

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 9, 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 6:02 p.m. at the Administration Building in Maplewood, Minn.

Attendance: Gale Pederson, Deb Falkowski, Rich Straumann, Cedric Baker, Brian Shirley

Absent: Metric Giles, Candy Petersen, Bryan Tempas, Kong Vang

Staff: Jon Oyanagi, Sara Ackmann, Shar Whebbe, Scott Yonke,

Guests: Larry Wacker (Loucks Associates)

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Approval of the agenda was so moved with no changes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rich Straumann moved for approval of the February 10, 2016 minutes with no changes, seconded by Cedrick Baker.

Motion carried.

BRUCE VENTO TRAIL ALIGNMENT

Scott Yonke, Larry Wacker

Project is funded with Legacy dollars and is an assessment of the alignment prior to construction for extension of the trail to Highway 96. Additional funding will be necessary with federal funding a possibility. Community engagement phase is upcoming, and staff is looking to the Commission for feedback prior to those meetings. Staff will be polling the community on things such as aesthetic concerns and possible access points. Cedric Baker suggested the community engagement phase happen sooner rather than later to allow for greater input, with intentionality toward drawing a diverse group together. Additionally, there are some areas along the trail made without permission from the community. It was suggested staff reach out to these users as potential supporters of the project.

Alignment would widen the trail and provide a two-foot buffer zone. A portion of the trail runs through the Burlington Northern corridor, and a meeting is scheduled with them for 03/18/16 to address this issue. Once the trail leaves the corridor, there are some wetland and gradient considerations. There is a partnership possibility with the City of White Bear Lake as they are making some park upgrades that may allow for shared resources. Discussions will be necessary with adjacent property owners as well, although the actual amount of private property this affects is minimal. This is a potential Rush Line route for the light rail and the public has already expressed support for the trail. Possible access to the trail may be in partnering with businesses in the area for parking and trail access. There are existing amenities as well as potential for additional amenities along the trail by Goose Lake. Trail will terminate at Highway 96 and connect with the Lake Links Trail. The grant for this project expires at the end of June 2016 so community engagement will occur in April or May.

Brian Shirley moved for progressing to the community engagement phase of this project, seconded by Rich Straumann.

Motion carried.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Jon Oyanagi

Session started 3/8/16.

Contact your legislator to express support for Ramsey County receiving a portion of the \$11 million dollar State Bond Funding to support capital improvements at Keller and Long Lake regional parks. Other funding items may include Mighty Ducks funding to support the R-22 issue and Snow Angels funding for ski areas including Battle Creek. Ramsey County is also asking for \$2 million in State Bonds for the Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area project. There is also a bill to fund Emerald Ash Borer prevention, removal and education.

2015 GOLF REPORT

Sara Ackmann

Power point highlighted 2015 overview. Golf related revenue was right at \$2.7 million, with Manitou having the most rounds played. Rounds were up last year due to the weather, and up over the 5 year average. Keller continued to make improvements including restoring a walking path and addressing drainage issues. Goodrich contracted with a new golf professional, the clubhouse saw numerous upgrades and the course was reconfigured. The Ponds at Battle Creek welcomed a new Superintendent and made improvements to the practice area bunker. The nice spring weather has allowed for courses to open this year earlier than anticipated. As 2016 progresses, Keller will continue to work with neighbors to eliminate golf balls in yards, Manitou is exploring operational strategies, the Golf Dome lease will be renegotiated, and Keller will be adding 100-yard markers. Staff continues to work on growing the game with initiatives such as First Tee Twin Cities and may be partnering with John Glenn middle school.

Informational only; no motion.

STATE OF THE PARKS

Scheduled for March 22nd at the County Board room at the Courthouse. Gale Pederson will present.

PowerPoint was reviewed. Other than adding photos, there were minimal changes. (Add Raintree Salk name, add Energy Task force, Long Lake Regional Park)

Informational only; no motion.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- a. **Vadnais Sports Center** – We sold a lot to People's Bank, we have another sale pending for Lot 6, and we have a potential buyer for the smallest lot (Lot 1). This allows us to cover more than originally anticipated which is slated for the general fund.
- b. **Office Remodel** – The process has been started with Wold Architects to allow for greater space efficiency and potential growth. Staff has reviewed the initial designs.
- c. **Campus Planning** – Conversations have been started with the Extension Center, the County Care Center and the Family Center for campus redesign to allow for greater access.
- d. **Poplar Lake County Park** – Along the north boundary of North Oaks; citizens of North Oaks have expressed a need for athletic fields. Initial conversations are just beginning, and Jon will be asking for a formal plan.
- e. **Tuj Lub Court Update** – Bids came back \$100K higher than budgeted; staff is looking at plan revisions to work within the budget and project will be rebid. Grand opening is still scheduled for July 2016.
- f. **Rice Creek North Trail Extension and Rice Creek Commons** – Construction is underway; trees have been removed and fill is being brought in.
- g. **Tamarack Site Plan** – Entrance road is being revised to line up with residential road and parking lot is being revamped; plans are at White Bear Township for review.

REPORT FROM CHAIR

Rich Straumann reports the Pedestrian and Bike Master plan kicked off 2/29/16 and seminars are scheduled for

ADJOURNMENT

Deb Falkowski motioned to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.; seconded by Cedrick Baker.

Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Shar Whebbe