

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on August 10, 2023, at the Rivers Bend Park South Shelter, 5000 142nd Avenue NW and Waco Street NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present: Chair Nathan Barten
 Vice Chair Brandon Sis
 Commissioner Todd Arts
 Commissioner Shane Bennett
 Commissioner Jennifer Leistico
 Commissioner Dean Olson

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Justin Loss

Also Present: City Council Liaison Debra Musgrove
 Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood
 Assistant City Engineer Joe Feriancek

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

Commissioner Leistico requested to amend the agenda, specifically Item 4.01, to remove the April Commission minutes as those were approved in May.

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Barten; Commissioners Leistico, Sis, Arts, Bennett and Olson.
Voting No: None.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

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

- ~~Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated April 13, 2023~~
- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated May 11, 2023

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Consider Recommending City Council Partially Fund Central Park Main Parking Lot Reconstruction, Improvement Project #23-02 Using Park Trust Funds

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that this project was included in the 2023 Capital Improvement Projects. He noted that Assistant City Engineer Feriancek is present to provide an update on the project. He stated that the Commission will be asked to consider a funding request from the Park Trust Fund.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek provided background information on the project noting that the project was authorized for bids on July 25th. He stated that staff worked with ARAA and the Game Fair in order to avoid conflicts to the extent possible. He provided details on the design that was developed as well as future considerations. He stated that the CIP estimate for the project was \$800,000 while the final estimate based on plans and timing of construction is \$924,000. He reviewed the funding sources proposed for the project, noting that the stormwater utility fund will cover all stormwater items and the remaining costs are split 50/50 between the capital maintenance fund and park trust fund. He stated that the Capital Maintenance Fund has a \$340,000 cap and therefore the remaining costs would be proposed to be funded through the Park Trust Fund. He reviewed the next steps and tentative project schedule.

Vice Chair Sis asked about the basketball hoops and whether those would be reused.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek stated that area was reconstructed as part of the 161st project. He noted that there will be four hoops and it will be marked for basketball.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if the CIP funds were broken down in the same manner as discussed.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that they did follow that breakdown between the three funds. He noted that the Stormwater funds and Capital Maintenance funds are approved in static amounts, therefore additional funding will be requested from the Park Trust Fund.

Commissioner Sis asked the genesis of the cap on the capital maintenance fund.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided additional details. He noted that the city-wide CIP projects also have allocated funding and therefore caps have been placed on

projects that have additional funding sources. He noted that additional improvements were built into this project and therefore because of that changed scope, the burden of those additional costs should not be placed on the Capital Maintenance Fund.

Commissioner Sis commented that he appreciates the additional stalls that will be added as the parking lot fills quickly during certain events. He asked if the width of the stalls will be appropriate for the vehicles that utilize the parks.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that nine feet in width is the standard.

Chair Barten asked if this will push closer to the trees.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that they would go 12 to 15 feet closer on both the north and south but noted that they would not want to go further as that would encroach on the roots.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that there will be almost no impact to the tree roots. He noted that a mature tree could have up to one third of its rooting zone impacted without negative effects. He stated that the trees will have regular irrigation as part of the project.

Chair Barten stated that he was also wondering if the roots would have an eventual impact on the pavement, but it sounds like they will be far enough back.

Commissioner Olson recalled the discussion of angled spaces versus straight spaces and asked if there would have been a large difference in the number of spaces.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek stated that they would have lost a few spaces if they would have used angled spaces. He noted that there were able to add some stalls in other locations.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that the Public Works Committee discussed this and were on the same page in supporting the number of stalls. She noted that the straight parking design provided more stalls.

Commissioner Bennett stated that he recalled that safety was an issue with the angled spaces. He believed that this design does a great job using medians and cuts down opportunities of people driving across the lot to cut through. He believed that this design provides additional stalls and improved safety.

Chair Barten asked if there are concrete gutters on the central islands.

Assistant City Engineer Feriancek replied that there is full height curb with curb cuts. He commented that there is a series of three curb cuts on each side of the median. He stated that the inlets are raised a bit to hold some of that water.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the City has drafted a cross parking agreement with PACT Charter School that will be before the appropriate entities within the next month which will add additional parking capacity during large tournaments. He

confirmed that some people attending Friday night games at the school may choose to park in Central's northeast parking lot.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to recommend City Council partially fund the Central Park Main Parking Lot Reconstruction, Improvement Project #23-02, using the Park Trust Fund.

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

5.02: Initiate the 2024-2033 Parks Capital Improvement Plan Process – A General Policy and Priority Discussion

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood recognized that the Commission is intimately familiar with the Capital Improvement Plan and its related process. He stated that the Commission typically reviewed the plan in the fall to plan for the coming year. He stated that he brought it forward a bit earlier this year to talk about more general priorities and whether there are additional items they should be thinking about. He noted that within the past year, the Commission reviewed the disc golf project within the plan and decided to focus on other projects because of the number of courses in close proximity to Ramsey. He asked if more emphasis should be placed on larger regional projects in 2024, such as the waterfront park project, rather than smaller neighborhood and trail projects. He commented that the Commission has done a great job in spreading improvements throughout the community to provide equity. He stated that this is meant to be a discussion item and formal action is not requested.

