

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

COMMISSION MINUTES

**October 3, 2017 at 6:30 pm
Roseville City Hall**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Phil Gelbach, President of the Roseville Parks & Recreation Commission.

Attending: Gale Pederson, Louise Krohn, Bryan Shirley, Brian Tempas, Kong Vang

Absent: Cedrick Baker, Metric Giles, Candy Peterson, Leah Shepard

Guests: Lonnie Brokke, Danielle Christensen and members of the Roseville Parks & Recreation Commission

Staff: Mike Goodnature, Jon Oyanagi, Amber Soler

Master Plan / Comprehensive Plan:

Ramsey County's plans presented by Jon Oyanagi

The comprehensive plan is due at the end of 2018 so Ramsey County is currently in the public input phase of the project. There has been an online survey out since the beginning of the summer which has garnered some interest. Ramsey County Parks & Recreation would like to ensure that in doing this survey their plans aren't competing with the plans of the cities and townships within the county but instead are collaborating with them. Ramsey County offers some amenities typically seen in city-based parks systems such as ice arenas and golf courses but also offers more traditional county-based parks amenities, too. The system is a natural resources and environment based system. Ramsey County doesn't offer much in the way of traditional programming but does have significant nature-based programming available at Tamarack Nature Center.

Online involvement has steadily trickled in on the survey and it has been shared on social media platforms including Twitter and Facebook. It is has been sent out to surrounding neighbors in postcards as well as via email.

Roseville's plans presented by Lonnie Brokke

The last time the parks system plan was updated was in 2010 which was the first update from the plan developed in the 1960's. There was a major natural resource management plan also introduced in 2010. The updated parks system plan also helped with building upgrades, golf course improvements, 77 projects in the city and the County Road B2 project was funded.

Trout Brook Regional Trail

As planning continues to develop an extension of this trail, various routes are being considered. This will end at Lake McCarrons County Park and likely go through the Vadnais Lakes chain. The Vadnais Lakes area continues to suffer from flooding but the department in collaboration with other entities is working to minimize the problem presently and in the future.

Lighting at McCarrons County Park

Members of the Roseville Parks & Recreation Commission made comments regarding the lack of sufficient lighting in and around Lake McCarrons County Park. There is a particular stretch near the road as well as the woods that has had some safety issues and suggestions were made for lantern lighting along the trail.

Natural Resource Plan presented by Mike Goodnature

Ramsey County is also updating their Natural Resource Management Plan and evaluating where restoration has been done and needs to be done going forward. It's been crucial to plan forward with education and public outreach to also help prevent the spread of newer invasive species.

Off-Leash Dog Areas

Ramsey County developed a master plan for all of their off-leash dog areas and spent the past summer doing surveys and public engagement meetings. Topics covered in the surveys and meetings included improvements, ideas, amenities, locations, etc. The meetings have been very well-attended as dog owners in Ramsey County are quite passionate.

The Roseville Commission inquired if there was any development plans in the making for the area near the Woodview Off-Leash Dog Area to which Jon shared that there is not at this time. There was also an inquiry posed regarding the condition of the fence in the area and how often the area is inspected for maintenance. Jon will share this with park operations.

Southeast Roseville Revitalization

There was and is a sense of skepticism present amongst citizens as there is a lack of awareness of which entity is responsible for updates, maintenance, etc. It has been found to be beneficial to make decisions with as many parties in the room as possible, such as in joint commission meetings. This could also be a good opportunity for joint meetings or collaboration with Public Works.

Recently Roseville acquired a parcel of land near apartment buildings as park land. The apartment buildings are occupied by a large percentage of immigrants as the city wanted to see a park serve the immigrants' needs and desires. This purchase was not in Roseville's master plan but the city council wanted to capitalize on a unique opportunity. Roseville hosted "Popsicle in the Park" meetings with interpreters on site to help facilitate communication between the department and immigrants. There was also an event in the park with bounce castles, treats and again with interpreters so that the department could continue to get more feedback regarding the future development of that space.

There has also been an effort to develop a youth outreach program. In its first year, the program had approximately 30 youth participants and it has plans to continue and expand.

Natural Resources Restoration

Ramsey County's presentation by Mike Goodnature

Ramsey County has made a substantial effort to ensure that emerald ash borer. Capital improvement project (CIP) money has been used for smaller parks. Most projects are 20-80 acres and average about \$200,000 per project. The most current data regarding emerald ash borer comes from the Department of Agriculture and they have left some trees standing for purposes of bio-control. It has only been found on opposing sides of Ramsey County – in Rice Creek and in Battle Creek Regional Park. The spread of emerald ash borer was anticipated to be much higher than it is in reality. Ramsey County's plan of handling emerald ash borer is generally to remove and replace but not always due to other factors such as location (like boulevards), shade, bio infiltration basin factors, etc. Diversification is generally applied and often with native and heartier options such as salt tolerant species

Ramsey County has also taken the initiative to be the leader in handling aquatic invasive species. There's been a lot of work done in particular at McCarrons with boat launch checks, painting and signage. Most lakes have Eurasia and zebra mussels which are quite challenging to keep out but awareness has made a substantial difference and improvement for Ramsey County's waterways.

Roseville's presentation by Lonnie Brokke

Roseville is considered infested with emerald ash borer. It was first found in 2013 and volunteers have played a substantial and irreplaceable role in inventorying the trees. Volunteers have also helped to track removal and replacement. Fortunately, Roseville has a revolving fund provided by the city council to aid in the financial burden caused by emerald ash borer.

Community Engagement

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners recently developed a new set of goals, mission and vision to keep in line with a focus on racial equity within the county. This has provided framework for community engagement but it is not easy nor simply for the county to get the public to engage as they far more likely to engage with their city instead. Ramsey County is hiring community engagement specialists in 2018 in hopes and efforts to improve community engagement, especially with folks in concentrated areas of poverty. Currently, Ramsey County Parks & Recreation utilizes several modes of communication including but not limited to social media such as Facebook, Twitter, emails and postcards to park neighbors.

Roseville commission members shared ideas about hosting a "Discover Your Park" event at Lake Josephine in partnership with the county. Further details such as cost and/or sponsorship would need to be looked into further.

Roseville commission members also made mention of their "Adopt a Park" idea as well as underscoring the importance of their assistance from volunteers. Roseville has found their volunteer coordinator position to be extraordinarily beneficial for the department.

Closing remarks

The meeting closed with a thank you from Lonnie Brokke to the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation department and commission for their continued efforts towards collaboration and improvement for both city and county parks and recreation.

Respectfully Submitted,

Amber Soler