

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

December 11, 2019 – 6:00 PM

PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT: 2015 VAN DYKE STREET, MAPLEWOOD, MN 55109

Attendees: Leah Shepard (AL), Jordan Nelson (2), Metric Giles (4), Bryan Shirley (5), Melissa Wenzel (6), Candy Petersen (7)

Not in Attendance: Jessica Pitzel (1), Brian Tempas (3),

Guests and Staff: Branden Block, Mark McCabe, Jolie Wood, Ken Pelto and Angie Marlette

The meeting was called to order at 6:13pm by Leah Shepard.

Approval of Agenda

Candy Petersen motioned for approval of the December 11, 2019 agenda. All Approved. *Motion carried.*

Approval of the Minutes

Candy submitted for correction the spelling of her last name. Bryan Shirley motioned for approval of the November 13, 2019 minutes and Candy seconded, all approved. *Motion carried.*

Racial Equity Plan Annual Review: Attachments - PRRELT Work Plan & GARE Toolkit

Ken Pelto reviewed the history of the creation of Parks & Recreation Racial Equity Leadership Team (PRRELT) in 2018. The presented work plan took a year to draft and was done with the assistance of Human Resources. Parks has chosen to use the GARE (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) Toolkit to achieve these goals. The department has now begun implementing the work plan. Ken reviewed the nine goals of the work plan, progress and outcomes that are being monitored. The work plan is considered a working document that will be updated and changed to strengthen and improve. Mark McCabe asked for the Commissions suggestions and comments on the PRRELT Work Plan.

Melissa Wenzel asked about any pushback received. Mark responded that the response has been more questioning on why it is important and how this applies to their daily work.

Metric Giles asked who is doing the measurements, especially if these problem practices were created internally. He strongly recommends an outside organization that has experience be utilized to monitor and assist. Mark and Ken agreed that this is a great suggestion and will explore this.

Leah Shepard asked that the Commission is presented to with the results from the GARE toolkit when the various plans are implemented. Mark agreed to this. Leah also asked if the committee designed in Goal Four will be opened to the public. This is definitely an option, ideally more for the specific items in that goal. Leah asked if anything has been done to increase the racial diversity of this committee? Mark suggested checking in with Janet Guthrie, who just completed a study on Advisory committees and their representation. The group had a number of suggestions in which to solicit more diverse applications.

Jordan Nelson commented on training succession training program, this can help the seasonal workers have something to strive for. Mark agreed that the application requirements can deter these workers from getting in the door. Jordan also asked about on-going training. Ken commented that it is the goal to have on-going training and work is being done to determine who should be leading those trainings. Ideally its lead from outside the department.

Local Impact of Census Data: *Attachments - Census Fast Facts, Job Flyers, Census 101*

Jolie Wood expressed that as people active in their communities, they can play a key role in census awareness by encouraging respondents and recruiting census takers. Census takers only go to those households that have not responded by sending in the questioner. Currently, Ramsey County has only received 33% of the applications needed. This can have serious implications for those communities not counted since federal funding and other resources may not be allocated. All are encouraged to apply and a great opportunity that pays \$22.00 an hour. Jolie reviewed the ways that census workers are identified, how the public can avoid a home visit and different safety considerations for the worker and the public. Jolie then shared a presentation that detailed many of the programs funded using census data and how an accurate count secures these funds for our communities. The census is fundamentally about representation and is in the Constitution. It is through this that seats in Congress are allocated and its very possible a seat can be lost to another state that is growing more quickly. She shared that the census is also about equity since historically renters, low income households and minorities are undercounted. An example of this happened in North Minneapolis with an over 7,000-person undercount resulting in a loss of a city council member for that district. Jolie stressed that census information is confidential with severe penalties for violation. Jolie will supply census materials for distribution by the commission members. Reminder that the application deadline is February 1st, 2020.

Metric asked if there is a correlation between low census response and low voter turnout. Jolie confirmed that there is a definite link and a pattern in every major city.

2020 Work Plan Review: *Attachment - Template for 2020 Parks Commission Work Plan*

Mark and Leah asked Commission members to bring suggestions for items to be covered to the next meeting. Metric would like to see on-going racial equity work being addressed as well as an update on what is happening with the plan that came out of the ADA action committee. Leah would like more visioning work to be done by the commission and an update from the Advisory Committees work group study. Mark can see if HR has an organizational development contact.

Parks Commission By-Law Review: *Attachment - Current By-Laws*

Leah wanted to allow members time to review the by-laws and see if anything needs to be updated at the January meeting. Metric expressed the concern about equitable representation on the Parks Commission and follow-up with the Advisory Committees Work group. Melissa mentioned that location and access can also be an issue.

Directors Update

* Mark updated that Commissioner Reinhardt raised an addendum to the Budget that would push out the closing time of The Ponds to 2021 which was not supported. The County Board votes on December 17th which keeps the closing time at the end of the 2020 season and starts a public process with the City of Maplewood about best use of land. * Parks participated in Community Engagement training which used a Parks case study of the repurposing of West Side Arena to better serve the residents of the community, especially during off season times. Parks would like to present this case study which can springboard to other relevant conversations. * Tamarack Nature Center just had its annual volunteer appreciation event with great food, fun activities and was very well attended. * Design Build price discussions continue to move forward for the Vadnais Turf Facility as does the work on securing a Naming Rights Agreement to help with the cost of construction. A key sponsor has been identified.

Report from the Chair & Other Commissioners

No reports from the Chair or Commission members.

Adjournment: Bryan motioned for adjournment at 7:56pm