

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on December 14, 2023, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

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

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Jennifer Leistico
 Commissioner Megan Ealain

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Barten 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 Bennett, to approve the Park and Recreation Commission meeting agenda as presented.

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes date October 12, 2023

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Playground Replacement Plan – Alpine and River’s Bend Parks

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that in 2021 the City Council adopted the Playground Replacement Plan recommended by the Commission and in 2022 the City began to refurbish two playgrounds. He stated that in 2023 Alpine Park had been slated for replacement, but River’s Bend became a concern and noted that he has a plan to present which includes both playgrounds. He provided photographs of the existing playground conditions at River’s Bend, noting that the main issue is the wood deck boards as the plastic components are still in great shape. He reviewed the elements included in the RFP noting that the lowest proposal was \$13,170. He then presented the existing conditions for the Alpine Park playground and noted that a larger scope playground would have value in this location because of the high amount of use associated with the community park. He noted that two options were provided through the RFP and the Commission will evaluate and make a recommendation on those at its January meeting. He provided cost estimates for both locations, noting a total estimated cost of \$194,169 which would fall under the \$200,000 budget. He stated that action is not necessary tonight as they will delve into further detail at the January meeting.

Commissioner Sis asked if the RFP has been released.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that the Alpine Park RFP has been released.

Commissioner Sis referenced the undeveloped area to the north and asked if that is low lying.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that is a natural area, mostly weeds, but is at the same level of the existing playground.

Commissioner Bennett asked if the \$200,000 reflects \$100,000 earmarked for each year.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the Capital Improvement Plan reflects \$100,000 per year and those funds from 2023 and 2024 were combined to create the \$200,000 budget estimate.

Commissioner Bennett asked the benefit of the engineered wood fiber surface at River’s Bend. He asked if the decking would exceed the lifespan of the other equipment at the playground.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the refurbishment will result in about half a decade or longer. He noted that the RFP included two different types of wood, noting that this is a shady location. He stated that as they refurbish the playgrounds they need to have the engineered wood fiber surface. He noted that the original cost quoted for that material did exceed

\$6,000 and also had an installation fee of \$5,800. He commented that he was going to see if staff could install the material in-house to save on that cost.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that in the past the City was able to reuse equipment from other communities and asked if that is something that would be considered with this project. She agreed that the playground equipment at Alpine Park needs to be replaced.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that typically equipment is demolished and not resold. He stated that they were able to do that at Peltzer but that was a unique opportunity that arose. He stated that for Alpine Park the city likely wants something befitting the stature of the park, which would be newer and larger and typically something like that would not be removed from another location.

5.02: The Waterfront – Water Play Area Planning

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided background information on the Waterfront, which will be a main feature of the parks system. He stated that they have engaged the community many times over the years to gather input on the desired features for the park. He stated that waterplay continues to rank high on the list. He reviewed the updated concept for the park and its proposed features. He narrowed to one area of the park that would be discussed tonight and noted the proposed program elements within that area. He provided details on the different water elements to consider including a wading pool, splash pad, and architectural water play. He stated that there were case studies which helped to inform the planning process including Central Park in Maple Grove, Wabun Park wading pool in Minneapolis, Elephant Park in London, and Madrid Rio Park in Madrid. He then highlighted different elements from the case studies which could be good to think about as they further plan the water play features for this park. He then presented three different concepts that have been developed and reviewed the different features within each concept. He stated that concept three seems to have the most versatility and features that seem to make sense. He asked for input from the Commission on the different elements and concepts. He stated that he received an email from a resident on this topic and read that letter for the Commission.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood read the following letter into the record: "I'm glad to see we are continuing to work on this even though it will be challenging from a funding standpoint. I think this is a critical area for Ramsey from a development standpoint because it creates another part of the community puzzle. Today we lack an amenity that brings families together and brings people to Ramsey. Instead we are forced to go to other cities to experience things that I have outlined below. I think Maple Grove's Central Park is a very good example of what we need to create with a bit of their community center sprinkled in. And, relative to specifics on the splash pad, my perspective is very much a family with young kids looking for things to do. My kids absolutely love these and the more natural they are the better. We have spent time in quite a few that are designed more like a natural river where they can move logs and play in sand. The traditional cement pads with fountains are still nice but the more natural design aspect creates something that other cities don't have. On Indoor Play - Glad to see this on the list. Again, what do families do in the winter in our city? An indoor play area like Maple Grove will bring not only revenue but truly create something that can be used year round. An indoor climbing area would be nice for kids but maybe a 2 story indoor climbing wall would draw in additional people?"

Commissioner Olson commented that the concepts are all wonderful and include many great options. He stated that he likes the all-ages idea as well as the accessible options and zero-entry water feature.

Commissioner Sis commented that he likes the natural areas and running water as opposed to a wading area. He stated that a smaller, moving stream with a play area around could help to prevent children running amuck. He stated that he was drawn to concepts 1A and 3.

Chair Barten echoed those comments, stating that he likes 1, 1A and 3 as those seem to provide more versatility. He stated that he also likes consideration for accessibility and natural seating and focus.

Commissioner Bennett commented that they have talked about the need to create a destination within the city, and this could be that. He stated that he liked elements of each concepts, including the elements of natural play. He believed that this would come down to the financials as well as the scope and scale of the water play area. He commented that the water play area within concept 2 would seem to be too small. He asked if the size would be too large in concept 3. He believed that the water play area within concepts 1 and 1A would be equitable to Maple Grove and noted that Ramsey may not see the same level of traffic that community sees.

Commissioner Arts referenced the balance of the Park Trust Fund and asked if the funding were to come from that source, would it be replenished in the future.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that the Park Trust Fund is composed of dollars paid in by developers to be used for park projects.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that it would be great to have natural features that could be used for seating while they watch their children.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that those natural areas exist in all of the concepts and noted that they would have seating that wraps around the area. He stated that the landscaping would also be used to provide shady for some of those seating areas. He stated that he hopes to have a discussion with the Council at a January work session to discuss some of the other park features and hopes to gain consensus on moving forward with some of those other elements, such as trails.

Chair Barten commented that he would tend to err on the larger scale. He stated that his kids tend to gravitate toward the more natural play elements.

Commissioner Arts asked if more research could be done on other communities, noting that he also tends to lean more towards the more natural options. He stated that perhaps input could be received from communities with more natural features to find what works well and what does not, in order to avoid those mistakes. He stated that it is also great to see things for people of all ages.

Commissioner Olson agreed with erring on the larger side as they want to do it right the first time and support the eventual growth of Ramsey.

Commissioner Arts asked if the estimated costs for the elements include the buildings or just the outdoor options.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that would include the outdoor features and everything included in the water features.

Chair Barten referenced the boardwalk concept and asked if that would be an elevated boardwalk.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided additional details, noting the system that would be used to create a clean water area within the stormwater pond near the developed spaces. He stated that they would not create a boardwalk but a wharf or dock where people not using the active use area could still enjoy the water. He stated that area could be used as a little marina area where people could put in paddleboards or use canoes for that type of recreation.

Commissioner Olson asked if the pond would be aerated.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that they could do that but did not believe it would be necessary as the depth would be in excess of 20 feet in much of the pond area. He commented that he is working to develop a fish management plan.

Chair Barten stated that he was excited to see this on the agenda and is excited to see plans moving forward.

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

6.01: Recreation Program Update

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the packet included many different recreational program offerings and provided a highlight.

Commissioner Olson provided additional details on the Duck, Duck, Wood Duck program that will be offered.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that there is a QR code on each of the programing flyers, which is an easy way for people to register for the class or activity.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.