

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on October 10, 2024, at the Ramsey Municipal Center, 7550 Sunwood Drive NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present: Vice Chair Brandon Sis
 Commissioner Todd Arts
 Commissioner Shane Bennett
 Commissioner Megan Ealain
 Commissioner Dean Olson

Commission Members Absent: Chair Nathan Barten
 Commissioner Jennifer Leistico

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Acting Chair Sis called the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. CITIZEN INPUT

None.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

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

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

4. APPROVE MINUTES

4.01: Approve Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes date September 12, 2024

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

5. COMMISSION BUSINESS

5.01: Recommend 2025 Park Development Fees

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that each year the Commission reviewed the park development fees and provides a recommendation to the City Council. He provided background information on the purpose of Park Dedication fees from different types of development and how those funds are used. He stated that in 2021 and 2022 the Commission did a deep dive of the park dedication rates, comparing those to other communities as well as the nexus of capital improvements planned and future growth in the future. He stated that an increase was recommended in 2023, and no change was proposed for 2024. Staff does not recommend any increases or changes to the rates established for 2024.

Acting Chair Sis commented that he would be fine with the staff recommendation. He asked if developers have provided feedback on the fees and whether they are a hindrance.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that staff does sometimes receive that comment from smaller developers, or those looking to subdivide a single lot into two, as they are not as familiar with the typical City fees.

Acting Chair Sis stated that when the Commission did the deeper dive and compared to other communities, they discovered that it was difficult to compare to other communities as some communities are completely built out and no longer have a need to expand their park system.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that it is difficult to compare to other communities as some use revenue from municipal liquor stores to fund parks needs and others split fees in different ways. He explained that the Park Dedication for a community must be linked to the needs for the community's park system.

Acting Chair Sis asked if there has been consideration of trying to find a better source of funding for a potential community center at The Waterfront.

Councilmember Musgrove replied that a lot of funding would be needed for that element and currently there are higher priority needs for those funds. She stated that the Council does recognize the desire for the community to have that center and they will continue to look at options for creative funding.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood stated that the ultimate funding for a community building/center would likely have multiple funding sources. He also noted revenue that could be generated from the different elements of the community building/center. He advised of other demands on the Park Trust fund and Charitable Gambling fund within the parks system. He stated that the direction of the Council was to move forward with the trails and water play area and work towards the other elements in the future.

Commissioner Olson referenced the playground replacement schedule and asked if there should be an increase in the fees related to the rise in inflation and cost of materials.

Acting Chair Sis commented that he could consider that as well.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that while she does not like to see these fees increased, the amount of space available for development will continue to decrease. She asked if there is information on the available land for development. She stated that it would seem practical to build that increase in for development so that the burden does not shift to the residents.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that these are fees paid by developers for impacts to the community and do not impact the levy or property taxes paid by residents.

Commissioner Bennett agreed with the comments of Councilmember Musgrove. He stated that he does see benefit in avoiding raising fees, but also recognized that they will eventually run out of developable land. He stated that they have begun to see great development progress in Ramsey and was unsure if this would be the right time to increase fees as he wanted Ramsey to remain friendly to development. He did not feel comfortable arbitrarily throwing out a proposed increase to simply increase the funding source without understanding if there is a gap in funding they are trying to fulfill.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that the Commission would need to make a recommendation at this meeting in order for the Council to review the fee schedule with sufficient time. He agreed that capital costs have increased and did not believe that a two percent increase would be impactful to developers. He stated that the recommendation could be made that the increase only be applicable to residential development, which would allow the City to continue to remain more competitive in the commercial/industrial market.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he would assume that there are other developer fees in addition to parks and trails. He commented that he would want to be consistent with the other fees, as it is hard to make a decision in a vacuum.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that he is not familiar with any proposed fee increases for development through public works but was unsure about community development. He stated that the fee discussion by the City Council will occur on October 22nd.

Acting Chair Sis noted that assisted living facilities fall under commercial use and would have impact on the parks and trail system, as would employees of other businesses that use the parks and trails during their lunch breaks. He stated that he would be fine excluding industrial users from an increase but would want to see commercial/assisted living increased as well.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood added that it would be somewhat difficult to distinguish commercial from industrial, and those uses would have similar impacts on the parks and trail system.

Acting Chair Sis commented that it appears there is a difference between what commercial/assisted living and industrial properties are charged for Park Dedication.

Commissioner Bennett commented that there is not enough time to gather more details and provide a specific recommendation to the Council given the timeline for this discussion. He stated that he would not be comfortable providing a percentage of increase but would feel comfortable providing a recommendation to the Council to potentially increase the fees in line with the other development costs as they see fit.

Acting Chair Sis stated that he could support three to five percent as an increase to keep in line with inflation, as there was no increase made last year. He noted that this is a recommendation, and the Council would make the ultimate decision.

Commissioner Olson stated that he could support an increase between three and five percent to ensure there is sufficient funding for the proposed community amenities in the park system.

Acting Chair Sis asked Councilmember Musgrove for input on the appetite of the Council for a single digit increase.

Councilmember Musgrove commented that a single digit increase would be better. She stated that the Lower Rum River Water Management Organization (LRRWMO) is increasing its fees in response to not increasing fees for a period of time and if therefore playing catch up. She stated that it is harder on developers to have large increases and therefore incremental fees are easier. She stated that the fees need to be connected to the needs.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that within the capital improvement program, there are approximately \$30,000,000 of projects included and the community center has been included with an approximate cost of \$20,000,000, in addition to that overall cost. He noted that an index of \$50,000,000 can be linked to an increase in development fees. He stated that there is a demand, and projects proposed within the parks and trails plan that will always out-strip the available Park Dedication fees.

Acting Chair Sis asked if the Commission would be comfortable with four percent for an increase.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he would not feel comfortable with an arbitrary percentage. He stated that these are developer-paid costs, but those are passed on to consumers. He stated that he would feel more comfortable supporting an increase if there were some type of funding gap identified.

Acting Chair Sis clarified that this would be an increase of 4.5 percent to the Park Dedication fee and not the overall project cost.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he has difficulty supporting an arbitrary increase if it is not linked to a funding gap.

Councilmember Musgrove stated that there could be a range of increase proposed by the Commission and staff could provide the supporting need documentation when presenting to the City Council.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that he did not bring the in-depth discussion information to the Commission, but should the Commission support an increase, he could bring that supporting information forward to the City Council as there is still a funding gap between the park system needs and wants and the park dedication fees.

Commissioner Bennett commented that there has always been a funding gap and would be hesitant to increase the fees with no commitment to move forward with a community center. He stated that a community center will not be funded by a nominal increase in the fee structure.

Acting Chair Sis commented that inflation exists either way and project costs are not going to decrease, therefore he supports trying to stay current rather than falling behind. He recognized that raising these fees by 4.5 percent will not magically fill the funding gap or fund a community center but there are plenty of unfunded projects on the ten-year plan.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Ealain, to recommend that park and trail fees for 2025 as represented on the 2024 schedule with Commission support to raise fees no more than the rate of inflation, based on need, and consistent with other fee increases.

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

6. COMMISSION/STAFF INPUT

6.01: October Recreation Program Update

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood noted the written report that was provided.

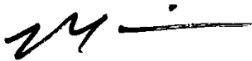
7. ADJOURNMENT

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

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

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

Respectfully submitted,



Mark Riverblood
Parks & Assistant Public Works Director

Drafted by Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.