

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on March 14, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present:      Chair Nathan Barten  
   Commissioner Shane Bennett  
   Commissioner Megan Ealain  
   Commissioner Dean Olson

Commission Members Absent:      Vice Chair Brandon Sis  
   Commissioner Todd Arts  
   Commissioner Jennifer Leistico

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

**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 Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Olson, to approve the Park and Recreation Commission meeting agenda as presented.

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

**4.      APPROVE MINUTES**

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

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes date February 8, 2024

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

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Recreation Programs Update**

Recreation Coordinator Proulx presented information on recreational programming that has taken place thus far this year, January through March. She also highlighted upcoming programming this year as well as new activities and programs that have been added. She stated that more information can be found on the City website, where registration is also available and easier to navigate.

The Commission thanked Recreation Coordinator Proulx for the update.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood thanked Commission Olson for his assistance on the duck, duck, wood duck offering. He stated that staff is also excited about the 55+ day-trip offerings, noting that the first offering filled quickly.

### **5.02: The Waterfront – Recommend Funding for Trails, Trees, and Furnishings, a 2024 CIP**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that they have been working on various planning efforts for many years for the urban waterfront in the downtown area, with the Commission recommending preparation of plans and specifications for the trails, trees, and furnishings at the January meeting. He stated that the Council approved that action in February and the project is currently out for bid. He stated that the purpose of this case is to recommend the funding for that project element. He identified the project area and provided more information on the tree and landscaping, trail, and furnishing elements. He reviewed the proposed project cost, with contingency, of \$428,000 or less. He highlighted elements of the project which could come in lower than the estimate through the bidding process.

Chair Barten commented that this aligns with previous discussions.

Commissioner Bennett noted that the bids are due April 3<sup>rd</sup> with the item appearing on the April 9<sup>th</sup> City Council agenda. He asked if there are any concerns that the bids could exceed the estimated amount and whether the Commission would then have to revisit this item before it would go to City Council.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that if the bids were to be deemed high, they would not need to move forward with City Council action on April 9<sup>th</sup>. He recognized the need to time the projects with the street work occurring in this area, providing input on the anticipated timing of the different projects. He stated that while the Council may approve this on April 9<sup>th</sup>, the start date is estimated for July 8<sup>th</sup>. He noted that once the contractor is approved for the street project, they will be able to better coordinate those efforts.

Councilmember Musgrove referenced the bike racks and asked for more information, specifically whether those would seem to be sufficient for families to use.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided more details on that proposed element. He noted that the City would be purchasing that equipment from the State contract and the contractor would simply be installing those by pouring concrete. He stated that the specific bike rack that they will use has not been selected.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Olson, to recommend to City Council a not to exceed amount of \$430,000 from the Park Trust Fund for the construction of trails, and related improvements, to The Waterfront.

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

### **5.03: Consider Irrigation for Municipal Plaza**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that this project was also included in the CIP for the past few years and the overall project scope for The Waterfront and this area for 2024. He provided details on the plans for Municipal Plaza and specifically the proposed irrigation plans. He asked for consensus from the Commission on whether it would make sense for staff to develop those irrigation plans for consideration.

Chair Barten asked if there would be a possibility for low water options for the turf grass.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that staff is cognizant of the importance of doing that when it makes sense. He stated that this is a dry, exposed site with high evaporation. He noted that topsoil was imported, and they would use smart technology for the irrigation system. He stated that they would also use low flow heads and fracture the spray to spread the water over a larger area. He noted that they also water overnight or at off-peak times to maximize conservation.

Commissioner Olson noted the activities of Happy Days that occur in that area and the benefit that would be provided by having nice grass in that area rather than dry, crispy ground. He stated that he supports the irrigation project.

Commissioner Ealain stated that she understands the desire to have this area be lush grass, but noted that other than Happy Days the area mainly appears to be used for dogs.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that also within the CIP this year is an off-leash area for dogs off Veterans Drive, which would move that activity to the identified area. He stated that signs could be placed deterring that dog activity while this work and seeding is occurring.

Commissioner Olson noted that with the improved surface, the use could lend itself to different activities.

Councilmember Musgrove asked for more information on the future plans for this area, as she recalled that some areas would be paved with firestones and benches.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that is the ultimate plan, to include those amenities to extend use in the shoulder seasons. He stated that those are still good ideas that they may move towards, but noted that the irrigation system can be reconfigured to accommodate those uses in the future. He stated that this action would make the area usable while they work on The Waterfront, with the future phases of Municipal Plaza to come in the future acknowledging that the majority of the area within the Plaza would remain open space.

Commissioner Bennett commented that it does not seem like it would be a significant investment to make this space usable and recognized that the plan would be deployed in a manner where reconfiguration could occur when future amenities are added.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed the consensus of the Commission that it is prudent to begin the process for developing plans for irrigating Municipal Plaza and to identify the associated costs.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that this would also complement the trees and irrigation along Sunwood.

Commissioner Bennett agreed, noting that the Plaza does seem like a weird, unfinished area across from City Hall.

Councilmember Musgrove noted that the improvement could also entice a business to come into that corner area.

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

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that at the April meeting they will identify the locations for the outdoor meeting schedule and appoint a Chair and Vice Chair for 2024. He referenced an area northwest of Central Park where there is a dilapidated boardwalk which is about 25 years old. He stated that hydrology in that area has changed, and the water sometimes overtops the boardwalk. He stated that staff would propose to refurbish that boardwalk and further elevate the boardwalk to solve the issue of water overtopping. He noted that item will go before the Public Works Committee at its next meeting. He explained that is a maintenance project and therefore the Public Works Committee would be the appropriate entity to make a recommendation on the project.

## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Riverblood', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Director

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