

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on January 9, 2020, 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

Commission Members Absent: None

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Barnes, Sis, Barten, Bayer, Leistico.
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 November 14, 2019, Park and Rec Commission meeting minutes as presented.

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Draft Recreation Policy Plan

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood introduced the draft recreation policy plan by recalling this work is a continuation of the Park Systems Plan revision. At the November meeting, the Commission reviewed the Recreation Programming and Partnerships chapter. Since then, Recreation Specialist Proulx has continued working on the policy plan, and tonight's focus will be on the first three sections, which are about 90% completed at this time.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted that the goal is to have the final draft of the Recreation Programming and Partnerships chapter available as soon as the February meeting for the Commission's input.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood continued by highlighting the elements of the portions under consideration, including: the context of the plan, the recreation districts, vision and essential elements, existing facilities and infrastructure, capital improvements, and future implementation.

Recreation Specialist Proulx then introduced the three sections she will cover tonight: Introduction, Trends, and Program Impact. She recalled the already-stated purpose, mission and core values, history of recreation in Ramsey, and reasons for providing recreation. She discussed trends, specifically changing demographics, and how to appropriately provide programming for those demographics, as well as highlighted overall economic trends and the necessity of fee assistance going forward. The most recent resident survey showed about 50% satisfaction with current programming, which demonstrates an opportunity for improvement. She also commented on the overall national and local trend that people spend less time in nature-based activities, and children today spend less time outdoors than their parents and grandparents. Internal research has found Ramsey had previously a void of recreation offerings, with many residents driving to neighboring communities to participate in recreation programming, which further establishes the need to increase recreation programming in Ramsey. Recreational programming partnerships with neighboring communities will continue to be a priority for Ramsey.

Recreation Specialist Proulx then discussed the necessity of physical activity in relation to physical health and the current statistics on obesity and heart health. Also, of concern is mental health, specifically anxiety and depression; outdoor physical activity has been shown to enhance good coping mechanisms. Another trend worth noting is people increasingly identify themselves by their activities rather than their work, e.g., "I am a runner."

Commissioner Barnes suggested including a section on the many benefits of child development, specifically the many advantages of children being outdoors and playing in natural spaces. She recommended the book *The Last Child in the Woods*.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood noted he has a dog-eared copy of *The Last Child in the Woods* and concurred with the importance of highlighting the aspects of child development in the recreation plan.

Commissioner Barnes also suggested offering nature hikes and night hikes in the woods for children with their parents, to help children learn not to be afraid outdoors and to observe wildlife.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood concurred with this sentiment, highlighting the importance of creating opportunities locally for both structured and unstructured outdoor play.

Chair Bennett thanked Recreation Specialist Proulx for the tremendous amount of detail and hard work.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood added that Recreation Specialist Proulx worked hard to synthesize a lot of material and data to make just the first three sections.

Recreation Specialist Proulx then introduced the next three sections she will be working on: State of Programs, Vision [programs and policy], Plan/Goals & Strategies. She discussed the factors in setting programming fees: Access, Responsibility, Anticipated Impacts, Social Value, and Benefit.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood discussed the complexities of cost recovery, and provided several examples of Ramsey events, the cost of the event, per participant charge, and the amount actually collected. Examples included the concert in the park series, starwatch party, movie in the park, art in the park, yoga, bingo, and Zumba.

Recreation Specialist Proulx indicated she is currently researching a Ramsey recreation pass, which will be a great way to balance accessibility and cost. She discussed possible options and benefits for residents and non-residents. The first and foremost goal is to serve residents but also to serve neighboring communities. She noted that fee setting and cost recovery is necessary to remove barriers for residents to participate.

Commissioner Barnes commented on the necessity of making sure some fee assistance is available for those who cannot afford it.

Chair Bennett noted that some residents are unaware of the many existing programs available by the City. Affordable and well-advertised programs will be used by the residents. He expressed support for the idea of a recreation pass.

Commissioner Sis suggested looking at areas of collaboration with nearby communities; perhaps some reciprocal arrangement could be made.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood thanked the Commission for the feedback.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood highlighted the Minnesota Master Naturalist Program which is the featured item in the *Ramsey Resident* this month. He encouraged anyone interested in conservation stewardship and Minnesota's ecology and geology to attend the open house to discuss details. He also mentioned the letter on Emerald Ash Borer and the corresponding presentation to be given next week on this topic by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood then highlighted the proposed items for the February agenda: the 2019 photo contest winners, continued review of Chapter 3 of the Park Systems Plan, updating a resolution from 1991 that this Commission developed that deals with public facility naming, and more detailed recreation program update.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Allison Burr
TimeSaver off Site Secretarial, Inc.