

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on April 11, 2024, 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 Megan Ealain
 Commissioner Jennifer Leistico

Commission Members Absent: Commissioner Dean Olson

Also Present: City Council Liaison Michael Olson
 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

 , , thanked the City for cleaning up an area near Elmcrest Park. She also commented that the parks and trails are nicely taken care of during all seasons. She asked if the soccer association could be asked to clean up after games and tournaments as the park is often left with trash that residents then pick up. She commented that there is an open lot at the corner of Elmcrest and perhaps that would be a great place for pickleball courts.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he coached with ARAA when his kids were younger and always made sure that the kids on his team cleaned up after themselves. He noted that typically an association has volunteer requirements within the organization and believed that the City could reach out to the soccer associations to ask them to create a volunteer sign up for clean up after games and tournaments. He recognized that pickleball is an increasingly popular sport and the potential need for more courts.

Ms. noted that Riversbend also has four tennis courts that could be repurposed noting that she typically drives to Anoka to play pickleball.

Commissioner Sis asked if there would be a value in placing more courts in one location for tournaments, or whether the preference would be to have a lesser number of courts in more locations.

Ms. [redacted] replied that she would prefer to have courts in more locations.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that staff meets with all youth sports organizations in March, and they do encourage everyone to pick up after themselves. He recognized that tournaments are chaotic with a large number of people coming and going from the park in a single day and some stuff is left behind. He stated that tonight the Commission will consider adding more pickleball in Ramsey. He noted that there will be a request to add pickleball in addition to rehabbing the tennis court at Riverdale Park. He stated that there is use of the tennis courts and there have been comments that people would like those courts to remain. He stated that there could be an opportunity to transition the tennis courts at Central Park to additional pickleball courts. He was not aware of any substantial problems with the pickleball courts at Central Park, noting that there are cracks that have been filled but that is more of an aesthetic issue.

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, Ealain, and Leistico. Voting No: None. Absent: Commissioner Olson.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Bennett noted that Commissioner Loss is no longer on the Commission and should be deleted from the minutes.

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes date March 14, 2024 as amended

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Nominate Chair and Vice Chairperson of the Park and Recreation Commission

Chair Barten opened the floor for nominations.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Leistico, to designate Nathan Barten as Chair and Brandon Sis as Vice Chair of the Park and Recreation Commission from April 2024 through March 31, 2025.

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

5.02: Recommend Park Dedication for Haviland Fields

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that this is a significant project proposed for the Lord of Life Church site which would have two large apartment buildings, one which would be all ages while the other would be designated for seniors. He stated that there would also be rental twinhomes around the perimeter of the site. He identified the existing park and trail amenities and noted that the land proposed to be dedicated for park use would be combined to increase the size of Solstice Park along with the creation of pickleball courts. He also reviewed the plans for trails and noted that the remainder would be received in cash. He noted that if the development is completed in phases, Park Dedication would be paid at the time of platting and would be based on the park dedication and trail fees at that time.

Commissioner Sis referenced a parking lot near the proposed park land and asked if that would be for use by park patrons.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that the private parking lot would be available for guests of the residential developments and would not be available for use by the general public.

Commissioner Bennett noted the comment that there would be a gate at one end and asked if a similar gate would be located at this end.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that there would not be. He stated that there could conceivably be people that drive into the PUD to park in that lot and walk to the pickleball courts. He stated that if there were to occur, the HOA could place signs stating that the parking is not available for public use. He stated that the HOA may not be bothered by an occasional park user parking in that lot. He noted that current parking for Solstice Park is on street.

Commissioner Leistico asked where users of the pickleball courts would park and access the courts, noting that it seems confusing and inconvenient. She stated that for courts that are being constructed in lieu of cash for park dedication, it does not seem to have great access and gives the impression that it is on private property.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood clarified the location of the trail corridor from Fluorine Street which goes to the park and new park amenities. He noted that Solstice Park is a neighborhood park, meant for those within walking distance, and is not a community or regional park meant for a lot of traffic from other neighborhoods.

Commissioner Leistico commented that it seems that people will flock to the pickleball courts.

Commissioner Bennett recognized that this is a pocket park and anyone that wants to use the park from outside the neighborhood will most likely park in the church parking lot.

