

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MINUTES
May 10, 2017, 6:00 p.m.
Keller Golf Course Clubhouse

The meeting of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Gale Pederson at 6:04 p.m. at Keller Golf Course Clubhouse in Maplewood, MN.

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

Absent: Bryan Shirley

Staff: Jon Oyanagi, Amber Soler, Scott Yonke

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Cedrick Baker moved for approval of the agenda, seconded by Candy Peterson.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Cedrick Baker moved for approval of the March 15th, 2017 minutes seconded by Kong Vang. *Motion carried.*

DEER MANAGEMENT

Scott Yonke

The 2016 hunt went well with 79 deer being removed which was a decrease from 2015. There was no aerial survey this past winter due to the lack of snow. There is a proposal to allow sharp-shooting in 2017-2018 season.

Kong inquired as to the specific definition of sharp shooting and Scott explained that it involves removing a larger number of deer safely at night using rifles. Jon also noted that sharp shooters are allowed to bait as well. Cedrick requested to know which cities get involved and why to which Scott replied that it is cities which appear to have more significant issues with large deer populations. Metric requested to know what happened to the meat and Scott informed the commission that it is donated through the sharp shooter program but if it is through the regular hunt, they are allowed to keep the meat. Scott also shared that the US Fish & Wildlife Service contract with, and select, the shelters which receive the donated meat. Kong asked why this goes through the US Fish & Wildlife Service to which Jon shared that they are very efficient and can offer great assistance in small areas. Scott also noted that they only allow for so many hunters and provide such a unique opportunity that there are even people who travel from the east coast to participate in the hunt.

Brian brought up the topic of having people pay for their participation in the hunt but both Jon and Scott shared the concern that it might be more challenging to garner participation as the hunters already have to pay for their permit or license as well as the fees associated with archery tests. Scott illustrated the price point importance in mentioning that Ripley's hunt is very well-known but as Ramsey County's is local, it is a smaller and more unique opportunity.

Candy Peterson made the motion to recommend approval of the 2017 Deer Management Program, and Kong Vang made the motion to second. *Motion carried.*

MINNESOTA CONSERVATION CORPS REPORT

Scott Yonke

Ramsey County contracts with the Minnesota Conservation Corps to enlist the assistance of youth natural resource groups. The group size is typically 4-6 college students and they are made up of both male and female students. Jon noted that there is also a crew of high school students that helps out during the summer as well. Gale Pederson wanted to know how the selection of the high school students occurs. Kong shared his knowledge that high school students fill out an application and that promotion of the program occurs in local high schools. The funding for this program is from a Legacy grant and allows for the significant benefit of exposing the youth to natural resource projects. Ramsey County's group is based out of Tamarack Nature Center where they do a lot of work assisting in Discovery Hollow, the gardens, completing small building tasks and assisting in grounds maintenance and day camps and last year they completed over 430 hours of the latter.

Recently, Ramsey County's group has also helped with the buckthorn removal and clearing downfall in the Rice Creek area in a coordinated effort with Anoka County. Other tasks that they help with in the parks include but are not limited to: planting, river obstruction and prescribed burns.

Kong Vang inquired if there was the possibility to get more groups involved or to increase the size of the groups. Scott shared that due to the funding coming from a Legacy grant, it is limited to a certain size. Jon informed the group that the funding is approximately \$110,000 each year. Cedrick brought up the fact that there is a lot of repetitive physical labor and inquired as to the value of it. Jon brought up the point that these students learn a lot from their experience. Metric wanted to know who exactly the county pays for this contract and if the student workers are receiving benefits and Scott said that it was the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and no, they do not receive benefits.

The conversation then turned to equity and the county's push for racial equity, led by Metric. He encouraged the commission to look further into data which determines who the commission is serving and who is receiving the benefits of the commission's work. Metric challenged the commission to always apply a racial equity lens to their work.

SUCKER LAKE CHANNEL PROJECT

Scott Yonke

This project began roughly two years ago in a meeting with Vadnais Lakes Watershed regarding the picnic area. The plan is to restore the edge of the channel while bring back the native plants and fixing the turf which went down to the edge of the channel. They will also fix the water quality as it drains into a drinking source. This project will be completed due to the collaboration of efforts and funding from four different agencies – The Vadnais Lakes Water Management Organization, the Ramsey Conservation District, St. Paul Regional Water services, and Ramsey County Parks and Recreation. All updates will be ADA accessible. Candy Peterson requested to know the cost to which Scott replied that the total cost is approximately \$300,000 and Ramsey County is bringing forward approximately \$200,000. They will be looking for additional funding to rehab the current and outdated benches and picnic tables. Assistance will be provided for the first 5 years of maintenance. Metric Giles inquired about the timeline to which Scott shared that they are currently finalizing the last of the plans and construction is set to begin on October 1, 2017 and it will be completed in two separate phases. This will mean that this area of the park will be closed from October 2017 through spring of 2018. Kong Vang wanted to know more about

the bidding process for this project. Both Scott and Jon informed the commission that they had to follow Ramsey County's process and that it was an open bid. The county does try to target bids from small businesses and ones owned by women and/or minorities.

PARK SYSTEM PLAN UPDATE

Scott Yonke

The last time that Ramsey County Parks & Recreation did a System Plan was in 2006 and the last time that Ramsey County did a Comp Plan was in 2008. Typically the plans are updated every 10 years so the current one is outdated. Regional Parks are not included as they have master plans to account for their development. The focus of redoing these plans is to determine what components should change and to incorporate new and updated mission, vision, goals, etc. There will be a lot of collaboration with the County Manager's office regarding community engagement and the department will seek the input of the commission on their progress. There are discussions surrounding having pop-up community engagement meetings in the parks. Gale Pederson inquired if the current plans are prior to the county's push for racial equity and Scott said that they were. Jon shared that he was excited for the opportunity to create a better park system for the residents of Ramsey County and he welcomes the input and ideas that the commission has to offer. Brian inquired about the efficacy of having community engagement in the summer but was reassured by Jon that this is a new approach that may include some trial and error.

JOINT MEETING WITH ROSEVILLE COMMISSION

Jon Oyanagi

Jon presented the idea of a joint meeting with the Roseville Commission. This will occur on October 3, 2017. The commission felt that topics to discuss included community engagement and racial equity.

TUJ LUB GRAND OPENING

Jon Oyanagi

The Tuj Lub Court grand opening is on Saturday, June 10, 2017. It will include: Hmong dancers, Hmong musical instruments, a blessing, a ribbon cutting and several speeches. At least seven teams from around the country will be coming to play in a tournament which will last all weekend.

2018-2019 BUDGET PLANNING

Jon Oyanagi

The target budget was submitted for approval and it is currently being evaluated by the county manager's office. In September, the department will know the maximum that the levy will be and by December the final budget will be approved.

OUTGOING COMMISSION MEMBERS RECOGNITION

Deb Falkowski greatly enjoyed her time on the commission but also looks forward to taking some time off and simply enjoying the parks. Richard Straumann plans to continue being involved in some capacity as he will remain the chairperson for the commission in Arden Hills. The commission thanks these two for their significant contributions over the years. Their insight will be missed.

ADJOURNMENT

Gale Pederson motioned to adjourn at 7:58 p.m.; seconded by Rich Straumann.

Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amber Soler