

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

June 14th, 2023, 6:00 PM

Lion's Park Shelter, Long Lake Regional Park
1500 Old Highway 8, New Brighton, Minnesota 55112

Commission Members In-attendance: Gregory Williams (Chair), Mary Grams Basnight, Jordan Nelson, Brian Tempas (Vice-Chair), Dr. Tamara Mattison, Snowdon Herr, Mike Sachi, Candy Petersen, Leah Shepard

Guests: Mai Herr, John Richter

Staff: Ryan Ries, Mark McCabe, Brett (Gus) Blumer, Angela Marlette

Chair Gregory Williams called the meeting to order at 6:16pm. **A motion was made to accept the May 10, 2023, meeting minutes and approve the June 14, 2023, meeting agenda by Candy Petersen and seconded by Jordan Nelson. Motion carried.**

Welcome New Commission Member: Commission members welcomed Mike Sachi. Mike is a long-time resident of Ramsey County, over 25 years and was also a research engineer for commercial energy efficiency programs. He enjoys biking, golfing, skiing, waterskiing and alpine skiing.

Review 2016 Energy Action Plan (EAP) Progress: Ryan Ries, Facilities and Sustainability Director
Ryan gave a high-level review of the 2011 adopted plan that was created through an Xcel Energy program called Partners in Energy.

- Focus Areas: Energy efficiency (using it better) and conservation (using less), Renewable energy (1st in county), educations and outreach (TNC incorporated a day of energy curriculum).
- Focus Areas Example: in 2011, Ice arenas accounted for 80% of energy use. The plan addressed alternate refrigerants and redesign options to make arenas more sustainable while also including modernizing aspects. Under renewable energy, the goal is to offset with solar. Education outreach was a bit difficult to measure even if there is validity to having it as a goal. Tamarack Nature Center was able to incorporate home energy reduction habits into its curriculum.
- Parks adopted a net zero design production and innovative energy off-set ideas such as using natural lighting and LED solar powered lights for restrooms. The arena system has 75% of lights upgraded to LED. Aldrich was still operating on steam heating system that needed replacing. When the Request for Proposals was issued a stipulation held that the new design must show an energy saving, which was contractually back with monetary repercussions.

Current performance: Goal was 25% reduction in energy usage, but Parks actual was a 16% reduction. This goal was not met mainly due to the addition of the TCO Sports Garden (2 sheets of ice and a field house). Ideally there is a way to account for growth that does not skew the numbers.

Currently there are four locations with solar arrays. Two of those locations cost nothing for installation but instead smaller payments are made for 12 years. The typical lifespan of panels are 30-40 years. Mary Grams Basnight asked about renting solar panels and Ryan acknowledged that was considered.

Lions Park Shelter & Restroom Highlights:

- Restroom & shelter met the net zero energy design.
- Generated 345 megawatt hours, that amount would power a residential home for 43 years.

Ryan informed Commission Members that B3 is the State of Minnesota's LEED program, all state buildings need to be net zero by 2030. Parks is already designing and building everything to B3/Net Zero designation.

Parks will begin the update process to the energy plan this fall and would appreciate Commission participation.

Brainstorm session:

What best practices for energy conservation or efficiency do you have experience with that would be worth exploring?

Suggestions: a plaque that says that this is a net zero facility, leveraging user groups for education such as signs/plaques, reach out to the University of Minnesota Climate Action Partnership.

Expansion ideas:

Ramsey County has already been implementing water reclamation (permeable pavement), more natural areas and less turf while also working to change the public perception. The 2040 Ramsey County Comprehensive Plan also played out some high-level goals. Link to that plan: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/projects-initiatives/comprehensive-plan>

Ryan would like to share the draft EAP update with the commission for feedback.

Suggestions: Dr. Tamara Mattison would like to see community education of what it takes to create and build the park. Make sure we talk to the children and other community members about what we need.

Retired Commission Member Recognition:

Both Greg Williams and Mark McCabe thanked and recognized out going Commission Members Candy Petersen, Leah Shepard. Candy served since 2008, an incredible 15 years. Leah has served since 2017 and Chaired the Commission for half of them. Candy will be retiring and enjoying her new home by the sea for a portion of the year while Leah will continue to advocate for equity, the West Side neighborhood and the environment in both her personal and professional life!

Commission Chair Update: Greg Williams introduced Jon Richter with Endurance United (EU) and showcased some of the programs. Jon spoke that the purpose of their programming to get people outdoors and involved in an outdoor type of lifestyle. Recently the Rice Creek Boat Club joined the EU organization. He challenged the Parks Commission to get a greater diversity of members and to work to have people connected to those communities.

Switching topics, Greg commented that Three Rivers Park District has a security and would like to encourage more security in Ramsey County Parks. He will do some research on funding.

Commission Member Update: Candy requested a Ramsey County Fair update. Parks continues to work with Ramsey County Property Management on new formalized agreements since none have existed. Indemnification for the event remains an issue since it legally needed to be transferred to the Organizers, the Ramsey County Fair Board. You can read a brief history on the Ramsey County Fair here: <https://maplewoodmn.gov/1693/The-Ramsey-County-Fair>

Director Update: Mark McCabe

The 2023 legislative session wrapped up with the passing of a Metro Regional Parks System onetime \$9.9M modernization bill. The Metropolitan Council match brings it to \$16M. A Bonding bill was passed on the last day of session for \$16.62M. The Met Council match makes this \$26M with Ramsey County's estimated portion being \$2.2M. The Bruce Vento Regional Trail extension received \$5M of state funding which would complete construction. The Keller Regional Parks - Tuj Lub courts received \$500K of funding through the Outdoor Legacy Heritage Fund. Parks continues to look for other matches to complete the other upgrades in the plan. The Parks and Trails Legacy funds are approved on a two-year cycle, which was this year. Ramsey County Parks is estimated to receive \$1.5M that will be used to connect people with the outdoors, acquire land and develop opportunities, while taking care of our existing system. The Operations & Maintenance funding state statute was reviewed, and Metro Regional Parks will receive a one-time \$6M increase and the Lottery in-lieu funding will be restored closer to what it should be.

Candy Petersen motioned for adjournment at 7:55pm

Next Meeting: Parks Tour, August 9th, 2023