

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on November 14, 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 Jennifer Leistico

Commission Members Absent:      Commissioner Russell Bayer

Also Present:                              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 6:30 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, Barnes, Barten. Voting No: None. Absent: Bayer.

**4.      APPROVE MINUTES**

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

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Barten, to approve the October 10, 2019, Park and Rec Commission meeting minutes as presented.

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

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Draft Recreation Policy Plan**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood introduced the draft recreation policy plan by recalling that this same topic was on the October agenda by way of an introduction. The recreation plan is a component of the Park System Plan. A final draft will be presented at the January meeting, and then it will be presented to the City Council.

Recreation Specialist Proulx noted this plan is to be an encompassing document that has practical use for the City. Staff is looking for detailed feedback on the first section and also general feedback on the overall format. She noted it is important to set specific goals to reach desired outcomes in terms of recreation, with the goal of connecting residents physically and socially. The City's strategic plan has approved the action item to update the programming work plan and deliver to create a robust system of recreation services. Previous research has found a void of recreation programming in this area and surrounding areas.

Recreation Specialist Proulx continued that the first three chapters of the policy plan highlight the trends for the City and the surrounding areas and the call for programming. After that come the current state of offerings, the vision of what to offer in the future, and how to do it. She highlighted the mission and core values adopted by Ramsey. Four core values particularly relevant to the Park and Recreation department include: fiscal responsibility, cooperation and teamwork, excellence and quality in the delivery of services, and adaptability and continuous learning. The impact recreation has already had in the City will also be included in chapter 1 of the document. Chapter 2 of the document will include trends related to demographics, economy, and recreation. Chapter 3 of the document will include information on the necessity of programs, with a focus on the importance of promoting personal health (both physical and mental) as well as community health (livability and economic development).

Recreation Specialist Proulx then highlighted partnerships with local businesses, specifically the very first Ramsey Resident Day on the Farm at Pearson Family Farms. The City partnered to offer a day of fall events like face painting, hay rides, pumpkin painting, and more. The event was a great success, as over 180 pumpkins were painted and taken home, and there has already been talk of expanding the program for next year.

Recreation Specialist Proulx continued that chapter 4 will cover the state of the programs in Ramsey, highlighting current programming as well as programming considerations for the future. Chapter 5 will communicate the vision of the department, motivations, goals, and program philosophy. There are a lot of elements that go into the plan, and the goal is to have it be workable and maintain relevance in the future. Chapter 6 will provide an overview of the plan, i.e., restate mission and vision, provide program assessment and evaluation, prioritize record-keeping, provide a facilities update, include a consideration of local partnerships, discuss the value of programming for lifetimes, note inclusivity and accessibility for all, consider fee setting and cost recovery, as well as marketing and outreach. The goal for the final plan will be how to provide and maintain this plan for years to come.

Chair Bennett thanked Recreation Specialist Proulx for a well-done presentation.

Commissioner Barnes asked if a professional proofreader will go through this document to account for grammar mistakes.

Recreation Specialist Proulx noted this is in a very rough draft form, including her own personal comments and thoughts not intended to be presented in final formatting. It is not yet to the stage of doing grammatical proof-reading, but that will come.

Commissioner Sis asked about the lack of mentioning of Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association. He would like to highlight that in the report.

Recreation Specialist Proulx stated the Association has been important, and staff will not forget to include their valuable impact on the community.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted staff wanted to be sure to get everything out to the Commission, and it is a working copy. The Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association will show up in the recreation plan in the beginning as well as the background and also with respect to the importance and synergy that comes with partnerships. ARAA will be both highlighted and featured. Much of what the Athletic Association does is for youth and athletics. At the same time, it also means a lot of those same ages may not have an interest in organized athletics that may very well be showing up at the Art in the Park and other events. Staff will make sure to look at all the partners, even those that pre-exist Ramsey's endeavor into recreation programming.

Commissioner Barnes noted the chapter 1 introduction mentions an "in progress statement," which will be a critical statement, and she asked about the status of that statement.

Recreation Specialist Proulx stated it is still very much in a working draft form so was not included in the draft document yet.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated what Commissioner Barnes called attention to is a broad overview being picked up from the Comp Plan, and that narrative will be modified to speak more directly to the Parks System Plan. He encouraged specific feedback from the Commissioners over the next couple months.

Chair Bennett commended Recreation Specialist Proulx for her good work, and suggested some of the power point slides were text-heavy, making it easy for the reader to get lost in the details.

Commissioner Sis concurred this document is a good start.

Commissioner Barnes stated she would like to see a reduced fee for seniors, without them having to fill out a form. That would encourage more seniors on fixed incomes to participate. Also, in terms of promoting community health and livability, she would like to see references more relatable to the residents of Ramsey.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated each page is supposed to ultimately have three images related to the text, and that will be included in the final form of the document. Also, staff will use the appendices to get a little deeper into the studies and statistics, so they are not brought into the narrative so much, in order to promote readability.

## **5.02: Acknowledge Phasing Plan for Public Realm Improvements in The COR**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reminded the Commission that the downtown was an organic, citizen-driven process that began in 1998. It showed up as an advisory question on a ballot and was affirmed by residents at the general election. It is important to note how far the City has come in the last 15 years, in spite of the Great Recession. The City has not moved substantially away from the vision, which has helped the success of the vision. The downtown area is about half developed currently. A lot of progress has been made with the residential goals. The residential component is very important to getting to the retail, which is what residents really want. The public realm elements are about 30-40% of the way there. The majority of improvements in the downtown are private sector investments, and that is why it is important to hold the vision and deliver. For example, people who are buying next to Municipal Plaza are doing so because the City promised a park there.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood continued to note that connectivity between all the planning elements is key. He presented proposed images of Municipal Plaza. The various phases may include gathering spaces, activity “rooms,” water stairs, hearths along the regional trail, splash pad, wading pool area, restaurants, indoor playgrounds, engineering and infrastructure improvements, and more. Near-term improvements include grading for Municipal Plaza and design work for first phases.

Chair Bennett thanked Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood for sharing a vision for the potential phasing of the project.

Commissioner Barnes asked about the inclusion of the water stairs.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded the water stairs may not occur, but it is a great idea to have a centralized aesthetic and functional component in that park area. The water stairs would also be a nice sound as well as aesthetic for the park. As the plans are refined, staff will look at individual elements. The stairs would not be a first phase improvement and could be looked at in later phases. First phase elements will be grading to Municipal Plaza with later improvements potentially occurring later in the summer of 2020.

Commissioner Sis asked about the refrigerated surface that may be an ice rink in the winter.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood responded there are vendors who bring out refrigerated surfaces, so that would be a contract relationship, much like the City contracts with people at Happy Days for generators, tents and bounce-houses. There would be irrigated turf and after the ground freezes, it would be set up. It is a popular model on the East Coast.

## 6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Recreation Specialist Proulx provided an update on programming, including bingo with the Women of Anoka, yoga, line dancing, an ornament-making class, and the upcoming master naturalist program.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated the Commission often does not have any action items in December, and that appears to be the case this year, so a meeting is not necessary.

Chair Bennett stated the Commission is fine with not having a December meeting, with the understanding that a meeting can be called if needed.

Chair Bennett noted Commission Shoemaker has resigned her spot, and an opening will be posted, with interviews occurring in March 2020. He thanked Commissioner Shoemaker for her service on the Commission.

## 7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

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