

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

The Ramsey Park and Recreation Commission conducted a regular meeting on July 10, 2025, at The Waterfront, 7676 Ramsey Parkway NW, Ramsey, Minnesota.

Commission Members Present:      Chair Megan Ealain  
   Vice Chair Nathan Barten  
   Commissioner Garth Anderson  
   Commissioner Todd Arts  
   Commissioner Shane Bennett  
   Commissioner Dean Olson

Commission Members Absent:      Commissioner Brandon Sis

Also Present:                              City Council Liaison Shanna Stewart  
   Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Mark Riverblood

**1.      CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Ealain called the Park and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

**2.      CITIZEN INPUT**

None.

**3.      APPROVE AGENDA**

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

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

**4.      APPROVE MINUTES**

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

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

- Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes dated June 12, 2025

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

## **5. COMMISSION BUSINESS**

### **5.01: Resident Request to Remove Neighborhood Trail Connection**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood presented background information on the development of the subdivisions in the area of discussion, as well as the creation of trails in that area. He explained that originally, there was a road connection planned between the two subdivisions, but it was decided to use a trail connection instead. He stated that the current property owner purchased the property in 2021 and approached the City this year to request that the trail be removed from public use.

Jeff Lamert, 7494 159<sup>th</sup> Lane NW, stated that they moved into their home in August of 2021 and found it odd that the trail segment did not connect to another trail or sidewalk, and also did not provide connection to a park. He stated that the surrounding neighbors also find the trail to be odd, as do the residents on Traprock, and would prefer it to be removed. He stated that if they had known what they know now, they would not have chosen to purchase their property. He stated that they do support a good trail system within the community, but this trail does not provide a connection to anything other than a dead-end cul-de-sac. He noted that he could only find one other trail segment that is similar in nature. He commented that he has tracked usage of the trail over the past four weeks, and it averages use by four groups of people per day, often times people walk to the other side and then immediately return as they realize it goes nowhere. He stated that he has also seen go-karts and e-bikes using the trail and going onto his yard. He stated that he has spoken with both the fire and police, and they have said they do not need the trail for public safety purposes. He stated that in lieu of this trail, they could extend the trail on Variolite to connect the two trail systems. He stated that the two neighborhoods are already connected by the bike path and asked the Commission to consider removing the trail which runs between his and his neighbor's properties.

Rocky and Jessica Belmonte, 7514 159<sup>th</sup> Lane NW, commented that they are present for the same reason. He stated that their sprinklers have been found to be located on their neighbor's property. He stated that if the trail were put in as a compromise to a road that residents did not want, that would seem to be a silly reason for a trail. He commented that the trail is wide enough for cars, and there have been vehicles that have driven across at times before the signs were installed.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood explained that the trail was not created as a compromise, but more to provide a connection between the neighborhoods. He stated that while the bike path is only one-fifth of a mile from this trail for this neighborhood, if the trail did not exist, it would be about six times that length for residents of Traprock to get to the boardwalk. He stated that the trail was in place prior to any of the homes being built; therefore, everyone purchased their homes knowing the location of the trails.

Mr. Belmonte stated that the sprinkler system existed prior to his purchase of the home and asked if a permit is pulled for the installation of a sprinkler system.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood replied that a permit is supposed to be pulled for an irrigation system to ensure there is not a cross connection. He stated that there really is no harm in having the sprinklers next to the trail, whether it is in the trail/easement, but that is done at the risk of the homeowner. He commented that the trail easement is 20 feet, as shown in the information for this case. He noted that many of the lots in this neighborhood are very small. He commented that a community garden is being considered for Traprock Commons, and the trail would make that space more accessible for residents of this neighborhood.

Mr. Lamert noted that residents would still have access between neighborhoods from the trail on Variolite.

Commissioner Barten referenced the statement that a trail of this nature serves no purpose and stated that he does not agree with that statement. He stated that short trails like this, especially in communities that lack a robust trail system, can serve an important purpose to allow for a greater perception of safety. He stated that Variolite receives more traffic each year. He commented that he has used this trail many times because it provides a calmer alternative to Variolite. He believed that trails of this nature serve an important purpose in providing a safe connection between neighborhoods.

Mr. Belmonte stated that while he appreciates that there is a connection to Traprock, which is a quiet neighborhood, it is not as nice for the people who live there. He believed the better alternative would be to extend the Variolite trail. He asked how he would research something like this, noting that he never would have purchased the home if he knew there would be a road there.

Parks and Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood clarified that the road was originally proposed, but the trail was constructed in its place—and a street connection is not being proposed.

