

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

February 10, 2021 – 6:00 PM  
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Chairperson: Leah Shepard (AL), Michael Berger (AL), Jordan Nelson (2), Brian Tempas (3), Metric Giles (4), Bryan Shirley (5), Melissa Wenzel (6)

**Staff in Attendance:** Mark McCabe, Kristopher Lencowski, Angela Marlette

**Other Attendees:** Joann Ellis

**Call Meeting to Order:** Chairperson Leah Shepard called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. *Melissa Wenzel motioned for approval of the January 13, 2021 Meeting minutes, Brian Tempas seconded, motion carried. Jordan Nelson motioned to approve the February 10, 2021 meeting agenda, Brian Tempas seconded, motion carried.*

**Parks Ordinance Revision Review:**

Kris Lencowski summarized the impetus behind a Park Ordinance review and the request for Park Commission feedback and involvement.

- Criteria needed for the ordinance; fair, reduce conflict, protect park property, promote usage
- Racial Equity Review; Community and agency partnerships
  - *Mike Berger explained about the State Statue regarding ordinances are to be punished as a misdemeanor and cannot be circumvented with updated ordinances. Melissa pointed out that the enforcement of this is where there can be discretion, but also therein lies the issue. Mike was also very concerned on the heavy review of Law Enforcement and no Public Defenders office review for a balanced law aspect. Mike will connect Kris with them. Metric Giles hopes that this is not absolute how its used.*
- Outlined Parks Commission feedback before the wider Community Public Engagement
  - Racial Equity review of all ordinances
  - Evaluation of Tier System of topics for public engagement
- Kris will send the Ordinance with suggested revisions to the Parks Commission to begin work as well as the presentation. *Leah asked for education on the different enforcement options available. Mike reminded the group that the criminal code also still applies to behaviors in the parks, but the behaviors need to be defined as a petty misdemeanor. Joann comment that being a diverse community, we need to strive to be as clear as possible. Metric asked about many of the parks are within the City of St. Paul boundaries and how close RC Parks works with neighborhood associations? Battle Creek and Beaver Lake, but also Arenas are within the boundaries. Yes, Parks does with those organizations and those would be good for the wider engagement. Metric introduced that this is also addressing Justice and inclusive work force representation and education/support.*

**Elect Parks Commission Chair and Vice Chair:**

Jordan Nelson and Brian Tempas expressed interest in Vice Chairperson position. Leah offered to run for chair again.

*Brian nominated Jordan for Vice Chair and Mike Berger seconded, Melissa nominated Leah for Chairperson and Mike seconded. Motion made to run both positions as one ticket. All Approved. **Motion Carries.***

#### **Annual Review and Approval of Parks Commission Bylaws:**

- Parks staff was unable to get more clarity on the expansion of the number Parks Commission members
  - This can assist with the need to diversify the Commission
  - The process is managed through the Board of Commissioners and the Chief Clerks office
  - Mark will continue to research
  - *Melissa would like to promote an opportunity for youth to serve on the Commission*
  - Angie Marlette reviewed the upcoming vacancies, reappointments and considerations
  - *Metric would like to know the time frame in which to engage other areas to solicit participation: Postings will open in March online and are filled at the first County Board meeting in June. Metric/Melissa propose that Commission members discuss different groups to engage at the next meeting.*
- *Motion was made by Brian and seconded by Mike to approve the current by-laws. **Motion carried.***

Link to Parks Commission postings:

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/volunteer/advisory-boards-committees-0>

Link to subscribe to notifications:

[https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNRAMSEY/subscriber/new?topic\\_id=MNRAMSEY\\_161](https://service.govdelivery.com/accounts/MNRAMSEY/subscriber/new?topic_id=MNRAMSEY_161)

#### **Review 2021 Work Plan:**

- *Leah requested that time sensitive items are marked. Once there is data collection a regular update can be added to the work plan.*
- *Metric/Brian commented on the improvement in the Work Plan especially with Racial Equity being addressed regularly. Suggested at least 15min dedicated in each meeting regarding how this is being moved forward.*
  - *Brian suggests that topics are designated for more intentionality.*
  - *Metric recommended an education approach to understand the structural racism within the scope of this Commission*
  - *Leah agreed about a shared analysis or understanding of structural racism within the Commission's past history and looking at consulting work that can be done*
- Next months Racial Equity Conversation: Mark recommended bring in the RE Health Administrator to discuss county wide initiatives.
  - *Leah is interested in how we are bridging the community engagement gap with projects that were before new standards.*

#### **Commission Member Updates:**

- *Brian updated regarding a higher level of theft activities in homes and parks, encouraging people to report all of these. Make sure these items are tracked by the police*
- *Jordan attended the Lake McCarrons Winter Rec and enjoyed it very much, Leah was glad her Nordic Ski at Tamarack Nature Center (TNC) was cancelled and rescheduled due to extreme cold*
- *Melissa very happy to see many people enjoying Battle Creek sledding hill*
- *Metric tells people about TNC frequently and feels it's a wonderful place, so how do we connect people with transportation. Not everyone can drive out to TNC.*
  - To be added as a Racial Equity Topic on the 2021 Work Plan
  - *Leah commented that the MET Council had a bus that went to Regional Parks*

- *Brian mentioned Uber/Lift social justice interest in this, Metric commented on inviting them to a meeting. Melissa mentioned City of St. Paul's expanded car sharing options.*
  - *Leah would suggest advocating for a budget for this with the County*

**Director Updates:**

- Winter Trails Maps now published online to clarify activities and trail accessibility
- Winter Recreation Sampler occurred at McCarrons Park
- Working to establish prioritization for staff vaccinations and working to maintain coverage as staff are exposed-All Staff have recovered successfully
- Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area: RFP to solicit for design build is out and working towards engagement work in tandem with the planning

*A motion for adjournment was made by Mike Berger, **meeting adjourned at 7:35pm***

**Next Meeting:** March 10, 2021