

**RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING NOTES**

January 12, 2022 – 6:00 PM  
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Commission members in attendance:** Chairperson: Leah Shepard (AL), Gregory “Greg” Williams (AL), Vicechair - Jordan Nelson (2), Brian Tempas (3), Metric Giles (4), Savannah Lane (5), Snowdon Herr (6), Candy Petersen (7)

**Not in attendance:** Michael Berger (1)

**Staff in attendance:** Mark McCabe, Joua Yang, Angela Marlette

**Notice:** Due to the ongoing health pandemic, particularly because of the delta variant, as Chair of the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Commission, I have determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent. In compliance with Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021, subdivision 1, as the Commission meets via Zoom, we state for the record that all members of the Commission are able to hear one another and all discussion and testimony, as can members of the public. Also, because of the ongoing health pandemic, it is unfeasible for at least one Commission member, chief legal counsel, or County staff to be physically present in the regular meeting room. All votes by Commission members will be conducted by roll call.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Leah Shepard at 6:05pm. *Candy Petersen motioned to approve the November 10, 2021 Minutes and the updated January 12, 2022 Agenda; Savannah Lane seconded, and Motion carried.*

**Approved 2022-2023 Ramsey County Budget Highlights: Joua Yang: Parks Finance and Administration Manager**  
Highlights for 2022-2023 Budget Cycle:

Joua reported that 2020 and was a challenging time due to the pandemic and 2021 was challenging to recover from the financial effects of 2020. A key highlight for 2020 was that Parks was \$800,000 overbudget and 2021 is about \$250,000 over budget. Parks increased vacancy factor from 0.5% to 3% in 2022 and to 1.5% in 2023 to assist in meeting budget targets. A new department into budget department was added for the Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area and will have an estimated net levy neutral position. Both McCarrons Beach and WaterWorks will be staffed. A 0.25 position has been added to Tamarack Nature Center to be able to staff for White Bear Lake Area school district contract which will be reimbursed by the school district. Due to the EGCI (Economic Growth and Community Investment) service team reorganization, four Parks FTE’s (Full time equivalents) have been moved out and there will be no parks budget allocation for these finance positions. In the past the vacancy factor was minimal at 0.5% and due to budget challenges, that has been raised to 3%.

*Gregory Williams asked if the budget is posted, and this site was shared.*

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/sites/default/files/Budget%20and%20Finance/Ramsey%20County%20Biennial%20Budget%20Book%20-%202022-2023%20-%209.17.2021.pdf>

Revenue Impacts:

- 2022 Arenas rates were increased ~\$10 per hour and 2023 ~\$5 per hour
  - Generates an additional \$500,000
- Golf fees were increased \$1 per round at Goodrich and Manitou and \$2 per round at Keller
  - Generates an additional \$300,000

- \$15 Minimum wage floor increased resulting in additional \$100,000 expense for Parks that was not budgeted for and revenues will need to cover (2022 & 2023)
- Park Shelter and Pavilion were also increased.

#### Capital Projects:

- \$3.1 million of approved capital spend for county, state, and municipal funding
  - Parks received \$4.1 million for golf projects
  - Allocated funds for bituminous projects (pavement, parking lot, road maintenance)
  - \$400,000 for capital asset management projects
  - \$870,000 CCAMP (County Capital Asset Management Program) for maintaining regional parks

*Greg asks how the budget for the Battle Creek Winter Rec Area will be funded, Mark replied that this will be funded through user fees as well as an equity grant for programming and outreach. No additional levy dollars are allocated. No fees are planned for the sledding hill.*

Mark acknowledged Joua's skill and amazing work done coming on during a pandemic and best wishes for continued success in her new job.

#### **Elections - Commission Chair and Vice Chair**

Gregory William expressed interest in being Chair of the Parks Commission. Both Brian Tempas and Jordan Nelson expressed interest in serving as Vice-chair. Leah asked more times for anyone else that was interested, hearing none the three interested members spoke. Jordan withdrew in since he previously served when Brian stepped down. *Leah nominated Gregory Williams as Chair and was seconded by Savannah Lane. Leah nominated Brian Tempas as Vice-chair and was seconded by Jordan Nelson. There was no discussion and role was taken, all approved, motion carried.*

#### **2022 Work Plan and By-Laws Review:**

Mark shared the draft 2022 Parks Commission work plan of agenda topics and sought feedback. *Metric Giles appreciated Racial Equity topics were planned on a regular basis and would also like to see Racial Equity training/education included in the work plan.* Mark offered that the newly appointed Racial and Health Equity Administrator for the Service Team, Antonio Montez, would be a resource for this training and a first step in planning this. *Metric suggested creating a subcommittee on this that includes others as well.* Mark will work to get Antonio at a meeting as soon as able. *Brian asked about notification timeline to get an item onto the agenda.* Depending on the item it can be as soon as the day before the meeting other wise 2 weeks prior to the meeting is sufficient. *Metric commented that he would like to see a roller-skating rink since it would be better used by the local community over ice skating rinks.* Mark will pass that idea to the West Side project team as another use for that facility.