Commissioner Sis stated that his son is interested in the RC car park, acknowledging that item did not move forward. He asked the feasibility in exploring that concept again.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the Commission authorized the development of an area for that use, but momentum was lost. He stated that he did reach out to the resident that expressed interest in the past to see if momentum could be gained again.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the concept of a dog park within the COR, asking if that was still on the radar of the Commission. She asked for an update on the trail repair plan.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the dog park is shown as a 2023 project. He stated that he has a good amount of work done on the specifications and plans but has not brought that forward for quotes yet. He anticipated that would have a cost of about \$20,000. He stated that they hope to develop a trail maintenance plan as a policy plan, noting that he hopes to bring that forward to the Public Works Committee in draft form in the next month or two. He stated that funds have been earmarked for trail repair each year in the budget and provided details on that. He stated that they will be doing trail maintenance this month.

Commissioner Arts asked if there is anything planned for trail expansion.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that there is a placeholder within the CIP for priority trails. He provided additional details on those opportunities that could come with

development that will remain on the list. He anticipated that this item would be on the September agenda with a formal recommendation to be made to the City Council then, or at the Commission's October meeting.

Commissioner Sis asked if it would be possible to partner with a local company, noting that perhaps a local fencing company would assist with the dog park project if there were an opportunity for them to place signage.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that opportunity could exist if the Commission wanted to invite a company to talk about that. He stated that exchanging subtle signage on the fencing in return for that donation would be a fair trade for the City.

Chair Barten commented that he would think there would be significant value in continuing the work for the dog park for the Commission to review at one of the upcoming meetings as a dog park would be a valuable addition to the residents in the COR.

Commissioner Bennett commented that generally the recommendations within the report seem to make a lot of sense. He stated that in terms of priorities he wants to ensure they are continuing to address the existing playground equipment per the recent policy that was adopted. He stated that he would also like to see continuous movement on the projects within the COR, as the movement of dirt has sparked resident interest.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that the City Council recently held a worksession to provide staff direction relative to The COR. He stated that there was complete consensus that staff should continue to refine elements related to the splashpad and park building, along with a trail and restoration plan around The Waterfront. He stated that the anticipation is that the trail and landscaping would be ready for completion as soon as the Spring of 2024 to go along with The Waterfront while the splashpad and park building would have a longer timeline. He noted that the aeration project within the plan was pushed back as the fish died so there is no longer urgency.

Commissioner Arts asked for an update on the park located on the south side of Highway 10.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that weather permitting, the Commission would be meeting at that location in September. He stated that the zipline has been installed, but some grading changes are needed before the remaining woodchip material can be placed in the fall zone.

Councilmember Musgrove asked if there is a plan for Lake Itasca Park with the current condition of the lake. She commented that the water level is currently so low that it makes recreation difficult.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that the land is in place for a large community park, although he was unsure there is a need for a community park in that location at this time as the focus is currently on The COR. He noted that the previous CIP included an observation boardwalk, but the Council recommended that project be removed partly because of the droughty conditions.

Commissioner Arts referenced the Lake Itasca area, which is a natural and scenic area. He asked if there have been thoughts to placing natural plantings in the area that was previously tilled up.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the City created the 7-acre Monarch Trail, noting the goal to establish milkweed in that area. He stated that they have been unsuccessful in establishing that plant and they continue to work on it. He stated that they will be seeding and placing plugs again in the Spring of 2024.

Councilmember Musgrove provided context from recent resident input and discussion at the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization related to the low water level at Lake Itasca.

5.03: Proposed Haviland Fields Housing Project

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the City Council was asked to consider funding assistance for this project, which he believed was not approved. He believed the developer is continuing in the funding process to bring this forward for development. He stated that an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) was sent to the Commission and is posted on the City website noting that it is currently open for comments. He noted that they are very early in this process. He commented that staff will be talking about the interface between the project and Solstice Park. He noted that the park is lacking pickleball and perhaps there could be a modest park expansion to accommodate courts that would be shared between the general public and development's residents.

Chair Barten commented that his biggest concern would be the impact to the park as that type of development could create a larger amount of traffic for the park and liked the idea of exploring pickleball as an expansion.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that they will be moving forward with trail maintenance in the coming weeks. He provided an update on recent events including the giant waterslide that coincided with the summer concert event. He noted that the second to last concert will be held tonight. He provided flyers for Happy Days and announced that former Recreation Specialist Abigail Proulx is coming back the following week as the Recreation Coordinator for the City.

Commissioner Bennett referenced the legalization of cannabis, noting that there has been a lot of discussion about use within public parks. He asked if the City Council has talked about that concept.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that the City is talking about that.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that the City Council tabled discussion on a proposed ordinance to ensure they are doing things right. She stated that it seemed there was consensus that cannabis use should be prohibited in parks but there was additional discussion needed related to

tobacco use in the parks. She welcomed input from the Commission on the topic. She stated that there were also concerns about the use of cannabis by minors.

Commissioner Bennett stated that he would agree that cannabis and tobacco should not be allowed within the parks.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

Motion carried. Voting Yes: Chair Barten; Commissioners Leistico, Bennett, Arts, Olson, and Sis.
Voting No: None.

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.