

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on November 12, 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
 Commissioner Matthew Guck
 Commissioner Jennifer Leistico
 Commissioner Justin Loss

Commission Members Absent:

Also Present: City Council Liaison Debra Musgrove
 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 Sis seconded by Commissioner Leistico to approve the Park and Recreation Commission meeting agenda as presented.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Leistico, Barten, Guck and Loss.
Voting No: None. Absent: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated October 8, 2020

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Leistico, Loss, Sis, Barten, and Guck. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Consider the 2021-2030 Parks Five-Year Capital Improvement Plan

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the Commission discussed the CIP on an ongoing basis each year. He stated that 2021 is similar to the past year. He explained that the CIP is a planning document that attempts to identify the timing, funding and proposed cost estimate noting that none of the individual projects have been approved. He stated that the discussion tonight will focus on the park and trail section of the CIP. He noted that the Council will review and adopt the entire CIP later this year. He noted that most of the parks items within the CIP are funded through the park trust fund which has been established with funds from developers and not from the general fund. He provided an overview of the proposed projects shown for 2021, placeholder projects and newly proposed projects. He provided background information on each project.

Chair Bennett stated that as they look at the potentially planned projects over a period of time it is important to note that the attempt is to balance the resources over a multitude of things. He commented that there are projects that range widely in type. He stated that this is a plan that attempts to plan for future improvements in the most cost-effective manner.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the trail mentioned along Hwy 47 and asked if that is not meant to move forward until the development of those lots occurs or whether the City could move forward with some type of trail prior to that time.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that he mentioned the development of those lots for many reasons. He explained that development would help to increase support for retail and provide the easements needed for the trail. He stated that if desired, the City could proceed with the project but there would be added cost. He stated that there is a sidewalk along Xkimo, but people still tend to make their own foot trail along 47.

Commissioner Loss asked if the trail connection along 47 would potentially bring in increased interest from developers.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that could be a possibility. He explained that if the City does not have the land, the City would need an easement or acquire that land through purchase. He stated that it may make better sense to have that connection occur with development as the site development is unknown and therefore there could be a possibility that the City would pay to construct a trail segment that may be torn out and replaced in order to match grade with the development or to provide utility connection. He noted that in the case of waiting for development to occur, the developer may also construct the trail to themselves rather than the City paying that cost. He confirmed that trails are an amenity to retail and all businesses.

Chair Bennett commented that this is a good list with the vast majority of projects that have been on the plan for some time.

Commissioner Sis referenced the expansion of the Dog Park at Alpine and asked if that is part of this plan.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that is included in the CIP for 2020. He stated that the Commission discussed that topic, met at the park in October and there was consensus to move forward on that project. He noted that information will be reviewed for action in the next case.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Loss to recommend approval of the 2021-2030 Parks Capital Improvement Plan to the City Council.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Barten, Guck, Leistico, and Loss. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5.02: Recommend Proposed Improvements to Alpine Park's Off-Leash Area – a 2020 Parks Capital Improvement

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that some of the background for this case was discussed in the discussion for the last agenda item. He stated that the dog park has a lot of users and the request to expand the off-leash area makes sense. He displayed a sketch showing the proposed expansion area and noted that it would increase the size by one third. He reviewed the proposed materials and a cost estimate. He asked if the Commission would like to move forward on the project at this time or wait until 2021, with an estimated cost of \$20,000.

Chair Bennett commented that the Commission met at the park recently to hear the request from the resident. He stated that even though this is just space between ballfields, it is one of the most loved parks in the community. He stated that he often hears requests to make the park larger and believed that this would be a good option to provide a cost-effective expansion to the dog park.

Commissioner Leistico stated that she supports this project. She believed that this would be good representation of what people in the community want, as a resident had enough interest in the park to gather input from other users in order to present a realistic proposal.

