

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on May 21, 2020, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present:      Chair Shane Bennett  
   Vice Chair Brandon Sis  
   Commissioner Nathan Barten (arrived at 6:40 p.m.)  
   Commissioner Russell Bayer  
   Commissioner Matthew Guck  
   Commissioner Jennifer Leistico  
   Commissioner Justin Loss

Commission Members Absent:      None

Also Present:                              City Council Liaison Nadine Heinrich  
   Deputy City Administrator Tim Gladhill  
   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.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill read a statement related to the COVID-19 pandemic and local state of emergency. In declaring this Local State of Emergency, the City of Ramsey has determined that in person meetings and meetings conducted under Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.02 are not practical or prudent because of the declared health pandemic emergency.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

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

A roll call vote was performed by the Deputy City Administrator:

Commissioner Guck                      aye

Commissioner Leistico	aye
Commissioner Loss	aye
Commissioner Bayer	aye
Commissioner Sis	aye
Chair Bennett	aye

Motion carried.

#### **4. APPROVE MINUTES**

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

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Bayer, to approve the following Park and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting Minutes:

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated March 12, 2020

A roll call vote was performed by the Deputy City Administrator:

Commissioner Leistico	aye
Commissioner Bayer	aye
Commissioner Loss	aye
Commissioner Guck	aye
Commissioner Sis	abstain
Chair Bennett	aye

Motion carried.

#### **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

##### **5.01: Consider Park and Trail Concepts Related to Trott Brook North, a Sketch Proposal**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented a sketch proposal for a 200-acre residential subdivision, noting that the purpose is to identify high level concerns and gather input to help develop the plans. He stated that sketch plan proposal should be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and identify the trail connections, both to the adjacent neighborhoods and overall larger City trail plan. He identified the subject parcel and adjacent uses, noting that the Hunt property is connected to the north and also is being considered for development. He identified the different Recreation Districts within the City, noting that a community park has been identified to be constructed within this area. He displayed the sketch plan, providing details specific to the park and trail proposals. He stated that the developer is willing to work with the City for reuse of some of the existing barn/farm buildings within the parks system, perhaps as public/private endeavor. He asked for input from the Commission related to the park and trail elements included thus far in the sketch plan.

Commissioner Sis stated that a significant portion of the area slated for park dedication is generally unusable land in terms of development, due to the overhead powerlines and wetlands, and

recommended that those areas not available for development should not be counted towards Park Dedication.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that if the consensus of the Commission would be to support that recommendation, staff can use that direction in the conversations with the development team. He provided details on the overhead power line, which is a prominent feature in the landscape. He confirmed that homes could not be built in that area and advised that sports fields may be the highest and best use for that area under the power lines. He stated that there are other areas where the park could be located but noted that this park location is close to the bridge crossing and would also align with the location of the barn buildings.

Commissioner Loss asked the location of the barn buildings.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood clarified that the barn buildings are marked with the star on the sketch plan.

Commissioner Sis asked if a play structure could be located under the power lines or whether that structure would be located in another area.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood confirmed that a play structure would be warranted in this park.

Commissioner Leistico asked if the size of the park is adequate for the desire of the City.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that within the case there is discussion of a community park, which is generally described as 40 acres and would provide for athletic field space. He reviewed the different parks within the City that have athletic fields, or space for the fields, noting that perhaps this park size would be adequate for that use. He believed that the barn buildings would help to add the destination element desired for a community park.

Commissioner Sis referenced the Hunt property and asked if there would be a proposed connection to that development.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that the City would require a trail to be constructed along 175<sup>th</sup> and along Nowthen Boulevard to provide the connection to the existing trail. He noted that sidewalks would also be required in order to provide connectivity.

Chair Bennett stated that he loves the concept of attempting to maintain the farm character and reuse of the barn buildings. He asked if the buildings would be left where they exist and whether the park would be reconfigured to be near the buildings.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that it would be difficult to move the buildings and it would also be very expensive. He stated that it would also be expensive to demolish the buildings and perhaps that is the incentive for the buildings to be improved. He noted that the silo could not be moved. He stated that the desire would be to reuse the buildings in their current location.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill stated that the planning team is going to attempt to work with the developer to make the area near the buildings the park space, along with the sports fields. He stated that the developer has been very receptive and believed that there is a way to include the historical barn buildings and sports fields.

