

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

SEPTEMBER 14, 2022 – 6:00 PM

Parks Administrative Building
2015 Van Dyke Street in Maplewood Minnesota

Commission Members In-Attendance: Chair - Gregory Williams (AL), Leah Shepard (AL), District 1- Vacant, Jordan Nelson (2), Dr. Tamara Mattison (4), Savannah Lane (5), Snowden Herr (6), Candy Petersen (7)

Not In-Attendance: Vice chair - Brian Tempas (3)

Staff: Mark McCabe, Brett Blumer, Liz Flinn, Angela Marlette

*The meeting was called to order by Chair, Greg Williams at 6:10pm. Snowden Herr motioned to approve the June 8, 2022, Meeting Minutes and to accept the September 14, 2022, Agenda; Leah Shepard seconded, **Motion carried***

Official welcome and introduction of Dr. Tamara Mattison, new member representing District 4.

Vadnais Snail Lake Regional Park: Wetland Feasibility Study: Brett “Gus” Blumer, Landscape Architect

Gus presented the history of the project and the need to amend the Snail Lake Master Plan and re-evaluate the current trail placement due to the flooding and hydrology changes over time of the area. Please visit the projects page for a more detailed history and to view the feasibility study.

<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/planning-construction-restoration/vadnais-snail-lakes-regional-park-trail-improvements>

In summary:

- Hydrology modeling used with information from the Watershed District and climatologist was used to determine the best elevation to set the boardwalk that allows most use as well as compatible to existing trail elevations and user needs.
- An informational meeting will be held on September 28th at Shoreview Community Center with Commissioner Frethem in attendance.
- Next steps are to begin work on the Design-Build and request funding.

Leah Shepard asked about how many people are being impacted by this being closed and will be served when its restored. Since this is a Regional Park, it is heavily utilized trail and park in general. While the Feasibility Study was not required, due to the amount of community feedback, some hostile, made the study an important tool. Mark commented that there is a no build option, but people continue to make their own trails which negatively effected the wetland and private landowners.

- *Commission Members asked about ensuring all voices were heard and not just property owners, Gus reviewed the community engagement steps that were taken so that as many users were reached.*
- *Communications will do Media and Mail blasts two weeks ahead.*

Golf Update (Island Lake, Operator Agreements, Winter Activities): Liz Flinn, Director of Golf Courses and Arenas

- Keller achieved the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Recertification again and have been certified since 2008. Paul Diegnau is leading the way for all Golf Courses.
 - <https://rwmwd.org/projects/keller-golf-course/>

- Mini golf at Island Lake has reopened
- All Courses have been able to catch up profitability wise from the late April start.
- Goodrich Golf Course has a new partnership with the Watershed District to assist with water storage while enhancing the beauty of the course.
 - The repairs and replacement of aging irrigation systems will significantly impact water usage.
 - User groups were able to give feedback on this project
- Goodrich Winter Use:
 - Gates will be installed for winter shoeing, ability to open the clubhouse for warming.
 - Partnering with schools, leading programs, and offering onsite rentals.
 - Liz would appreciate any other ideas; Greg would like to present his proposal to Liz at a separate time. Liz.Flinn@ramseycounty.us
- Island Lake Golf Course & Training Center
 - Is a 9-hole course and training facility that has about 200 children learning to golf and very welcoming to new golfers and has partnerships with Courage Kenney, YMCA, High schools and golf leagues.
 - On year 29 of the 30-year contract, looking to have 2 models for all golf operator models.
 - All facilities will come under Ramsey County operation, so a facility assessment will be conducted. That assessment will be shared with the Parks Commission as Greg requested involvement.
 - The area has been significantly built up since the start of the course, hence looking at a 5-year contract instead of 10-year to keep options open.
 - *Leah expressed a desire that the programming remains, Parks is hopeful that the same contractor may remain and bid on the new RFP (request for proposals).*

Ice/Turf Programming Update: Liz Flinn

- Turf: At TCO Fieldhouse the desirable Turf time is booked with youth soccer. Bringing back Toddler Tuesdays and Open Walking. This has not been done since the 2018 collapse and is free and open to the public. *Greg was happy to hear that his work with the Ultimate disc group was able to secure a spot.* Liz commented that Parks needs to consider the equitable use of the facility which is not always dependent upon how much time they are willing to buy.
- Ice: Rink flooding has started for the practice arenas and takes about 2 weeks. Free and Open Ice times are available at TCO, Highland and Arena. Availability can be seen online:
 - <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/ice-arenas-fieldhouse/skating-programs/open-skate>
 - <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/ice-arenas-fieldhouse/skating-programs/open-hockey>

For the Winter season Shoreview, White Bear, Harding and Oscar Johnson are all completely booked with Youth Hockey and High School Hockey Associations.

Reviewing open times left available and working on gathering who is not using ice that has been purchased and be able to answer capacity questions.

Community Engagement Updates for 21st Century Parks/Arena Use: Liz Flinn

- 8 virtual engagements for user groups and 2 community meetings as well an online survey
- Aldrich Arena response was mainly for upgraded and repairs to the current facility as well as community meeting spaces, storage for user groups and off-season multipurpose use. The parking lot events requested bathrooms accessible from the outside. Finally, wayfinding issues at the facility and pedestrian safety.
 - Refrigerant upgrade: NHL is working with arenas on this and have presented options other than Ammonia use.

- *Greg asked if a facility conditions assessment has been performed recently, and Liz would need to defer to Ryan Ries for the report.*
- Responses for Highland Arena followed along the same lines as Aldrich.
- Westside Phase 2 Engagements: can see all the upcoming engagements online:
<https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/21st-century-parks-initiative/west-side-arena>
 - Very pleased with the engagement on September 12th and look forward to the others.
 - Final compilation of engagements to happen November 1st, 2022.

Commission Chair Update: Greg Williams

Would appreciate the Commission to come in with more solutions submitted and emailed the Commission members requesting this along with information.

- Carver County ranked top 5 as one of healthiest communities, Ramsey is on par with their offerings, yet Ramsey County is ranked 9th with a low equity score.
 - Would appreciate commission input on how to improve this and asked members to review.

Commission Member Update

- No other updated

Director Update:

- A more detailed summer programs recap will happen next month but on a high level there was growth in number of participants as well as programs such as fishing and archery.
- Recalls in the past that fully built out plans were presented with no thought to community input as there was a “we know best” attitude. Whereas now, Parks is intentionally in engaging community before those plans are formulated. While there is still progress to be made the shift is real and tangible.
- Tomorrow is an All-Staff Parks picnic to thank staff and show appreciation, first time since the pandemic and hosted by parks managers and supervisors. Much of the staff were primary onsite during the pandemic and a hybrid model can take a toll on staff.
- Appreciated Members coming us for the August Tour and *Leah suggested a winter tour.*

Tamara Mattison appreciated the opportunity for diverse residents and youth to have access to activities they are not normally exposed to. It will save lives.

Greg commented that coming up with those potential solutions to help the situation.

A motion for adjournment was made by Candy Petersen, meeting adjourned at 7:42pm

Next Meeting: October 12, 2022