Chair Bennett agreed that this would be creative use of space and existing fencing.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that the Commission should also consider another off-leash area in the future. He acknowledged that it can often be difficult to find the right site for this type of recreational activity, as not everyone loves dog to the same degree. He stated that the entire dog area is bare soil because of all the use by the dogs.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that she takes her dog to the park often and her dog is often curious about the area proposed for the expansion. She also liked the fact that this project was proposed by residents. She asked for details on the lighting of parks.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that City Code states that parks are closed at 10 p.m. He commented that he believes that there will eventually be a transition to 24-hour parks because of the changing trends of when people are working and when they are taking walks or using things like the dog park.

Chair Bennett commented that as he was on his way to the meeting tonight, he saw two people walking their dogs in The Draw area and fortunately there is lighting to assist with walking in the evening hours. He believed that lighting would be worth exploring. He stated that while dusk occurs much later in the evening during the summer, the winter hours bring darkness much earlier.

Councilmember Musgrove recognized that more people are using the parks earlier in the morning or after 10 p.m. She stated that she better understands the need for lighting and that residents would find that helpful in the winter months.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that lighting was previously the top request for the dog park, noting a light that was installed during an earlier project.

Motion by Commissioner Leistico, seconded by Commissioner Guck to recommend City Council authorize \$20,000 for the expansion of Alpine Park's off-leash area to include aspects of solar lighting.

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Leistico, Sis, Barten, Guck, and Loss. Voting No: None. Absent: None.

5.03: Note Draft Center Street Area Framework and Policy Plan

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood presented the draft Center Street area framework and policy plan. He stated that the detail is intended to update the existing framework and plan that was adopted in 2012. He stated that input would be gathered from all the Boards and Commissions prior to presentation to the City Council. He provided background on the creation of the plan and public input process for the downtown "COR" area. He stated that it was clear through that public input process that pedestrian connection and connection from the downtown area, over the rail and highway, to the Mississippi Park were the most desired elements by residents along with a green corridor and water feature. He explained how the plans evolved over time and how the plans can be reactive to different types of development. He displayed a sketch from the 2012 Center Street area framework and policy plan and explained that additional detail is needed in order to provide developers with the necessary information. He reviewed the details of the proposed draft framework and plan including the pump house, pump house plaza, different streetscape project elements, irrigation, and future development site frontage.

Chair Bennett recalled that there was a great deal of discussion related to Municipal Plaza and appreciated the creativity, sustainability elements, and stormwater reuse for irrigation. He stated that he also understands the need to revise the original plan to better plan for the Center Street projects.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood reviewed the different Board and Commission review that will occur, noting that the EDA and Planning Commission will be asked to recommend approval of the draft plan. He explained the additional level of detail that those groups will be presented and provide.

Chair Bennett stated that he likes the concept of improving the look of the pump house and the desire to make that more residential in appearance because of the surrounding residential properties. He noted that area also continues to be popular in terms of recreation and events and therefore the bathrooms would be helpful as well.

Commissioner Sis commented that it is fantastic to see the level of planning that has gone into the downtown area and how the plan has changed with the different economic conditions.

Commissioner Loss stated that this is the first time he has seen a lot of these plans and appreciated that the City did not rush into the method of accepting any development and instead putting more thought into the desired outcome.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the intent would be to have standards in place which ensures that development projects will meet the expectations.

Commissioner Loss asked if there is a timeline for the build out of Municipal Plaza.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that he will be asking the City Council for authorization for RFQ to complete the design build plans for the pump house perhaps as soon as January with improvements to occur in 2021. He stated that he would also like to work on the interface near the Affinity building in 2021. He stated that Center Street may be reconstructed in a future year, so some improvements would be tied to that project. He noted that some elements will be developer and/or opportunity driven. He noted that staff will continue to explore grant opportunities as well.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

None.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Bennett; Commissioners Sis, Barten, Guck, Leistico, and Loss.
Voting No: None. Absent: None.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.