The Parks Commission reviewed the By-laws and notification period needed for changes (10 days). *Greg would like to look at having special meetings and committees to focus on items such as Racial Equity education and training. Leah asked that it be added to an upcoming meeting. Metric suggested a focus on accessibility for people with disabilities and community representation.* *Leah motioned to approve the By-laws and Candy seconded, all approved, motion carried.*

#### **Parks Ordinance Revision Update: Mark McCabe**

Mark recapped the Parks Ordinance Revision history and process. Using the public engagement feedback and input from the County Board, the final revised ordinance was drafted, and the Approval/Adoption process begun. Areas of note are: expanded park hours and decriminalizing park penalties to administrative fines before moving to misdemeanors. Requests for Board Action will be submitted requesting a Public Hearing and readings of the revised ordinance. At the public hearing, members of the public can make comment or submit comments ahead

of time. Communication to the public would only happen once the County Board approves the revised ordinance and after the 45day contestation period.

*Leah asked if the County Board is welcoming of the changes. Mark replied that they are very supportive.*

### **State of the Parks Presentation Topics**

In the past the Parks Commission Chairperson, with the Parks Director, would give a 10-15 presentation on key happenings, challenges and future items to the County Board at a weekly meeting. A list of topics was shared that included topics from all park divisions as well as COVID impacts, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks work, programming, and workforce diversification. Parks plans to aim for the end of February to present this. Mark asked if there were items the Commission would like added. Leah last presented this in 2019 and offer suggestions. *Leah commented that it is a good opportunity to do some advocacy with the County Board.* All board meetings are streamed live as well as recorded. <https://ramseycountymn.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

### **Community Engagement Fund Update: Parks Commission Stipend**

In the last budget cycle and this upcoming cycle \$1 million dollars of funding for community engagement was set aside. Many departments do not have this funding already built into their budgets, including parks. Parks has several applications submitted with one requesting a stipend for parks commission members. This request falls into the category of compensating community members that are engaging in county work. If the application is approved and the commission member is interested, a stipend of \$25 per meeting is available. Currently, there are more requests than funding and approvals are pending.

*Greg asked if there is a site where the commission can view the application process and past projects that were funded. Current information on this is not housed within Parks since its under the greater service groups umbrella and very new. Greg is interested in looking at the application to see if there were any types of engagement funding opportunities that can be created or were missed.*

### **Job Postings Update**

- 4 Maintenance and Operations positions open and represents a great opportunity to diversify staff
  - Partnered with Equity Action Circle to review and assist with posting
  - Interviews coming up next month
- Accounting and Administration Manager
- Golf Courses and Arena Director accepted a new position outside the county and will be posted shortly
- Parks Communications position, the hiring of this position is overseen by the Communication & Public Relations Department
- 2 Janitor Building Guard Positions
- Tamarack Nature Center office manager

Overall, about a 10% vacancy rate and another 10% at the same time that are out due to COVID related family care issues.

*Metric asked for an update as to if Ramsey County is a 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Employer. Parks has reached out and not received a clear answer, but Ramsey County as a practice does not discriminate if there is a felony that is not related to the job they are seeking. Parks will continue to reach out for clarification on being a 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance employer. Metric explained more about being a 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance employer and how it opens opportunity up for those with felony convictions and Mike Berger could potentially give more details. Greg elaborated on a MN law that was effective January 1, 2018 which gives certain offences a second chance for employment opportunities, but it does not list Ramsey County per se. Metric expressed concern regarding nepotism, that the county and the city are ran generationally buy white families and understands that this is a conversation for another time.*

Current job postings can be viewed here: <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/ramsey>

### **Commission Member Update**

*Candy asked if Ramsey County parks is compensated for hosting ice castles? (See Directors update)*

*Leah asked if there is more movement on the West Side Arena project other than the online survey now that Lisa has left the project? Yes, the survey was a small piece of the overall engagement. The next steps are face to face virtual meeting with key stakeholders.*

**Director Update**

Ice Castles is a partnership with the private company “Ice Castles” and the City of New Brighton. Ramsey County is compensated and received about \$20,000 as well as fees to restore the site from any wear and tear.

Thanks again to Leah and Jordan for your work this year on the Commission. Looking forward to working with Greg and Brain as well as the rest of the Commission.

*A motion for adjournment was made by Brian Tempas, **meeting adjourned at 7:39pm***

**Next Meeting**

March 9, 2022