

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION ANNUAL PARKS TOUR NOTES

AUGUST 17, 2022 – 6:15 PM

Commission Members in Attendance: Chair - Gregory Williams (AL), Leah Shepard (AL), Jordan Nelson (2), Vice chair - Brian Tempas (3), Tamara Mattison (4), Snowdon Herr (6),

Not in attendance: Candy Petersen (7), Savannah Lane (5)

Guests: Martha Flynn with Little Bellas and Ashley with ACET inc.

Staff in Attendance: Mark McCabe, Kris Lencowski, Liz Flinn, Ryan Ries, Gus Blumer, Solomon Tsega, Brian Olsen, Angela Marlette, Cate Duin - Aide to Commissioner McGuire

Welcome to new Parks Commission Member Dr. Tamara Mattison, Guest Martha Flynn and Cate Duin.

Battle Creek Winter Recreation Area: 75 Winthrop St South, Saint Paul, 55119

- Design/Construction Update: Brett “Gus” Blumer & Ryan Ries
 - Upgraded lights, over 20 hydrants added for time efficiency, trail widening for safety due to overhanging trees, added beginner areas and training areas, focused on trail circulation to prevent trail degradation as well as reduce overlap of mountain bikers and skiers.
 - Maintenance facility is over 4,00 square feet, one level, will be utilized in the summer for maintenance staff, provisions made for future solar and electric equipment upgrades, meets the Minnesota sustainable building guidelines - B3 standards, funding constraints made Net Zero unattainable at this time.
 - It will be a metered water supply, due to environmental classification of lake on site it is unable to be used as a water source, the Elm Creek winter recreation area also uses city water.
- Operations/Programming Update: Kris Lencowski
 - A cooperative agreement with the City of Saint Paul will bring pass sales and warming area to the Battle Creek Rec center, Parks will no longer be participating in the Great MN Ski Pass program but switching to a specialized pass that has options for natural snow and artificial snow several types of passes will be available, Parks received programming grants.
 - Last season Parks piloted a program with Battle Creek Elementary for 250 3rd – 5th grade students, this was a great opportunity to understand the logistics behind organizing this type of program, the program can be expanded to more schools, the goal is to introduce XC skiing to elementary schools and use after school programming for middle schools, next is to establish clubs in high school which will feed into job opportunities for Parks.
- Parks Commission Chair Guest: Martha Flynn
 - Little Bellas is a mountain biking mentorship program for girls aged 7-13 with four programs operating in the Twin Cities, due to the challenging trails at Battle Creek this site hosts girls aged 10 – 13 years. Little Bellas creates opportunities for girls to experience success using mountain biking as the platform and pathway to personal growth, building community, and competency.
<https://littlebellas.com/about/>

West Side Arena: 44 East Isabel St, Saint Paul, 55107

- 21st Century Parks and Community Engagement: Liz Flinn
 - West Side Arena was built in the 1970's, ice sheets are maintained from late October to late February, the anchor tenant is Edgcombe Youth Hockey Association that offers an affordable intro to the game of hockey, the neighboring church occasionally uses the parking lot.
 - 21st Century Parks Community Engagement for West Side Arena Phase 1 engagements yielded that while a need for ice still exists there is also an off season need of space for the community to recreate as well as a need to inform local community of the arena's existence. There were 469 online survey responses and 42 individuals participated in the in-person engagements.
 - Phase 2 will be starting shortly in which Phase 1 contacts will be re-engaged and new contacts will be established with a focus on local businesses and organizations near the arena.
 - ACET inc. is the name of consultation group assisting us with Phase 2
<https://www.acetinc.com/> , Ashley is the ACET staff that was on site at the meeting. Her contact info is ashley@ACETinc.com the county has previously worked with ACET and been very happy with their work. Three listening sessions. 3 Virtual sessions are planned with dates to be announced. Timeline for this is Late August, with reporting planned for October 2022.
 - Mark reported that determining future use before December 2022 is crucial to obtain funding and make staffing/budgetary adjustments since 2024-2025 Budget planning begins then. Liz also reported that the current staffing model of moving staff from arenas to parks in the summer makes it difficult to allow year-round use at practice arenas and would also need to be considered.
- BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant Application/ Westside area sub-watershed study: Brian Olsen
 - Locally, a stormwater infiltration assessment study was completed for the area and it was found the most cost effective way to reduce contaminants was to increase the frequency of street sweeping.
 - New project at Battle Creek Middle school, there is an area of ball field not being used (13 acres) that will be converted into wet prairie and utilizing a treatment swale, an outdoor classroom will also be added. Soil & Water is applying for one last grant to bridging the existing funding gap for the project.

Next Meeting: September 14, 2022