proulx confirmed that those types of programs can be seen to have crossover and there could be some overlap.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that perhaps it be mentioned that there could be some overlap with public safety for those programs.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood explained that is why this chapter is titled 'Programming and Partnerships', with the desire to build upon those synergies. He recognized that many staff members work on different events, using Happy Days as an example where staff from multiple departments work on the event.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced page 39 and asked for feedback to a reference from a 2001 study. She asked if there is a more recent study that could be referenced and whether that information would be considered dated.

Chairperson Bennett commented that is a fair challenge and noted that a review could be done to determine if a more recent study is available.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that staff can check that organization to determine if there is an updated study on the favorable association between parks and increased home values but was fairly confident that the information would remain the same or even more favorable.

Councilmember Heinrich referenced page 41, which mentions a collaboration with a local restaurant and the art event that the Commission has held. She asked if it is appropriate to name that restaurant or whether it should less specific and not include the name.

Chair Bennett commented that is a fair challenge and noted that he has a similar thought when he read that information. He stated that while it is nice to call it out perhaps there is a more generic way to state that information.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that could be omitted in this section. He stated that in later sections there are specific businesses listed as partners and believed that to be helpful information as he is proud of the economic development activity between the City and the business community. He stated that staff can make updates to the online format as needed.

Commissioner Leistico commented that it also helps to inspire others to perhaps also collaborate when they see that acknowledgement.

Chair Bennett stated that perhaps that moves into the next section where specific businesses and entities are listed for collaborations.

Councilmember Heinrich noted that her comment was specific to page 41. She agreed that it does make sense to acknowledge the partners in the later section.

Recreation Specialist Proulx continued to review the sections of the chapter including the state of programs, planning factors & considerations, and initiatives & strategies.

Commissioner Barnes asked if there would be a proofreading completed prior to finalizing the document, as she noted multiple spelling and grammatical errors in the document.

Recreation Specialist Proulx confirmed that would be completed and noted that the intent tonight was to receive input on the content.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commended Recreation Specialist Proulx for the hard work that she has put into the document. He also thanked the Commission for its work on this over the past few months. He noted that this is not a static document and will continue to be updated and modified over time as the City responds to the desire of its residents for recreation services.

Chair Bennett confirmed the consensus of the Commission to ratify the content.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that there will be a number of reports the following month, using the example of skating numbers for the season and the upcoming concert lineup.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Barten seconded by Commissioner Bayer to adjourn the meeting.

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.