Chair Bennett stated that he agrees that seems like a great approach and was happy to hear that the developer is open to that idea. He stated that would also address the concerns related to the size and limited use identified by Commissioner Sis.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if the developer's Park Dedication fee would cover the cost to improve the barn buildings.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that any reuse of the building would be expensive and noted that staff would look at the model created by other park organizations. He commented that the HOA could be a logical partner. He stated that projected uses and responsibilities for maintenance and terms of use would be identified. He stated that if the buildings and agreement for public use could be secured, the improvements could be considered on more of a longer-term phased approach. He stated that there is a lot of opportunity that could still be reviewed and stated that staff is simply asking for direction on whether to pursue the reuse of the barn buildings, noting that the reuse would not be covered solely by this development through its Park Dedication obligations, but with funding in the future that could be generated by additional developments in this area of the City.

Commissioner Bayer commented that this would be a smaller park than the traditional 40-acre plot. He commented that this area of Ramsey does need a park and asked if something could be added that would be unique to the site.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that the barn buildings and programming that could occur would make the site unique. He commented that this is an opportunity that speaks to the heritage of Ramsey.

Commissioner Bayer stated that having the barn buildings would help to meet everyone's needs by retaining the character and providing a building that could still be used by the public. He agreed that having the barn buildings would be an amenity.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that there may be historical preservation funds and other sources that could be obtained to help rehab the buildings.

Commissioner Guck commented that he spends a lot of time in the Carver Park and agrees that the barn buildings would be an asset to the community. He stated that the aesthetic creates the value of the park and commented that the historic buildings do provide intangible value.

Councilmember Heinrich asked if pursuing State preservation grant funds for this use would compete with an application for the old town hall site.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that certainly there is opportunity to receive funding for different projects in the same community. He noted that the

Council could prioritize the funding opportunities. He stated that there may be additional funding opportunities that may be available for historical agricultural uses.

Chair Bennett stated that he is gathering consensus from the Commission to continue exploring the options to pull the barn buildings into the mix and how that could potentially impact the ask of the developer.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood asked if there is consensus of the Commission that the land under the power lines and the wetlands should not be fully counted towards park dedication.

Brian Walker, resident, asked what the need is for more parks and fields in Ramsey.

Chair Bennett noted that the park needs within the community were reviewed in the beginning of the meeting.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that he could share the information with Mr. Walker following the meeting. He noted that there is a need for a park in this area of Ramsey and the connections that this development would provide would be valuable in terms of connectivity.

Chair Bennett agreed that there has been feedback from the community that a park is wanted in that area of Ramsey. He stated that the area marked for sports fields could also be used as greenspace within the park.

Deputy City Administrator Gladhill explained that new development pays a Park Dedication fee which covers the development of parks within Ramsey. He stated that parks arise through planning for smart development and working with developers to craft a better product.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Loss, to direct staff to continue exploring the park and trail issues, preservation of current buildings, siting as discussed by the Commission and that the power lines be considered as a lesser value related to Park Dedication.

A roll call vote was performed by the Deputy City Administrator:

Commissioner Barten	aye
Commissioner Bayer	aye
Commissioner Guck	aye
Commissioner Leistico	aye
Commissioner Loss	aye
Commissioner Sis	aye
Chair Bennett	aye

Motion carried.

## **5.02: Consider Revising Ramsey's Central Park Name**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that there has been considerable discussion over the years relative to naming public facilities, culminating in the Park and Recreation Commission recommending a naming policy to City Council at the regular February meeting in 2020. The draft Resolution and Naming Policy has not yet been considered formally by the City Council. Concurrent with the discussions in 2019 and into 2020, a proposal was submitted by Ramsey resident Ron Schara to rename Central Park to honor and recognize long-time resident and internally renown Loral I Armstrong Delaney. Staff supports the revised name for the 36-year-old park.

Chair Bennett stated that this would be an opportunity that could set precedent. He stated that his personal goal would not be to change names across the City but liked the idea by staff to enhance the Central Park which strikes a balance.

