

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

May 13, 2020 – 6:00 PM
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

In Attendance: Leah Shepard (AL), Michael Berger (AL), Jessica Pitzel (1), Jordan Nelson (2), Metric Giles (4), Bryan Shirley (5), Melissa Wenzel (6), Candy Petersen (7)

Not in Attendance: Brian Tempas (3)

Staff: Mark McCabe, Angie Marlette, Ann White Eagle, Brandon Block and Michael Schumann

The meeting began at 6:05 pm.

Approval of Agenda and April 8, 2020 Meeting Minutes: Candy Peterson asked for a motion to approve the agenda Melissa Wenzel seconded. All Approved, *Motion carried*. Melissa made the motion to approve the minutes from April 8, 2020 and Michael Berger seconded, all approved. *Motion carried*.

Directors Update: Mark introduced the new Director of Golf Courses and Arenas, Lisa Hanson Lamey. Mark updated the Parks Commission on both County and Parks specific COVID19 response.

- Daily updates on the COVID numbers are available online at RamseyCounty.us
- Homelessness: Boys Totem Town is now permitted to house homeless as well as Mary Hall and contracts with local hotels to house up to 400 people are in progress
- Food Aid: County continues work with the school district to ensure meals are provided and distributed safely
- CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Stimulus) Ramsey County received \$96 million going towards housing, food, employment resources and small business support
 - County Board continues to work on how to best distribute
- County Staffing: No furloughs issued, and focus remains on redeployment to COVID response areas of greatest need, vacant positions are being held open
 - 2021 Budget is being reevaluated considering all the changes
- Many Parks staff have been pulled into assisting with the COVID County response
- Parks and Dog Parks are open for picnicking, walking and general use,
 - Tuj Lub courts and Archery ranges are open for small group use
 - Online programming through Tamarack Nature Center is available
 - Soil & Water continue with resident rain garden work

Melissa would appreciate a link for updates regarding Boys Totem Town.

Candy raised concerns on the inadequacy of the portables at Keller Golf Course.

Mike Berger asked for clarification on beach closures. Mark explained the inability to do Lifeguard re-certification along with ensuring social distancing guidelines of users does not allow for beaches to open.

Metric Giles asks if the Golf Courses are generating Revenue and how that relates to the funding received from COVID and the tracking mechanisms involved. CARES Act money can only be used on

COVID related support and cannot supplement the budget. The County also has to track all related expenses and those are reported to the Federal government but separate from the CARES Act monies. The Parks department revenue is projected to be down \$1.6 Million with the later start to the golf season, arenas remaining closed, shelters are unable to be opened, and Tamarack Nature center fee-based programming not happening.

Projects Update:

- Beaver Lake Community Engagement is resuming but being modified due to limited face to face opportunities, will phase back from online to small meetings
- Snail Lake Master Plan: Last engagement was converted to online
- Battle Creek Regional Park: Nature Playground is currently being built
- Snail Lake Beach: Is ready for opening when able
- Aldrich Arena Parking Lot: Final Parking lot and landscape work in progress
- Keller Golfview Project: Parking lot redesign proceeding
- Tamarack Nature Center: Final design in progress

Melissa forwarded a resident concern on how raingarden work can proceed amidst other priorities. Funds towards these projects has already been dedicated and Ann White Eagle will cover this in her presentation.

Letter of Concern:

Leah shared the letter of concern and encouraged the commission to review. Many items have been addressed by the commission and the planning staff do have the history of public engagement when the plan was developed. They will assemble this information to share and address the concerns. It will be shared with the commission for comment as well. Leah addressed the lack of trail use designations on maps available. To be discussed further at next meeting and compile a commission response.

Soil & Water Updates: Ann White Eagle, Brandon Block and Michael Schumann

- The Division has relocated to the Parks Administration office from Public Works
- Due to the current climate there is an increased demand in raingarden installation
- Work continues with virtual messages and teachings: played Pollinator Puppet Show
- Brandon assists in coordinating the Ramsey County Rain gauge Network
 - Largest network in Minnesota with 45 members, “raingaugers”
 - Info entered into the State Climatology database
 - 2019 was the wettest year on record
 - Will have a virtual forum for the volunteers
- Michael Schumann, Landscaper Designer primarily works with landowners for water quality improvement projects but also with other agencies
 - Soil & Water conducts over 400 site visits annually and produce 100 construction designs for install
 - Phone consultations and on-site visits have continued
 - Installing a demonstration garden at the Parks Admin building
 - Lawns to Legumes grant: while not awarded the grant, many landowners did receive individual grants and Soil & Water’s assistance has been asked for by them and other agencies
- Ann would like to encourage Parks Commission members to serve on the Rice Creek *Watershed District advisory committee*. *Mike Berger expressed interest.*

Report from The Chair & Other Commission Members:

Bryan Shirley would like an update on the state of ice reservations and arenas future plans and for it to be shared.

Leadership has been working on modified service delivery plans regarding this and is in touch with the hockey communities and is working with Lisa and it will be submitted to the State.

Adjournment: Candy moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:07 pm.

Follow-Up Links and Resources:

<https://opendata.ramseycounty.us/stories/s/jbct-4jb6>

This link provides information on Homelessness, COVID updates and resources available

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/covid-19-info/county-services-initiatives/covid-19-compliance-oversight>

This site details monies spend on the COVID-19 Response.

Next Meeting: June 13, 2020