

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES: DECEMBER 12TH, 2018 – 6:00 PM

Annual Holiday Potluck

LOCATION: Parks and Recreation Department

2015 N. Van Dyke Street ~ Maplewood, MN

Attending: Leah Shepard, Metric Giles, Gale Pederson, Candy Petersen, Bryan Shirley, Kong Vang, Mark McCabe and Angie Marlette

Not in Attendance: Melissa Wenzel and Brian Tempas

The meeting was called to order at 6:14pm by Leah Shepard

Approval of the Agenda:

Leah asked for approval of the December 12, 2018 agenda there we no dissenters.

Agenda Approved

Approval of the Minutes:

Leah asked for a motion to accept the November 15, 2018 Minutes. Candy made the motion and Metric seconded. All Approved.

Motion carried.

Debriefing of Joint Commission Meeting

Candy felt it was purposeful and gained insight into the City of White Bear Lake's parks program, however the meeting was long and she was unable to make a report to cover Ramsey County Commission business. Leah felt that while the meeting was useful, but all commission members need not be present. Leah suggests that this type of meeting would be made voluntary and a regular commission meeting would still occur. The staff members gained good partnerships and ideas from the joint meeting. The agenda was not closely followed; however, all the items were discussed. In the past, there was discussion of commission members each going to their respective community parks meeting's and reporting back. Gale commented that the local systems are very different in their composition and that can be an issue on gaining information and collaboration. Metric agreed that it was difficult for commission members to engage in this meeting and it would be better for staff to attend and then report back to the commission. Kong commented that the past few joint meetings have had the same result.

As the 2019 Work Plan is created the commission will discuss what outreach can look like in this next year.

Establish 2019 Work Plan

ADA Transition Plan and the Racial Equity Plan are ongoing items that will need to be kept on the 2019 Work Plan. Metric asked for more intentionality surrounding the use and review of the Racial Equity Plan. This would include establishing a benchmark with data early in the year, check-in at midyear, a workshop

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during the year, outreach, and a year-end wrap up. Furthermore, the commission can make recommendations that would create a more welcoming park by reflecting the diversity of those using the parks. One idea is to have the race of the officers that are patrolling the parks reflective of that population. Topics can include hiring and use of minority businesses. Leah would like to revisit and see the progress on the draft of the Parks & Recreation Racial Equity Leadership Team Work Plan that was shared in the October meeting. Bryan stressed that, being a Parks Commission, equity in regards to access needs to be addressed. Anytime an improvement on a facility is planned the commission can try to take steps to increase use and access.

Discussion continued regarding how to get more engagement of minority populations. Kong suggested the use of a non-profit agency, Nexus Community Partners, whose goal is to promote equity based community engagement. Obtaining a student advisor was also suggested to gain more diversity in the commission. While this has been done in the past with little success, it may be good to try again using placement resources to find someone specifically interested in the Parks.

Mark asked if there are items currently on the work plan that need to be removed. Key projects will get updated, but many items are annual items. Leah suggested the addition of work items for individual members to advocate feedback from the community on the items Parks is working on. The joint meeting would be optional or switched with a workshop. Metric would like to meet with Parks programs that have similar demographics.

2018 Bylaws Review

The By-laws have been reviewed each year and a question from the past is how many meetings the commission members should be attending. The language was reviewed regarding attendance and found acceptable. Metric began a discussion on how to receive feedback from the Commissioners. Some members have sought meetings with their respective Commissioners and asked questions regarding how to move forward with the Ramsey County initiatives. The Commission is interested in giving feedback to the County Board and would like to have that reciprocated. Mark would be happy to add to the one on ones with the Commissioners that he has been scheduling a discussion on the feedback from the Commission and how that can happen. Discussions of ensuring Racial Equity is used as the lens to evaluate all work done by the commission and assist staff in maintaining that focus. Metric requested to know the County's current racial equity goals. The Commission agreed that language surrounding racial equity needs to be built into the purpose. Authority to revise and update the by-laws are expressed in Article IX. Mark will share the by-laws with the county's racial equity team for suggested language to use. A vote for final approval will happen at the January, 2019 meeting.

Energy Action Plan Update: Mark McCabe

Mark reviewed the report from Ryan Ries regarding the progress of the Green Spaces Green Places program (Energy Action Plan), a commitment on Ramsey County's part to be more energy efficient. In the past two years, Parks has saved 911,000 kilowatt hours of energy. Translates to \$80,000.00 of utility bills savings. Solar arrays have been implemented at 3 facilities; Ponds of Battle Creek, Parks Admin building, and the new Owasso structures. Owasso County Park will be the County's first net zero energy site. Educational energy weeks have been held at multiple facilities for both the public and staff. In 2019, the first green ice initiative will begin at Aldrich Area as well as the final phase of the Tamarack Nature center redesign with the goal of another net zero site. Metric asked if a water audit has been done and said it could have a large impact in cost savings that most people do not consider.

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Directors Report: Mark McCabe

Mark recapped the history of the collapse of the Vadnais Sports dome in April of 2018. The Board of Commissioners have been in discussion on what the best course of action for the dome is considering that it has collapsed before. The community has voiced concerns to the Commissioners on their need for the site. Transportation is also another need since this site is situated along the new Rush Line Corridor. There will another discussion in January 2019 with input from community members.

The golf system study is near completion, Mark gave a synopsis regarding the report with more to report upon its completion. The County Board has been given the executive summary for review and another discussion will ensure for any future changes.

The Parks System Plan has gone through a Board Workshop with a public hearing schedule on December 18, 2018. The goal is that the plan will be adopted mid-January, 2019. Public feedback has been overall positive.

The Director of Operations position has been posted and is now taking applicants.

Mark announced both Gale Pederson's and Jon Oyanagi's awards from the Minnesota Recreation and Parks Association. He detailed the qualities needed to receive the awards and congratulated them. This will be awarded January 11, 2019 with more details to follow.

Report from Chair and Other Commission Members:

Candy updated the commission about the great success at The First Tee Tournament which happened in October at North Oaks Country Club. The First Tee Ramsey County brings lessons to youth golfers. Candy is on the board of this youth program.

This will be Kong's last meeting and Mark updated that the Board is very close to making decisions on his replacement. Kong offered his assistance in the future with any needs. The Commission thanked Kong for all his work.

Adjournment

Gale moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:00pm

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