Commissioner Sis agreed with Chair Bennett that the hybrid name would be a good option to pay tribute the resident and also maintain the Central Park name. He stated that this would clear up confusion between Central Park and Rum River Central Park as well. He asked for details on the cost and logistics in changing the name.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that the cost has not yet been investigated. He noted that the name could be added to the existing monument. He noted that staff would look into the costs associated prior to bringing this to City Council. He noted that he park was originally donated by Federal Cartridge and naming the park after Loral I Armstrong Delaney, who is recognized for trap shooting, could be an opportunity to bring in Federal Cartridge to assist with the renaming costs.

Councilmember Heinrich asked staff to share some of the discussion the Council had when Ron Schara made the proposal to the City Council.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood provided a summary of the discussion that took place when Ron Schara made his proposal to the City Council, noting that the Council seemed to support the renaming of the park.

Councilmember Heinrich stated that she appreciates the concept proposal drafted by staff that would enhance the existing Central Park sign and name.

Chair Bennett agreed that he likes the Central Park sign and commented that this could be a way to enhance the park and the signage.

Commissioner Leistico stated that she likes the ties ins with Armstrong Boulevard and the historic ties to the community.

Commissioner Guck stated that he moved to Ramsey four years ago and has heard a lot about Loral I Armstrong Delaney, noting that he has received many positive comments from residents.

Motion by Commissioner Bayer, seconded by Commissioner Sis, to recommend to City Council revising the name of the existing Central Park to be known as Loral I Armstrong Delaney Central Park.

A roll call vote was performed by the Deputy City Administrator:

Commissioner Barten	aye
Commissioner Bayer	aye
Commissioner Guck	aye
Commissioner Leistico	aye
Commissioner Loss	aye
Commissioner Sis	aye
Chair Bennett	aye

Motion carried.

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

Recreation Specialist Proulx provided an update on the recent May Day Basket Hunt. She reviewed some of the opportunities that staff is reviewing including a drive-in movie, an instructional painting activity that could be completed via Zoom, and other adapted activities. She stated that there were some canceled events that staff is attempting to reschedule in another manner. She reviewed some of the updates that were recently made to the City website to make it more user friendly.

Commissioner Sis commended staff for the May Day event.

Councilmember Heinrich commented that the May Day event was a great low-cost example of programming the City can offer to residents to get them out into the parks. She stated that many families are looking for budget friendly opportunities to get them outside. She commended Northgate Church for the storybook walk they did earlier this spring to help get families outside while remaining socially distanced. She asked if staff could make a blurb on social media to highlight the website updates. She also recommended the idea of a park passport.

Recreation Specialist Proulx confirmed that she could work to create a social media blurb. She stated that staff can look into a parks passport but noted that it would need to be adapted as Ramsey does not have a main recreation center.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that some of this programming attempts to bring residents into parks they may not have explored before. He stated that the bingo game would be a great opportunity to do that and help residents discover new things in the community. He stated that staff is excited about the possibility of the drive-in movie, which could introduce that opportunity to a new generation.

Commissioner Loss asked for details on the drive-in movie, noting that classic car owners may see that as an opportunity.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that staff talked about reserving the front rows to showcase older vehicles and provided details on the proposed location for the event. He noted that the audio would be transmitted through FM radio so that each vehicle could adjust the audio to their liking. He stated that they are also reviewing options for no contact food vending. He stated that the City Council will be reviewing City events at its work session meeting on May 26<sup>th</sup>, to determine if events could move forward with social distancing. He provided an update on a park improvement project currently under construction. He stated that there is also a request being made by Anoka County to consolidate Rum River North Regional Park with Rum River South Regional Park, noting that the City Council provided a resolution of support.

Commissioner Loss stated that he took his children to Ford Brook Park and received positive input from the other two families at the park.

Councilmember Heinrich commended staff for their work in bringing the park to fruition as that was a desire for residents. She commended staff for thinking outside the box and getting the project completed under budget.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

A roll call vote was performed by the Deputy City Administrator:

Commissioner Barten	aye
Commissioner Bayer	aye
Commissioner Guck	aye
Commissioner Leistico	aye
Commissioner Loss	aye
Commissioner Sis	aye
Chair Bennett	aye

Motion carried.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*