

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

February 10, 2016, 6:00 p.m.

PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The meeting of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Gale Pederson at 6:00 p.m. at the Administration Building in Maplewood, Minn.

Attendance: Gale Pederson, Candy Petersen, Kong Vang, Rich Straumann, Cedric Baker, Brian Shirley, Metric Giles

Absent: Deb Falkowski, Brian Tempas

Staff: Jon Oyanagi, Alisha Seifert, Scott Yonke

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the agenda was so moved with no changes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Kong Vang moved for approval of the January 13, 2016 minutes with changes, seconded by Candy Peterson.

Motion carried.

ATF Update

Jon Oyanagi

Staff presented the Executive Summary from the Arena Task Force Draft Report, to be presented to the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners on February 16, 2016 to the parks commission. An overview of the task force recommendations and findings were discussed. Key points from the report included prioritizing use of the arenas by county-based groups; freezing rates for county groups; updating the arenas to meet with EPA standards for refrigerant and the eventual removal of R-22 as a coolant; phasing the replacement schedule of the cooling systems to spread costs over several years; updates to the exterior of the buildings: funding for improvements; criteria for closing or repurposing an area; criteria for building additional sheets of ice. Workforce impact was also addressed as a concern of the task force. Kong Vang asked about the status of other arenas in Ramsey County. Additional discussion ensued regarding where arenas could be added at arenas that are heavily used, specifically Charles M. Schulz-Highland Arena. Ramsey County operates more arenas than any other county in the country. Metric Giles asked about the cost of keeping a facility but not operating it, in addition to the costs of repurposing. Several of the arenas close during the off-season, although Aldrich is used in the off-season for dry floor event. Metric Giles also requested information on what activities and events take place at the arenas. Discussion ensued on what arenas could be used for the off season for large events. Large groups generally prefer to be outdoors during the summer, making arena rental in the summer challenging.

ADA Transition Plan

Scott Yonke

In 2010 the ADA standards were updated in a number of ways. Ramsey County parks and facilities were reviewed for compliance and transition and a number of updates were noted. Parks & Recreation staff are reviewing the plan data and determining how to move forward. Phase one of the ADA transition involves physical accessibility only, while phase two will address programing accessibility. Goals for phase one include completing an accessibility self-evaluation; establishing an assessment methodology consistent with the ADA Self-Evaluation and completing data collection for all facilities; develop and complete a draft plan that reflects project goals including assistance from focus groups, public hearings and a public comment period. The project timeline includes developing an anticipated plan approach for

implementation in spring 2016 and presenting that plan to the county board in April 2016. The recommendation report lists approximately 5100 deficits in 41 parks and facilities. Key issues focused on providing an accessible route, reducing level changes greater than .25 inches, develop other power mobility devices, accessibility within the department for employees, Discussion took place regarding the expertise of the advisory board. Standards for handicapped parking in Minnesota have been changed within the past few years and are now more stringent than ADA standards. Most Ramsey County Parks & Recreation handicapped parking spaces will need to be changed to meet these new standards. Additional recommendations focused on door opening force requirements, building signage, bathroom layout and accessibility and directional signs. Locations that require additional accessibility include water access, playgrounds, dog parks, picnic areas, trails, ice arenas and golf courses. Entire implementation plan is suggested over a ten-year time period. The first phase is projected to cost \$1,149,007 and would take four years to complete. Phase two is projected at \$935,441 over three years. Phase three is projected at \$717,890 over three years. Cedric Baker requested to be a more active participant in the transition planning. Kong Vang commented on the importance of trail accessibility for all residents and those in areas of lower economic standing.

Pollinator Resolution

Jon Oyanagi

The board did approve the resolution at the February 9, 2016 and an update was given. Metric indicated his support for this.

Maplewood Fitness Plan

Jon Oyanagi

Parks & Recreation staff suggested not moving forward with the support of the pod creation. At this time, there is no funding available for this sort of initiative and staff was concerned about prioritizing it over other projects. Staff was also concerned about additional requests coming from other groups and cities as well.

State of the Parks

Scheduled for March 22nd at the County Board room at the Courthouse.

A Power Point will summarize highlights from the past year and address what's coming in the current year. Rich Straumann suggested including an updated slide(s) on the Active Living Bike and Ped Plan.

2016 Work Plan

Metric Giles does not support another racial equity discussion in July. He made recommendations that the group should come together in a different way than has previously occurred during these discussions. He suggests attending a white privilege workshop and with the entire group and learning how to address the issues that impact the community as a whole, in regards to racial equity.

Brian Shirley suggested moving the racial equity discussion into April.

Rich Straumann suggested a June update on all projects. He also indicated that the Bike Ped plan would be kicking off on Feb. 29.

Gale Pederson suggested combining some of the sessions to address equity in terms of both race and disability and accessibility. Gale also suggested combining viewing a well-rounded look of the parks by choosing an arena, a golf course, a park, a beach, etc., rather than focusing on one area.

Cedric Baker suggested reaching out to groups in the community to have a conversation on best practices and how to connect with the community in areas of poverty. How do they engage with the parks system? He also suggested focusing on areas of poverty and community engagement in September.

Kong Vang suggested holding the commissioner’s meeting at a different venue in the coming months. Jon Oyanagi suggested using the Highland Community Room in March or April.

Director’s Update

Tamarack Nature Center site improvement community open house was held January 26, 2016. Four residents attended. Gale Pederson commented on the level of engagement at the city level versus the county level.

Long Lake joint project with New Brighton – parks staff will meet with New Brighton staff tomorrow (Feb. 11, 2016). Funding may be an issue because Parks funds may not be available until July.

Report from Chair

Chair reports the State of the Parks will be delivered to the county board on March 22nd.

Rich Straumann reports that the bike and pedestrian plan will launch Feb. 29.

Brian Shirley proposes launching banks of equipment at the arenas in order to engage the community. Financially this could help engage communities of color by providing equipment to get kids skating. Cedric Baker supported the idea and also suggested targeting community engagement.

ADJOURNMENT

Rich Straumann motioned to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.; seconded by Candy Petersen.

Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Alisha Seifert