Commissioner Sis commented that pickleball courts are popular and will increase the number of patrons going to the park, therefore additional signage on where people should access the park could be helpful.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the Commission could have another opportunity to address that scenario prior to the review by the City Council in May, although he was not sure what that scenario would be. He noted a reciprocity agreement with PACT Charter School for shared parking but noted that agreement also provided the school with use of the Central Park parking area. He stated that he could reach out to the developer to determine if there would be agreement in shared parking for park users.

Commissioner Bennett commented that the intent of the case is to determine whether the Commission supports the dedication of the land and fees, recognizing that access could be a challenge and perhaps direction to work with the developer could be added to the motion.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood agreed that direction could be provided to staff to have a conversation with the developer related to permitted parking within the private area of the PUD. He stated that citing pickleball courts can also be a challenge near residential properties because of the noise, which is why he mentioned a potential privacy fence. He noted that the courts are scaled to neighborhood use and the seniors in the proposed apartment building will most likely use the courts along with other neighbors in this area. He did not think two courts would attract throngs of people from outside this area.

Chair Barten asked if there would be more benefit in having Haviland Fields build their own pickleball courts for private use and the City instead use its funds to build courts in another area, such as Elmcrest.

Commissioner Bennett commented that the challenge would be that part of the process is to have resources that could be used by everyone as part of this development.

Commissioner Sis asked if it has been considered to leave the new park dedication area as grass and locate the pickleball courts in Solstice Park proper.

Commissioner Bennett commented that regardless of where the courts would be located within Solstice Park, the issue would be access.

Commissioner Sis noted that the changed location would encourage people to park on the public street parking. He asked if access could be arranged off Erkium.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that would not be likely as there are driveways on that cul-de-sac and therefore there is only a bit of space for parking. He stated that adding a parking lot would take up a lot of park space, disrupt the irrigation, have additional cost and provide a small amount of parking in return. He stated that on-street parking has not been an issue for Solstice Park to date. He also reviewed the present use of the open space area in question.

He stated that the developer had proposed their own pickleball courts in addition to these courts, but was unsure if both sets of courts would ultimately be constructed. He also explained the difference in the courts being constructed through this type of development project compared to a standalone pickleball court project completed solely by the City.

Commissioner Sis commented that he would like to see additional options.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that he can bring back additional information to the next meeting if that is desired.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Ealain, to table this item to the May 9, 2024 meeting with direction for staff to prepare additional exhibits for review.

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

5.03: Recommend a \$350,000 Budget and Playground Installation for The Hollow

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that this project for about two years and has approved a concept. He stated that an RFP was issued for the playground component and reviewed the previously discussed concept for the park and playground components. He stated that he updated the preliminary budget from \$350,000 to \$370,140. He stated that the development paid \$350,000 into the Park Trust Fund for this project. He commented that this will be a unique park for the community, noting that there are already a lot of new residents living in the development and there has been interest from the Bowers Drive residents as well. He stated that the playground components would be estimated to be complete by July.

Commissioner Sis asked if there would be space to add more street parking to support this use and whether the zipline would create a conflict for those attempting to enter the park.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that there will be a sidewalk connection for people to use and did not think there was a good opportunity to add more pull off parking. He noted that there will be parking allowed on many of the neighborhood streets.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he is excited about this project as it will be unique.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Arts, to recommend to City Council \$370,140 from the Park Trust Fund for the one-acre neighborhood park known as The Hollow, including \$176,905 for the playground specific components with installation.

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

5.04: Consider Park and Recreation 2024 Outdoor Meeting Schedule

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that each year the Commission chooses to hold a series of meetings outdoors, which provides an opportunity for the Commission

to review locations and new projects and also allows residents to meet the Commission and provide input in their local park. He presented the potential locations he would suggest for the season and welcomed input.

Chair Barten suggested holding the May meeting at Solstice, given the discussion tonight and then simply shift the other locations by one month.

Commissioner Sis agreed.

Commissioner Bennett agreed noting that the case was tabled to the May meeting so it would seem appropriate to meet in that park for that meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Sis, seconded by Commissioner Bennett, to approve the outdoor meeting locations as follows: May - Solstice, June – Riversbend Park, July – Alpine Park, August – The Draw, and September – The Hollow.

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

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided a brief overview of the upcoming recreation programming and events.

7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.