

RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

MINUTES SEPTEMBER 10, 2014 PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

The meeting of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Gale Pederson at 6:35 p.m., at Ramsey County's Goodrich Golf Course in Maplewood, Minnesota.

Members Present: Gale Pederson, Jack Ditmore, Deb Falkowski, Rich Straumann, Candy Petersen, Brian Tempas, Metric Giles

Members Absent: Phil Jenni, Bryan Shirley

Staff Present: Jon Oyanagi, Kara Coustry

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Candy Petersen moved, seconded by Brian Tempas, that the agenda of the Parks and Recreation Commission be approved as emailed. Motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Rich Straumann moved, seconded by Deb Falkowski, that the minutes of August 13, 2014 be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

INTRODUCTIONS FOR NEW PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEMBERS

Metric Giles was appointed in August to represent District 4. He has 9 children and 18 grandchildren which give him the passion for the betterment of family, education, environment and community. Metric is graduate from Concordia – St. Paul. He works days as a lime plant operator at the St. Paul water treatment plant, is a director for the Community Stabilization Project, which advocates for renters. He began community gardening in the 1990 and calls himself an urban farmer who not only grows food, but grows relationships and builds community networks.

MANITOU RIDGE MAINTENANCE BUILDING

The cold storage building is under construction, scheduled to be completed around October 1. Manitou staff will move into this facility temporarily at this time so the existing buildings can be demolished. Construction on the new maintenance building will begin around October 16. Site work will also be completed this fall. The project will be complete by February 15, 2015.

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING CENTER

We are currently working out the details of the design of the Early Childhood Learning Center but expect to break ground this fall. The Early Childhood Learning Center will be attached to the existing Tamarack Nature Center building and consist of two classrooms.

LEGACY FUNDING

The recent 2016-17 Parks and Trails Legacy Funding request goes to the Metropolitan Council for discussion and voting. It provides a good diversity of projects throughout the Ramsey County Regional Park and Trail

System. Funding is dependent on approval by the Minnesota Legislature and if approved, will be available July 1, 2015. We will receive more information spring 2015.

RICE CREEK NORTH REGIONAL TRAIL PROJECT (TAP GRANT)

The County Board accepted TAP Grant funding of 1.1 million for construction of the Rice Creek North Regional Trail Project from County Road H in Mounds View to Long Lake Regional Park in New Brighton. We will be issuing RFPs for the professional design and engineering services. The TAP grant (administered by MN DOT) is scheduled for implementation in 2015 and requires a 20% match of non-federal dollars, plus the project design and engineering costs.

Construction of trail connections such as these are part of an overall master plan to provide biking and walking connectivity throughout the twin cities. This particular trail provides connectivity to Irondale Schools and provides access to informal ski trails.

CONSERVATION CORP

“Conservation Corps provides meaningful work for young people in managing natural resources, responding to disasters, conserving energy and leading volunteers. We provide training in resource management, safety, job-readiness and technical skills, and we help young people develop personal responsibility, a strong work ethic and greater awareness of environmental stewardship.” <http://www.conservationcorps.org/about-us/>

Sponsored by the DNR, the Conservation Corps provide various opportunities for youth ages 15-18 years and young adults ages 18-25. The after school program, which targets Twin City teens at or below 80% of the city’s median income by providing educational activities and service-learning projects, is only one of their programs. Our Conservation Corp Crew incorporated high school youth in educational and in-field work programming this past spring and will be starting again during fall session.

So far this year our Conservation Corp: provided the after school program, removed thistle, burdock and other invasive species within numerous prairies throughout the park system; removed buckthorn for oak woodland restoration along the Long Lake bike trail; removed woody invasive species to complete restoration at Grass Lake; cleared the Rice Creek canoe route through the park system; and at Tamarack, they helped landscape and install the Hobbit House, garden and vegetation in the play area.

Metric has mentored and worked with the Conservation Corps. He wanted us to encourage more diversity amidst the supervisor level of this group to be more representative of the diversity of its youth workers.

GOLF DOME

The initial 20 year contract with the Golf Dome is set to expire at the end of 2016. Current contract holders were seeking early contract renewal to provide security in knowing any investments they might make, such as replacing the bubble, would be viable. The Dome’s primary business occurs in winter with golf professionals, schools and youth organizations such as First Tee.

Discussion was initiated around other possible uses for the space, such as adding a multi-purpose area and building a field house for year round use by concert events and other mid-scale venues. Deb mentioned that overflow parking from the Goodrich Golf Course should be considered. It was generally agreed that a study would be needed to determine best use of the space before any decision could be made. In the meantime, any renewal contract could be structured with buyout options so that current owners could proceed with improvements.

CO-MEETING WITH ANOTHER PARKS GROUP

As a follow up to August request for meeting with another parks group, it was clarified the first outreach would be made to the City of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Commission. It was decided the meeting would be to discuss how best to allocate Legacy and Metropolitan Council Capital Improvement Program (CIP) dollars. The focus will

be on the development and implementation of an outreach nature and outdoor recreation based programming for people of low income and color. The goal will be a measurable increase in nature and outdoor based programming and participants of low income and color.

Jack mentioned the possibility of partnering with golf courses to reduce watershed with improved drainage.

Metric mentioned partnering with the City of St. Paul and Ramsey County Food and Nutrition Commission. Metric also cautioned about the soil contamination at Jimmy Lee Recreation Center and wanted to be sure benchmarks were set and mandates followed for future projects.

Rich gave an example of the recent Library/Recreation Center opening at Arlington Hills and the partnership between St. Paul Libraries and St. Paul Parks and Recreation.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

October's meeting will occur at Highland Arena, but will be confirmed when next agenda transmitted.

Harding Roof replacement is well under way and scheduled for completion around 9/19.

We are getting ready for this year's deer hunt. A news release will be sent in mid-September and post cards will be mailed to notify surrounding residents. The first hunt is scheduled on October 10 and will conclude by the third week of November.

Changes from the last deer hunt include the addition of sharp-shooters in St. Paul and Maplewood, a hunt at Rice Creek North Regional Trail Corridor for the first time, with the off leash dog area remaining open. There will be no hunt at Tamarack Nature Center.

REPORT FROM THE CHAIR AND OTHER COMMISSION MEMBERS

Rich reported that Active Living Ramsey County is working on a Request for Qualification (RFQ) to complete a bike-walk pedestrian Master Plan for the county. This huge undertaking involves tying all City Master Plans together into one cohesive county plan.

Deb has been hearing negative feedback about the course conditions at Keller Golf Course. They are getting rough from excessive play. She believes more damage control by staff and with signage would help alleviate some of the issues. There has also been grumblings about increased rates next year. Deb suggested we focus on keeping golf carts on cart paths, put more posts near bunkers and post signs to replace your divots.

Metric mentioned three upcoming events: Thursday, 9/11 is the Saint Paul Almanac, "To the Nines" book release party at The Black Dog Coffee and Wine Bar at 7:00 pm; Saturday, 9/13 is the Jazz Festival west of Victoria, on Selby; Sunday, 9/14 is the Community Meal which is a mile long meal along Victoria Avenue in St. Paul. All Metro Transit rides are free for this event.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon appropriate motion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kara Coustry