

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

September 13, 2023, 6:00 PM

Tamarack Nature Center: Garden House
5287 Otter Lake Road, White Bear Township

Commission Members In-attendance: Chair - Gregory Williams (Chair), Mary Grams Basnight, Linda Duck, Snowdon Herr, Dr. Tamara Mattison, Jordan Nelson, Mike Sachi.

Not In-Attendance: Brian Tempas (Vice-Chair), Reier Erickson

Guests: Mai Herr

Staff: Mark McCabe, Noelle Roden, Angela Marlette

Chair Gregory Williams called the meeting to order at 6:07 pm. **A motion was made to accept the June 14, 2023, meeting minutes and approve the September 13, 2023, meeting agenda by Snowden Herr and seconded by Dr. Tamara Mattison. Motion carried.**

Welcome

Linda Duck was welcomed to the Parks Commission and introduced herself. The Parks Commission members each took turns welcoming and introducing themselves. New member, Reier Erickson will be at the October meeting.

Introduce New Education Manager at Tamarack Nature Center (TNC)

Mark introduced Noelle Roden and her history with Tamarack Nature Center.

Noelle introduced the members to Tamarack Nature Center; its history, mission as well as a programming overview and education amenities the center provides. One major accomplishment is that TNC has an agreement with Saint Paul Public Schools which funds a field trip to TNC for all pre-K students. TNC also serves as White Bear Lake Townships Pre-K school.

Nature Center Grounds Tour: Highlights

- No Charge for entry or parking.
- Hundreds of pounds of garden produce is given to the White Bear Lake Food Shelf annually.
- Discovery Hollow has lots of climbing spaces and a water play feature.
- Visited the new Sugar Shack.
 - Build by Parks & Recreation Staff which saved money and produced a custom building.
 - Maple syrup is given to volunteers and used for the annual Volunteer Pancake Feast.
- The Nature center has several animal exhibits two favorites are the threatened Blanding's Turtle and the Apiary.

Noelle asked for feedback/ideas on how to increase user diversity and programming. Some suggestions were:

- Connecting with the libraries for shuttle services.
- Connect with Saint Paul Community centers as a pickup location.
- Work to increase volunteer diversity so that diverse groups can see someone that looks like them.
- Encourage partnerships with Scouting groups.
- Reference the Lake Nokomis Monarch Festival.

Commission Chair Update: Gregory Williams

Greg emailed and texted his video update directly to the Parks Commission due to unavailability of Wifi at the Garden house. https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ubtmy50c56abt4ba77vk4/8_09_2023-Pigs-Eye-Lake-Island-Building-Project-Site-Visit.mp4?rlkey=sly4up56gpw1kzyccybg7lpi4&dl=0

Commission Member Update: None

Director Update: Mark McCabe

Mark acknowledged the end to a successful and busy summer season in both programming and rentals. Parks staff are now transitioning out of the parks and into the practice arenas. He closed with welcoming the new commission members and thanking them for volunteering.

Dr. Tamara Mattison motioned for adjournment at 7:50 pm

Next Meeting: October 11, 2023