

# **RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**

## **MINUTES**

**JANUARY 8, 2014**

### **PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT**

The meeting of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Gale Pederson at 6:00 p.m., at Ramsey County Parks and Recreation in Maplewood, Minnesota.

Members Present: Gale Pederson, Jack Ditmore, Deb Falkowski, Rich Straumann, Candy Petersen

Members Absent: Bryan Shirley, Brian Tempas, Phil Jenni

Staff Present: Greg Mack, Jody Yungers, Kara Coustry

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Rich Straumann moved, seconded by Deb Falkowski, that the agenda of the Parks and Recreation Commission be approved as emailed. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Jack Ditmore moved, seconded by Rich Straumann, that the minutes of December 11, 2013 be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **REVIEW OF 2013 WORK PLAN ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Referring to the Commission 2013 Work Program, Greg Mack reviewed the status of each item (see attached annotated Work Program, with status noted in red font).

#### **2012 – 2013 STATE OF THE PARKS REPORT**

A draft State of the Parks Report consisting of a two year summary of committee activities was offered by Greg Mack to the Parks Commission as a starting point. The Parks Commission members are to review and add comments / opinions about the current state of our park and recreation system (see highlight, page 1) and prospective for the future (see highlight, last page). The pictures included in the draft are intended as place holders for realistic pictures. Parks Commission members are to respond by no later than one week prior to the February Parks Commission meeting.

#### **REVIEW OF THE CONSERVATION CORPS**

The Conservation Corps was funded through the Legacy Parks and Trails Fund. Although the crew is housed at Tamarack, they support environmental initiatives throughout Ramsey County regional parks and trails. The first year focused on working with juveniles as an alternative to incarceration, which was logistically difficult to coordinate. In 2013, the program was changed by providing four (4) crew leaders to work with area youth doing environmental education and field work. The 2013 year's crew was highly productive at removing buckthorn and other evasive plants, in addition to other tasks such as building rain gardens, and collecting and planting seeds. The 2013 annual report was distributed to the Committee. We have funding to bring back the Conservation Corps again in 2014. The Parks Commission expressed strong support for continuation of the program.

### **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Rich Straumann nominated Gale Pederson to serve as Chair for 2014. Hearing no additional nominations, Rich Straumann moved, seconded by Jack Ditmore, that nominations be closed and a unanimous ballot be cast for Gale Pederson as Chair. Motion carried.

### **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR**

Deb Falkowski nominated Jack Ditmore to serve as Vice Chair for 2014. Hearing no additional nominations, Deb Falkowski moved, seconded by Rich Straumann, that nominations be closed and a unanimous ballot be cast for Jack Ditmore as Vice Chair. Motion carried.

### **APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSION BYLAWS FOR 2014**

Gale Pederson asked for a motion to approve the bylaws without any changes. Candy Peterson approved, Rich Straumann seconded that the Commission approve its 2014 bylaws. Motion carried unanimously.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Greg Mack announced his retirement effective at the end of April, 2014. The position of Parks and Recreation Director was opened for applications today, with preliminary interviews to be conducted toward the end of February.

Consultants are working on the redesign of the Manitou Ridge Golf Course Maintenance Shop / Cold Storage Facility. Bids will be taken in early 2014. An RFP for the design / build of the Early Childhood Center will be issued next month. The Trout Brook Trail Master Plan is going to a consultant.

The Keller Lake boardwalk is emerging. The contractors are waiting on the weather to auger in the posts over the open water and decking will be installed in spring.

### **REPORT FROM CHAIR AND OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS**

Candy Peterson thanked Jody Yungers for her support of the Ray Widstrand fundraiser. Rich asked about 70 acres, Fish Creek property acquired by the City of Maplewood. The County is to get 20 acres on the north side of Fish Creek with the whole site to be jointly managed. This was a positive acquisition made at a time when the real estate market was weak.

Jack Ditmore inquired about the sale of the Vaden Sports Center, which has been in the news. Greg Mack stated that nobody has reached out to Parks and Recreation, after the initial successful bidder was unable to perform.

The Coliseum is closing their ice / hockey service which should have a positive impact on our arenas, especially Aldrich.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Upon appropriate motion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kara Coustry