Mr. Belmonte commented that there is already a very long trail on Variolite, and it would make more sense to extend that trail rather than redirect traffic between two homes. He acknowledged that he would have nothing to gain if the trail comes out, as he would lose part of his lot due to where the property line is.

Commissioner Bennett appreciated the input of the residents. He recognized that this is a tough scenario caused by a community that has been built. He stated that he understands the point of view from City staff as well, that it would not make sense to remove it at this time. He stated that as the quality of the trail deteriorates, perhaps it could be reevaluated at that point.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood estimated that the cost for the trail to extend to Alpine would be about \$500,000 or more, and other areas in the community have a greater need for new trail connections. He commented that the trails along Variolite were paid for by the developer as part of the development.

Commissioner Arts asked if there are any known developments anticipated in that area along Variolite.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that there is no vacant land at present, as the current properties were developed in the 1980s.

Commissioner Olson stated that if the lots were to be subdivided, it would require sewer, water, and sidewalks to be installed.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood provided details on scenarios that could bring forward the re-subdivision of lots.

Commissioner Arts asked if there is a compromise for the homeowners.

Mr. Belmonte commented that he believes that Mr. Lamert would like to have a fence as close as possible to the trail.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood commented that he would have no problem providing a letter stating that a fence could be placed 12 to 18 inches from the trail. He noted that there is no harm with the irrigation system location either.

Commissioner Bennett asked what the process would look like from this point.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reviewed the options the Commission could take.

Commissioner Arts commented that he would prefer to table the discussion to allow the other members of the Commission to visit the site.

Commissioner Bennett agreed that he would like to see this in person and find out more information about alternate connections.

Commissioner Arts asked the cost to receive a better estimate for the trail connection to Alpine.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood estimated that would have a cost of several hundred dollars. He recommended that the Commission not jump to that step, as the referenced new trail connection would have to be funded through the Park Trust Fund, and there would be higher-ranking projects.

Commissioner Bennett commented that there are other similar trails in the community, and he would not want to create a situation of precedence, but would like to visit the site and learn more information.

Motion by Commissioner Bennett, seconded by Commissioner Arts, to table this item to the August meeting to provide the opportunity for Commissioners to visit the site and have additional discussion.

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

## **5.02: Water Play Development at The Waterfront – Progress Report**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood reported that in June, the Commission and City Council approved moving forward with the waterplay feature at The Waterfront. He reviewed details on the schematic design and project schedule and provided additional information on restrooms, seating and architectural details, and other items that will be discussed as this moves forward, including furniture, stone, lighting, pavilion design, public art, and theme.

Commissioner Bennett stated that this will feel more natural rather than a cheap playground. He stated that this would become a high-end destination that is clean and natural feeling while also being modern. He noted that the success of the waterplay area will help to bring the community building forward. He commented that it is great to think that this feature will be open next year at this time.

Chair Ealain commented that they recently visited a waterplay feature in another community, and their child liked the more natural features that are also proposed in this design. She noted that this design would not only appeal to children but to people of all ages.

Commissioner Bennett acknowledged that Chair Ealain has traveled to many communities to visit features of this type, showing that this is a draw to people from other communities as well. He believed that this design fits well with the character of Ramsey.

Commissioner Olson commented that he agrees that this design fits with the design of Ramsey and will stand the test of time.

Commissioner Bennett spoke about his time on the Commission and commented that it feels this area is starting to take the shape that they had always envisioned, to have this space be the center of Ramsey.

Consensus of the Commission was in support of the current concept and direction of the project.

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

### **6.01: Two Rivers Art Fair Information and Invitation**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood presented details on the upcoming art fair event.

### **6.02: Recreation Program Update - July**

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood highlighted upcoming events, activities, and programming opportunities.

### **6.03 Other**

Commissioner Barten referenced the earlier sidewalk case and commented that he found it odd that the trail is located on easement and not City property. He asked if that is typical throughout the community.

Parks & Assistant Public Works Director Riverblood confirmed that it is common for trails to be located on easement rather than City-owned land.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he views trails and sidewalks similarly. He stated that while he understands that this is a unique design, there are other unique situations in the community.

Commissioner Barten spoke about the importance of connecting places in a safe environment. He commented that not everyone feels safe riding adjacent to a busy roadway. He noted that without the trail connection, it would be six times longer for Traprock residents to reach the boardwalk.

Commissioner Olson commented that the residents were aware of what they were buying when they purchased their homes.

Commissioner Bennett commented that he would not be opposed to reevaluating the need for the trail at a time when it is in disrepair.

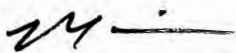
## **7. ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

The Park and Recreation Commission meeting adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



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Mark Riverblood  
Parks & Assistant Public Works Director

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