

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

March 15, 2017, 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, MN.

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

Absent: Metric Giles, Candy Petersen

Staff: Jon Oyanagi, Sara Ackmann, Amber Soler

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Cedrick Baker moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Rich Straumann.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Gale Pederson moved for approval of the February 8, 2017 minutes with changes, seconded by Deb Falkowski. *Motion carried.*

2017 PROJECTS

LAKE OWASSO PARK: Shoreview City Council met this past Monday for a workshop and discussion of the project. They are supporting the project.

SUCKER LAKE CHANNEL: A joint project with parks and recreation, the watershed, the conservation district and regional water services. Involves a redevelopment of the channel that flows south from Highway 96 into Sucker Lake.

RICE CREEK TRAIL: A new trail will be constructed from legacy funding by June of this year.

In 2016, Ramsey County Parks and Recreation also acquired the title for a property very near Tamarack Nature Center.

BATTLE CREEK MOUNTAIN BIKE PATHS: Public engagement meetings are currently occurring as well as online surveys. Kong Vang inquired if there was a high enough amount of interest or users and Jon Oyanagi assured the group there is.

KELLER LAKE REGIONAL PARK: Restoration to take place along the channel that flows from Keller Lake to Round Lake.

CAPITAL ASSET PROJECTS: Aldrich currently uses a steam system but is set to switch to a hot water system. The elevator at the Parks and Recreation Administration Building (at 2015 N. Van Dyke Street) also needs improvements or replacement in order to bring it up to code.

ARENA TASK FORCE UPDATE

Sara Ackmann

The arena tour with the county commissioners was a success with a lot of positive feedback as well as being very informative. Arenas are focusing on the Green Ice Initiative which will help provide more energy efficient products, such as for heating or LED lighting options. There is an ongoing discussion in regards to White Bear Sports Center owned by

the City of White Bear Lake and if renovating or closing down the arena would be in the best interest of the city. This will impact the County either way.

2018-2019 BUDGET PLANNING

Jon discussed the upcoming budget and likely changes to it. It is important to the department to correct revenue projections each budget cycle as historically it has been overestimated. The target for the preliminary budget is a reduction of 2.5% each year (from the 2017 budget).

Jon discussed that the division directors met and tried to determine what was most important for the department to provide. Providing a natural resource based system along with the amenities that allow for added enjoyment ranked highest. Programs and environmental education ranked second highest. He shared that the group identified that traditionally golf courses and arenas are not recreational facilities provided by counties but Ramsey County has been in the business for some time and they are some of the biggest sources of revenue. Kong Vang questioned how competitive were the rates at the arenas to which Jon replied that they were in the middle or high end of rates compared to other facilities in the surrounding areas. Cedric stated to think about more than what we can cut, what allows for growth, and emphasizing the County goal to reach out to underserved park users and how that requires resources. Kong also brought up the idea of charging food vendors. Bryan Shirley shared the idea of citable offenses as another source of revenue as well as raising the price of weddings or special occasions at locations such as the golf courses (i.e. Keller). Deb Falkowski encouraged the department to look into charging for the annual deer hunt. Brian Tempas expressed the idea to write a letter or statement to the commissioners in order to garner their support for adequate funding.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Jon Oyanagi

Parks and Recreation presented the capital requests for 2018-2019 in March and April.

The DNR has initiated discussions by stakeholders along the stretch of the Mississippi River that runs downstream from the downtown St. Paul area. An initial meeting was called to determine each agency's interest in supporting a large project.

There's discussions occurring regarding using the the land north of Rice Creek Commons for events such as skiing, biking or hiking.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR AND OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS

Cedrick Baker would like to make sure commission members are representing adequately. The Commission recognizes the work done is important to the residents and to Ramsey County as a whole and better work/discussions occur when all are present with a greater representation of our community

Gale wished to thank everyone for the attendance and assistance with the State of the Parks presentation. It went exceptionally well.

The commission was also interested in different locations for upcoming meetings to continue to see more of the parks and recreational facilities within Ramsey County. Jon and Amber will coordinate meetings at other venues in the coming months.

ADJOURNMENT

Gale Pederson motioned to adjourn at 7:45 p.m.; seconded by Kong Vang.

Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Soler