

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on April 14, 2022, 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 Jennifer Leistico
 Commissioner Justin Loss
 Commissioner Brian Walker

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Dean Olson

Also Present: City Council Liaison Debra Musgrove
 Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Mark Riverblood

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated March 10, 2022

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Playground Renovations – Rabbit and Peltzer Parks

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that at the last meeting, the Commission recommended playground renovations for Peltzer and Rabbit parks. He stated that many residents expressed support and enthusiasm for the improvements at the meeting. He stated that the meeting had technology issues at the last meeting, therefore the images could not be displayed and noted that his intention tonight is to review those images. He reviewed the presentation with the images for the Commission and viewers at home. He stated that this item will go before the City Council on April 26th.

Chair Bennett thanked staff for the presentation tonight with the images as those were not available at the last meeting.

Commissioner Sis referenced the shoreline portion and asked if the water level is constant from year to year.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that there is open water there and he would anticipate about a two-foot elevation before the water would outlet. He stated that he believed people wanted a pad to be able to see the water and feed ducks. He noted that he would salvage two deck sections from the public works site with a short boardwalk which would result in a short boardwalk with deck for people to enjoy the pond.

Commissioner Sis asked if that would propose risk to the City to have a playground in such close proximity.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood did not believe there would be an issue. He stated that there is nothing that prevents a child from wading into the pond and therefore did not believe a deck would create a further nuisance.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that it was good to hear the soccer goals were installed and asked if those are secured. She asked if the area would be enhanced for turf.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that the goals are secured with augers to ensure they do not tilt down or tip. He commented that there are no turf enhancements proposed. He noted that under normal precipitation seasons the grass is green, although last summer the grass was parched because of the drought conditions. He confirmed the Peltzer Park experienced a lot of vandalism in the past, as have other parks. He noted that often corresponds to the age of the children and those children growing out of that stage. He stated that they have not had vandalism at Peltzer for many years.

5.02: Community Park at Trott Brook Crossing – Preliminary Development Cost Review

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that the purpose of this case to continue to review the preliminary cost estimates for this project. He stated that this would be a large park in the category of a community park. He stated that the Commission reviewed the line item costs in great detail for the barn renovations at its January meeting. He briefly reviewed the different types of improvements outside of the barn renovations and estimated costs which would be broken into different phases. He noted that the total estimated cost for all project elements would be \$3,800,000 which does not include the value of the land that would be dedicated or certain improvements that would be provided by the developer such as irrigation and infiltration. He noted that information was provided in the packet on the present value of the improvements at Central Park and Elmcrest Park which total about \$18,000,000 each. He noted that those parks are similar in fashion in that they are community parks. He noted that the proposed cost for the improvements at this park would only be about 25 percent of the cost to develop the features of the other community parks, therefore it would appear that this is a good value to develop this community park that has been planned for this area of the community for the past two decades. He stated that at the last meeting there was a discussion on the value of the events that would be hosted for the event center, noting that it was stated that his projections may have been on the lower end. He provided more updated revenue projections for the first year, second year, and third year. He reviewed similar event centers within Minnesota and stated that almost all of those event centers had the same pricing for event rentals. He also noted the related economic benefit that could be experienced by existing businesses in Ramsey because of the event center. He stated that the proposed development did receive Preliminary Plat approval from the Council.

Chair Bennett recognized that there are still moving parts between now and the next steps and appreciated the additional details provided. He stated that action is not required from the Commission but welcomed any comments.

Commissioner Walker commented that he does not support the project, but since it has been pushed forward, he wants to ensure the park can be as good as it can be. He stated that he has serious concerns about the City getting into operation of a for profit business, as cities are notoriously bad at operating those types of uses. He stated that he would like to see a proposal of the expenses that would be needed for an event center such as staffing, utilities and supplies in order to review that element from a business perspective. He stated that while it is great to see the revenue projections, the expenses would also be needed in order to make that more accurate. He encouraged the City to lease that facility to ensure the taxpayers are not burdened with a net loss of an event center. He noted that leasing would provide guaranteed revenue with no risk of loss.

Chair Bennett recognized that community assets such as community centers and pools fall into that category because of the operating expenses. He believed that information would be very helpful.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood agreed that staff could research those elements in order to provide those types of statements. He stated that there has also been discussion about having this facility only operational during seven months of the year to limit utility expenses. He stated that the community park is an important addition to the community and will be used for many purposes outside of the event center use. He noted that the large playground, athletic fields, and greenspace will serve many residents as well.

Commissioner Walker stated that if the City were to build a swimming pool and if that were to break even or even lose some money, he would see that differently. He stated that he supports spending the money to make the park an asset but is concerned about the business component.

Chair Bennett commented that he looks forward to seeing more on this as it continues to move forward.

5.03: Consider Park and Recreation 2022 Outdoor Meeting Schedule

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that each April, the Commission identifies its outdoor meeting schedule for the upcoming season. He explained that the outdoor meetings provide additional accessibility for members of the community to attend a meeting and provide input and also provides an opportunity for the Commission to review potential park projects or completed parks. He reviewed a proposed meeting schedule for the upcoming season. He welcomed ideas for the May and June meetings noting that the Lake Itasca boardwalk should be completed in the next few weeks and therefore that could be a good location for one of those months.

Chair Bennett stated that he supports the locations proposed by staff. He noted that perhaps they could visit Alpine and/or Solstice parks to evaluate the potential improvements as those are next on the list for playground replacement.

Commissioner Loss stated that he was also going to suggest Alpine Park.

Commissioner Leistico agreed that the Commission should include a location on the upcoming playground replacement list.

Commissioner Sis stated that he would suggest Elmcrest in the beginning of the season because of the use by soccer. He noted that Alpine would also be good because of its use for baseball. He noted that the increased use of the park during those times would create opportunities for engagement.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood commented that the Commission met at Elmcrest each of the last few years and it was difficult to conduct the meeting because of the noise. He suggested visiting Alpine Park for June and Solstice Park in May. The Commission agreed.

Consensus of the Commission was to approve the proposed list of meeting locations for the outdoor meetings, adding Alpine Park and June and Solstice Park in May.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

6.01: Commission/Staff Input

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood stated that flyers for the upcoming events were included in the Commission packet and provided a brief overview. He also provided

an update on current park improvement projects. He stated that he will also be bringing forward a trail gap list for the Commission to prioritize.

Commissioner Walker referenced previous input from a resident related to the desire for a small dog park area and asked if there has been progress.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that staff has attempted to put some numbers together. He referenced an area that was mentioned off Veteran's Drive, which he believes would be a good location. He noted that it would be a matter of obtaining cost estimates and whether the Commission would support the project and related cost.

Chair Bennett noted that the Commission will be visiting Alpine Park, which will provide an opportunity to review the dog park.

Commissioner Sis asked for an update on the area in front of Affinity off Center Street.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent Riverblood replied that project is a placeholder within the current CIP. He provided an update on recent discussions related to preparing another site within The COR to become shovel ready and how that could relate to the Waterfront area and Municipal Plaza.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Superintendent

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.