

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES

July 12, 2017 at 6:00 pm

Tamarack Nature Center

The meeting of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Gale Pederson at 6:07 p.m. at Tamarack Nature Center.

Attendance: Cedrick Baker, Metric Giles, Louise Krohn, Gale Pederson, Leah Shepherd, Bryan Shirley

Absent: Candy Petersen, Brian Tempas, Kong Vang

Guests: Justin Hollis, Kee Vang

Staff: Jon Oyanagi, Ryan Ries, Amber Soler, Scott Yonke

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Jon requested to add Introductions to the agenda as new commission members were present for their first meeting. Cedrick moved for the approval of the agenda with the aforementioned change, seconded by Leah.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Bryan Shirley requested the spelling of his name be corrected. Cedrick moved for approval of the May 10, 2017 minutes with the aforementioned change, seconded by Gale.

Motion carried.

OPEN DATA PORTAL

Justin Hollis, Kee Vang

In 2014, the county made it a priority to have free and open data for staff as well as residents. Many more government entities are taking this route in order to make their operations more transparent. Ramsey County has a contract with Subprana and is in the process of building a repository of data. Cedrick inquired if the county was working in collaboration with Metro Transit as Justin had mentioned topics such as transportation being covered in the repository. Justin shared that the emphasis or focus is on a regional context, not exclusive to the boundaries of Ramsey County so the information would be sourced from multiple partners, such as Metro Transit.

Users initially are brought to the page which displays the county's mission, vision and goals. The four main goals serve as ways to categorize information in the repository while programmatic operational performance measures are categorized by strategies. Cedrick inquired if Parks & Recreation has their own set of performance measures and Jon replied that the department does indeed have their own unique set. Justin shared that the repository on open budget and expenditure is still being developed. Cedrick inquired if the site would have the capability to find new and raw data. Justin shared that it does and that users will be filtered through the primer page onto raw data and reports. He also mentioned how this will be a beneficial tool for staff to evaluate if we are collecting data on the right topic(s). Leah posed a question about the sign-in feature of the site and what if any limitations would there be due to it and Justin replied that in signing in, users will have the ability to save visualizations thus helping with individual's accessibility. Both Jon and Scott requested to know more about the open data portal's ability to send links or include links to the department's website. Justin informed the Commission that the open data portal can embed HTML links and link back to directly to the department's page.

Gale commented that the collaboration and connectedness is great but ultimately felt the public is largely interested in the day-to-day needs and uses such as where bike trails are or what time does the waterpark open.

Justin closed his presentation sharing that the soft launch is occurring currently and the hard launch will be September 23-24, 2017 at the Civic Code-athon hosted in St. Paul, Minnesota.

ADA TRANSITION PLAN

Ryan Ries, Scott Yonke

About 1.5 years ago, the entire parks system went through an extensive Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance evaluation which was spurred due to many changes in ADA laws that came into effect in 2010. Parks & Recreation found that many designs are outdated and accessibility needed improvement across the board. It was new to view accessibility issues not exclusively in terms of physical disabilities but also in terms cognitive disabilities. The evaluation found that there were over 5,000 deficiencies across the parks system.

Moving forward, Parks & Recreation intends to form an ADA commission to help the department implementing ADA changes. The commission will develop a charter, goals and a timeline and be a part of monthly meetings. The commission will be charged with the responsibility of strategizing the best possible way to implement ADA changes in collaboration with other projects also happening.

Ryan discussed the updates occurring with the arenas refrigeration systems and that 10 of the 13 sheets of ice are pre-1992 which was before ADA was around. Ryan also discussed that the Administration Building at 2015 Van Dyke Street in Maplewood was built in 1985 and also in need of being brought into ADA compliance. Ryan mentioned the work that will begin at Lake Owasso County Park in the fall of 2018 and detailed that the park as a whole will be very ADA friendly.

Bryan requested to know how the department planned to choose an advocacy group as there are so many groups with active participation in existence. Jon explained that the department will be mindful in their selection and is likely to work through a state organization such as the Minnesota State Council on Disability.

