

# RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

## MINUTES

May 13, 2015, 6:00 p.m.  
Parks and Recreation Department

The meeting of the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Gale Pederson at 6:01 p.m., at the Parks and Recreation Administrative Building in Maplewood, Minnesota.

Members Present: Gale Pederson, Jack Ditmore, Phil Jenni, Candy Petersen, Rich Straumann and Brian Tempas

Members Absent: Deb Falkowski, Metric Giles and Bryan Shirley

Staff Present: Jon Oyanagi, Kara Coustry and Mike Goodnature

Guest Speaker: Chris Swallow

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Candy Petersen moved, seconded by Brian Tempas that the minutes of April 8, 2015 be approved. Motion carried unanimously.

### **GO APE – CHRIS SWALLOW**

Chris Swallow came to assess the possibility of setting up a tree-top ropes course at Battle Creek or Long Lake Regional Parks. Their company prefers to establish 10 year lease contracts, with options to renew every five years. They assume all responsibility for set-up, operations, liability and course dismantle, and carry a \$10 million umbrella policy to indemnify parks (10 times the industry standard).

Operations would likely run from mid-April through October. They generally attract 70-90% unique park visitors, typically 20-30 year olds: 50% of users are friends and families, 25% corporate, 15% (ranging upwards of 40%) youth groups, with 10% devoted to discounted or free tickets for under-served and special needs participants. Standard fees are \$57/adult, \$37/kid, with 4'8" minimum height, 10 year minimum age and 285lb maximum weight restriction.

Staff include one manager who is brought in, with 8 FTE and 8 PT hired locally. Two weeks of CPR and rescue training are provided to employees. Press releases and market collateral are all approved by Parks. They refresh the course every five years with new materials and to add new elements. They also provide annual inspections from an independent arborist as an added assurance their operations are not harmful to the trees.

Chris will be sending sample contracts and a Pro-forma for review. Jon Oyanagi would be interested in having a non-compete clause in the contract.

### **CONSERVATION CORPS**

Mike Goodnature presented a summary report of 2014 and anticipated 2015 work accomplishments of the Conservation Corps. We have been contracting with this group since 2012 through Legacy Funding, which is designated for Regional Parks.

### **SNAIL LAKE MARSH MASTER PLAN CONCEPT UPDATE**

An open house was held in February at the City of Shoreview Council Chambers to solicit comments for the proposed master plan design. The Parks Commission reviewed the revised master plan. There was some question regarding an historical mound. The identified location of that mound had natural surface trails planned, rather than bituminous.

Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Department is planning to amend the 1996 Highway 96 Regional Trail Corridor Master Plan for a portion of the Highway 96 Regional Trail adjacent to Snail Lake Marsh in Shoreview. The addition of Snail Lake Marsh will provide 47 acres of passive recreation, including paved and natural surface trail facilities, informal seating areas, nature observation areas, habitat restoration and interpretation along the Highway 96 Regional Trail.

### **ARENA TASK FORCE UPDATE**

Candy Petersen represents the Parks and Recreation Commission on the Arena Task Force. The group met for the first time primarily for introductions and organization purposes. The next meeting occurs tomorrow, May 14 and will focus on history and today's operations. There is also a Technical Advisory Committee being formed to provide technical support to this group as subject matter experts. Additionally, the MN Amateur Sports Commission agreed to provide free consultation to the group.

### **WINTER RECREATION AREA**

We've held three Winter Recreation Area Summits to date and have a fourth scheduled for June 4<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 p.m. at Keller Clubhouse. This group has formed four sub-groups which focus on the topics of:

- 1) Stakeholders and Champions
- 2) Funding
- 3) Lobbying
- 4) Operations

There is nothing in the bonding bill this year, so the focus has shifted to the next bonding session in 2016. With scope of offerings of the Winter Recreation Area plan broadened to include downhill skiing, snowboarding and tubing in addition to cross country skiing, the enhanced plan is drawing more interest and less criticism.

### **RACIAL EQUITY DISCUSSION CONTINUED – OUTREACH**

Jon Oyanagi met with the Metropolitan Council to discuss the 2040 Plan, which includes a requirement for agencies to document their outreach efforts throughout the master planning process. The Metropolitan Council even provided a Draft Community Engagement Plan that their agency will consider adopting soon.

We are looking to get a student intern to work 20 hours/week this fall. Their sole focus will be to research best practices related to community engagement, and will assist us with formulating a plan for community outreach.

Jon also attended the Marnita's Table Project which supports the belief that if you bring people together over food, engagement happens naturally. It looks informal and feels relaxed, but is intentional and facilitated. Best outcomes are achieved the more diverse the attendees.

### **REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR**

We have a new manager at Goodrich Golf Course – Brad Behnke. Parks Commission members commented on the tees (3<sup>rd</sup> hole) that were redone at Goodrich and how they are much nicer.

**REPORT FROM THE DIRECTOR CONT.**

We submitted our Aquatic Invasive Species Plan to the County Board, which was a requirement for state funding. The Board also issued a temporary easement to the Metropolitan Council Environmental Services for work north of the TCAAP property.

Aldrich Arena’s elevator is in and will be ready for graduation season, but still needs to be permitted.

Monday marks the end of the Legislative session. The House and Senate bill being considered funds the same Maintenance and Operations amount as in previous years. The earned interest that Minneapolis had been getting will now be split among all implementing agencies according to the same formula as the Maintenance and Operations appropriation. This appropriation is designated for use specifically to reach out to underserved groups.

Senator Foug Hawj put in a special request for \$300,000 to fund Tuj Lub under Cultural Arts Legacy Funding. St. Paul was asking for \$50,000 for a Chinese Garden in Phalen Park, but they are looking to pull that money out of Ramsey County’s appropriation. Stay tuned to see what amounts, if any, are appropriated and from what source.

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

Rich Straumann attended a meeting in Falcon Heights City Hall to discuss breaking ground in 2016 for the Natural History Museum that will include a Raptor Center and new Planetarium. Rich also reports there was such good representation at the Arden Hills listening session for the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan, they had to move to a larger room.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kara Coustry