

# RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

## COMMISSION MINUTES

December 13, 2017 at 6:00 pm

Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Administration Building

2015 Van Dyke Street, Maplewood, MN 55109

The meeting was called to order at 6:09 pm by Gale Pederson, President of the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Commission.

Attending: Cedrick Baker, Metric Giles, Gale Pederson, Candy Peterson, Louise Krohn, Leah Shepard, Bryan Shirley, Kong Vang

Absent: Brian Tempas

Staff: Sara Ackmann, Kris Lencowski, Marcie Oltman, Jon Oyanagi, Alisha Seifert, Amber Soler

Guests: Deborah Carter-McCoy, Kristi Saksvig, Pa Na Lor

### **Approval of the Agenda:**

Candy moved for approval of the agenda and it was seconded by Bryan.  
*Motion carried.*

### **Approval of the Minutes:**

Kong moved for approval of the minutes and it was seconded by Louise.  
*Motion carried.*

### **Communications Overview:**

#### **Alisha Seifert, Kristi Saksvig, Pa Na Lor, Deborah Carter-McCoy**

Communications has recently evolved to make way for more natural partnerships, such as between the library and parks. This involves not only staff collaborating on department specific projects but also collaborative programs such as the summer reading program for the library and the rewards being free passes to Battle Creek Waterworks. Having more collaboration has allowed the Communications department to better identify gaps and overlaps in their projects. Candy shared that she felt this was beneficial to Ramsey County's taxpayers as the department is better leveraging their assets as a group versus individually.

Parks & Recreation has a very active and strong social media presence. In 2017, the performance measure goals were met with over 3,300 followers on Twitter, over 4,000 followers on Tamarack Nature Center's Facebook and 3,000 followers on the county's Facebook page.

Leah inquired about the languages which the materials are being offered in to the public. Deborah shared that it can be handled on a case by case basis, but overall most are offered in: Spanish, Somali, Hmong and English. Metric mentioned that offering materials would or should ideally be a line-item in

the budget because while it is costly, it is also racially equitable. Deborah agreed with Metric but also noted that there are over 140 languages spoken in Ramsey County so it would be very difficult to accommodate materials that cover everyone. Kong noted that audio and visual aids/materials would be a good avenue to look further into as youth are so often on their phones or tablets. Audio and visual materials can be very accessible. Deborah agreed but also shared that with social media algorithms changing, this can be challenging. For example, Facebook gives preferential treatment to videos over 90 seconds. These are all factors that the Communications keeps in mind when developing new materials.

### **Golf Update:**

#### **Sara Ackmann**

The golf courses had a good season despite 96 days of rain. The driving range opened on Feb. 17 this year and the courses took in over \$2.5 million in revenue while doing the most rounds since 2007.

- Ponds at Battle Creek: This summer more landscaping and signage was completed. There was a turf study done with the U of M as well. It is a top youth golf destination and has a very robust 1<sup>st</sup> Tee Program.
- Goodrich: This summer was the best season since 2004. There was over 30,000 rounds of golf this season. Kong inquired what might have led to this influx. Sara shared that there has been a lot of exposure to new clients with a new program that Goodrich is participating in this year. The Christmas tree on display at Union Depot also came from Goodrich this year.
- Keller: This summer Keller renewed their Audubon certification. The course also won a statewide ecological award for their restoration efforts. It was the first year of harvesting honey from beehives at the course and over 280 pounds was collected. It will be for sale from the front desk at the administration building.
- Manitou: This summer Manitou adopted a new operations contract with revenue shares changing drastically. They also procured new carts and a new wash station.

In 2018, there will be a golf course consultant hired to survey all aspects of golf course operations.

### **Beaches and Battle Creek Waterworks Update:**

#### **Kris Lencowski**

Battle Creek Waterworks had a great year. They met their goal for revenue and training and safety were paramount. There were no emergency calls for Waterworks or any of the beaches.

Kris noted that he aspired to be more racial equity-focused in hiring practices with lifeguards. He hopes to increase the amount of lifeguards who are people of color. He is hoping to put together a scholarship program to help aid young people with the cost of initial lifeguard training.

### **Tamarack Nature Center Update:**

#### **Marcie Oltman**

Tamarack Nature Center had another great year and continues to grow and utilize all aspects of their new space to its fullest capability. Day camp registration was fuller than ever before and additional camps will be added on in 2018. It was a tough year for snowshoeing and skiing due to the lack of snow but folks still were out using the trails in all seasons.

Gale applauded Tamarack for being a great space for all ages to go and enjoy nature. Leah mentioned that their programming and efforts are impressive and phenomenal. Bryan said that he often refers to Tamarack as the “crown jewel” of Ramsey County’s Parks & Recreation systems.

**January Agenda:**

The commission discussed finalizing the 2018 Work Plan in January.

**Director's Report:**

**Jon Oyanagi**

Pop-up meetings regarding updating the system plan have started and will continue through January. The system plan survey closes in January. Leah wanted to know more information about the meetings and if there were any inner city opportunities. Jon brought up that Highland Arena and the Battle Creek Recreation Center meetings are both inner city opportunities. Metric asked if there was an effort to target the senior population and Jon replied that the meeting at the Maplewood Community Center would be exclusive to seniors as it is only open to seniors at that time.

Cedrick complimented the department in their intentional efforts to become more inclusive. He noted that the department has come a long way in the past year.

**Report from Chair & Other Commission Members:**

No report to give at this time.

**Adjournment:**

Metric made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:31 pm and it was seconded by Cedrick.

*Motion carried.*

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Soler