Cedrick wanted to express his gratitude to the department for doing their due diligence to best collaborate CIP projects with ADA projects and compliance.

Both Leah and Bryan volunteered to be a part of the ADA committee.

BRUCE VENTO REGIONAL TRAIL

Scott Yonke

The department has completed their preliminary plans for the trail from Buerkle Road to Highway 96. The department was unsuccessful in obtaining federal money for the project this first go-round. They will handle a design study internally to determine the best routes to complete the trail plan from Highway 96 north to County Road J. Legacy money will help cover the costs of this planning effort. There are two major corridors with alternatives being kept in mind. The two main corridors are:

- The north side of Highway 61 through White Bear Lake
- Along the south side of Highway 61 veering towards the county line and ending at the Bald Eagle Picnic area

TROUT BROOK REGIONAL TRAIL

Scott Yonke

Information on the north extension was well-received in community engagement meetings the department hosted in the spring. There are still some areas where there is need to meet with property owners and there will still be specific groups that are taken into account. Parks & Recreation is aiming for a rough master plan in the fall of 2018, keeping in mind there will be more community engagement meetings as well. They are still going through community engagement comments as well as design opportunities.

There are plans that in early 2018, the Ramsey County Board of Commissioners will give their approval of the project.

COMMUNITY VISIBILITY

The Parks & Recreation System Plan needs updating so there will surveys present at the Ramsey County booth at the upcoming Ramsey County Fair. The booth at the fair is a great opportunity for community engagement. Jon thanked the commissioners who had already signed up to work shifts at the booth and encouraged others to sign up and help engage the public.

Metric encouraged the commission as well as Parks & Recreation to get involved in more diverse events such as the Selby Jazz Fest on September 9. Cedrick shared the idea of the commission and the department changing their approach to the Ramsey County Fair and instead of having a booth, considering having a float in the parade. Jon brought up the idea of having surveys accessible in the parks and other relevant community locations.

MID-YEAR REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN

Metric inquired as to what specifically is the department and commission doing along the lines of racial equity work. Metric would like to see not only concentrated areas of poverty being focused on or evaluated but also concentrated areas of wealth. Jon inquired as to how the department would quantify or qualify “wealth.” Justin shared with the group that determining the numbers isn’t always the answer but should be viewed as a tool. Justin also cautioned careful parsing between “income” and “wealth” but ultimately doing the research would likely help the department to determine where the impact has the greatest potential.

JOINT MEETINGS WITH SURROUNDING CITIES

The October meeting will be on Tuesday, October 3, 2017 in a joint meeting with Roseville at their location. The agenda topics will be racial equity and community engagement.

PARK TOUR ITINERARY/ AUGUST AGENDA

As a new commissioner, Louise expressed her desire to see Ramsey County parks and projects and the rest of the commission echoed her sentiment. Jon agreed and informed the commission he would work on itinerary for the commission to see new projects and upcoming projects within the parks system. Gale requested that at the sites of upcoming projects, the commission be able to see the plans for what it will look like in the future.

RACIAL EQUITY WORK

Jon shared with the Commission the work that has begun happening within the Parks & Recreation department. He described the trainings that the full-time staff have attended in March and at the start of the summer. Significant time was spent on ensuring all parties walked away with a mutual understanding of important terminology when it comes to building a foundation for discussing racial equity at Parks & Recreation.

Metric shared that he would like to see the Parks & Recreation department do something to commemorate Black History Month in March of 2018. He shared that an intentional activity could be beneficial to the community. Cedrick elaborated on this idea sharing that it could be of value to highlight people of color in the Parks & Recreation industry at that time as well.

Leah inquired if the programming that took place in the department had a focus on racial equity to which Jon shared that is part of the position of Ken Pelto, the Program Specialist, to develop that further for the department.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT

No report to give at this time.

REPORT FROM CHAIR & OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS

No report to give at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Bryan moved to adjourn at 8:00 pm, seconded by Cedrick.

Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Soler