

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

October 14, 2020 – 6:00 PM  
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Commission Members Attending:** Leah Shepard (AL): Jessica Pitzel (1), Michael Berger (AL), Jordan Nelson (2), Brian Tempas (3), Metric Giles (4), Bryan Shirley (5), Candy Petersen (7)

**Not Present:** Melissa Wenzel (6)

**Staff:** Kris Lencowski, Lisa Hanson Lamey, Angela Marlette

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Leah Shepard at 6:02pm.

**Approve September 9, 2020 Minutes and October Agenda:** Bryan Tempas motioned, and Brian Shirley seconded to approve the September meeting meetings and agenda. *All approved, motion carried.*

**Director's Updates/ Hockey Updates: Kris Lencowski & Lisa Hanson Lamey**

Continued work refining Parks COVID19 policies in the arenas:

- One parent for a child 10 years or less will be allowed in arenas
- Spectators allowed at 25% capacity in arenas
- 2 separate pods of 25 allowed on the ice at the same time with no mingling
- Coaches must always wear masks, skaters remain masked anytime off the ice
- Expanding group size for outdoor sporting events to 250, but must have submitted a COVID19 plan for example at Cross Country Ski meets

**High school hockey season** has been pushed back to start November 23<sup>rd</sup> for boys and November 30<sup>th</sup> for girls. The amount of games has also been shortened. Working with the 6 high schools that use the arenas to accommodate these changes. Thus far no impact on youth associations.

*Brian T, asked what the biggest community pushbacks has been?* It has really been for the young skaters and parents needing to leave immediately. Hence the change to allow one parent while still following CDC guidelines of social distancing and prevention. The varying sizes of the facilities can make it more challenging.

*Bryan S asked about COVID19 outbreaks in arenas and rentals.* There has been 8 reported COVID19 cases since opening in June and that were mostly stayed isolated with the individuals. Ice rentals are on track for the season considering the amount of available ice time with COVID19 precautions taken into account reducing availability.

Lisa reviewed the **TCO incident** in which a gun was taken into the arena in protest of current COVID19 restrictions. Ramsey County worked closely with the Sheriffs, the Hockey association and the City of Vadnais Heights city attorney. The Hockey Association came out with a zero-tolerance policy regarding weapons. A "No Trespass" order has been issued to the individual. The posting of a "no weapons" sign is not allowed since the rink is a county property and does not fall under exemptions to the posted sign policy. In these instances, staff are directed to call law enforcement who will try to de-escalate peacefully.

Metric raised the point of using rinks or their parking lots as roller-skating rinks as a more equitable activity. Lisa commented that some rinks are used in the off season for inline skating, but this could be explored more in other areas. Kris mentioned that the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks project in which the community is engaged in looks for these potential options.

**TCO Fieldhouse:** Lisa reported that December 5<sup>th</sup> is when the indoor Turf Facility is scheduled to open as well as facility specs and uses. *Brian asked that Parks takes the opportunity to be proactive in inviting diverse groups and programs.* Open play was also very popular with these groups and is planned to resume.

**Parks Programming Update:** Kris summarized parks programming with a presentation covering:

- Ramsey Reader:
- Various Winter Recreation Areas
  - This year with COVID19, campfires will be the alternative to warming shelters
- Equity Program Grant Application from the Metropolitan Council
  - Application due in January 2021 and available for several years
  - Looking to engage the community and partners for ideas
  - Winter is an important since most activities are not associated with communities of color
  - Would appreciate any ideas: *Brian suggested reaching out to Joe's sporting goods. Metric suggested Dog sledding as a program idea.* Theodore Wirth Park may have been a past site.
- Tamarack Nature Center:
  - Preschool in session with heavy emphasis on outdoor classes
  - Limited in-person programming
  - Increased outreach to schools
  - Virtual Programming

**GARE (Government Alliance for Racial Equity) Toolkit Presentation:** Kris emphasized the different levels of experience/familiarity in both the Commission and Parks staff with GARE.

The presentation reviewed:

- History of its use in Ramsey County and in the Parks department
- The components of the toolkit and how it advances equity
- Why the tool is important
- Desired results and outcomes
- Parks Implementation: Current use in Park Racial Equity Leadership Team, Planning department projects justification form, Requests for Board Action Racial Equity component, incorporating at each Key Issues Directors meetings, further training and development

Kris is the overall leader of use of GARE within Parks and the county has dedicated resources to this through a community group called Racial Equity Action Circle and well as the RECERT internal team.

*Jessica Pitzel recommended we track website traffic to assist with data gathering.*

*Leah asked how receptive Parks staff are to this and a timeline.* Overall enthusiasm to use the tool and cautious excitement. The Parks ordinance revision will have GARE toolkit applied to it as well as the West Side project. *Mike Berger asked how the GARE toolkit/ decision matrix affects the community engagement as well as budget decisions? Would like to see more documentation on that process, to be able to see some work.*

IPP2 (International Public Participation Association) has community engagement that is designed to be

equitable. *Brian voiced concerns over who is involved and wants to make sure people are engaged before the process starts. Kris shared the creation of a steering committee to ensure community voice. Metric asked about budgetary accountability to get this work done, such as an actual line item on the budget. Step 5 in the toolkit reviews funding of the proposed project and if the different items are realistic. The use of the toolkit is incorporated into each projects funding. Metric would like to see the actual work or something that shows this is being done, just as Mike previously stated. Metric would be interested on how it was determined to have 2 white women lead the Racial Equity process after all the discussion on Racial Equity and would like to know who was interviewed and how the decision was made. It will also be a representative group of people that will be involved in the West Side project and help lead it. Leah commented that if the Parks and Recreation RE Leadership Team could be opened to public participation with a stipend. Currently, Parks is still exploring which areas and communities can assist with these deeper conversations. Jessica commented that she appreciates the discussion of implicit bias and has a link to share with the group.*

#### **Commission Member Updates:**

- Brian Tempas expressed dismay at vandalism done at a St. Paul Park (Como) and encouraged other members to make sure this is reported and called out to those you know.
- Invitation to attend further training and an exercise as it pertains to the Equitable engagement of the community in the West side project.
  - Approximate 2-hour commitment to be done before the November meeting.
  - Members would appreciate different levels to participate.
    - There are many ways of involvement whether it be from high to low. involvement as well as a Parks Commission member or as a community member
  - Ideally this training is done separately from the meeting and then brought back to the group with updates from those able to attend.

**Adjourn:** The meeting was adjourned at 8:02pm.

#### **Helpful links discussed:**

To view the Ramsey Reader: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/content/tamarack-nature-center>

To get alerts for new posts: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/your-government/open-government/email-updates>

Implicit bias training mentioned by Jessica: <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.htm>

**Next Meeting: 11/18/2020**