

# RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

## MINUTES

June 10, 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 6:04 p.m., at the Parks and Recreation Administrative Building in Maplewood, Minnesota.

Members Present: Gale Pederson, Deb Falkowski, Metric Giles, Phil Jenni, Candy Petersen, Rich Straumann

Members Absent: Bryan Shirley and Brian Tempas

Staff Present: Jon Oyanagi and Kara Coustry

Guest: Shirley Erstad, Executive Director of Friends of the Parks and Trails

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Candy Petersen moved, seconded by Phil Jenni that the agenda of the Parks and Recreation Commission be approved with the additional Soccer Partners Program Grant item added. Motion carried unanimously.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Rich Straumann moved, seconded by Phil Jenni that the minutes of May 13, 2015 be approved with a name correction. Motion carried unanimously.

### **HIGHLAND PARK HIGH SCHOOL TEAM ROOM PROPOSAL AT HIGHLAND ARENA**

Highland Park High School submitted a proposal to convert 18 feet of the west end of the synthetic ice portion of Highland Arena into a designated team locker room for their use. Their proposal is endorsed by Cretin-Derham Hall High School and the Hockey Association who initially helped construct the synthetic ice at Highland Arena. The Parks and Recreation Commission discussed the value of an established locker room to the Highland Park High School's hockey program. A dedicated locker room would facilitate equipment storage, chalk talks, player instructions and team bonding. Candy Petersen moved, seconded by Rich Straumann to move forward with Highland Park High School's proposal for dedicated locker rooms at Highland Arena. Motion carried unanimously.

### **SOCCER PARTNERS PROGRAM GRANT**

The City of St. Paul submitted an application to Ramsey County for \$50,000 in grant funding from the Ramsey County Soccer Partners Program to supplement the cost of renovating the El Rio Vista/Neighborhood House Gilbert de la O multi-sport field. Total project expenses are \$1,676,700 of which the City of Saint Paul is funding the majority through their Capital Improvement Budget. They are also gaining \$200,000 from an NFL Grassroots Program Grant. These two funding sources combined more than cover the cost of their proposed renovation project.

The Ramsey County Soccer Partners Grant Program established a budget of \$1 million in 2000 to assist in the acquisition and development of youth soccer facilities in order to meet projected demand of soccer in the area. The remaining balance of the soccer grant fund is \$50,000. The Arena Task Force has been meeting to discuss the future of Ramsey County arenas, with the expectation of an overall arena plan proposal by early 2016. One

possible scenario is a proposal to repurpose one of our arenas to become an indoor soccer venue, in which case, this funding might come in handy.

The Parks and Recreation Commission was concerned about community accessibility of the ballfield. The Commission wanted the City of Saint Paul to provide a response to the following two points prior to considering a recommendation to approve the grant funding request.

1. Describe the process of community engagement used and the outcome.
2. Describe the nature of accessibility for the immediate neighborhood.

### **MID-YEAR REVIEW OF THE WORK PLAN**

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the Work Plan to-date and an anticipated timeline for the rest of the year. The group requested that projects be categorized by funding.

### **PARK SYSTEM TOUR**

The Commission cancelled the July meeting and set the tour date for the August 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Friends of the Parks was invited to join the group for a park tour. The group discussed visiting the following locations to view current projects and proposed future system improvements.

- TCAAP property with a stop at County Road H to visualize the trail
- Rice Creek North Trail Extension
- Long Lake to see the site of a new pavilion (left lot) and the site of a new shelter (right lot)
- Sucker Lake

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- a. Website update – The County will be rolling out a new website in the next couple of months using plain language and fewer clicks to access information.
- b. Legislative update
  - Legacy funding projects were approved
  - The Cultural Heritage Fund of \$150,000 for the Tuj Lub courts at Keller Regional Park was approved. Both Ramsey County and the City of Maplewood will also contribute \$75,000 for \$150,000 fund match.
  - The Metropolitan Council Bond interest income that the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board had been getting will be divided among all ten implementing agencies effective 2018.
- c. Highland Arena update – the City of Saint Paul has been holding up building permits for Cretin-Derham Hall's improvement project. The County needs to fix the sewer line and establish an access agreement with the City.
- d. County Board Actions
  - Rice Creek North Regional Trail Easements were approved to provide access over the railroad and a mobile park.
  - Hwy 96 Regional Master Plan Amendment was approved and has been forwarded to the Metropolitan Council for approval.
  - A TCAAP Board Action approved submission of the Federal Lands to Parks Application to the National Park Service, authorized the lease agreement to access sites for remediation prior to full transfer to the County and authorized the ultimate Land Transfer after remediation.

- e. We are hiring an intern, Kee Vang, for 10-20 hours per week who will focus on all aspects of community engagement. Kee will start this fall.

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

Rich Straumann reports that work continues on the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan. Rich also mentioned the new Hwy 96 Bridge over 35W will complete the Highway 96 Regional Trail in that area.

Metric Giles questioned the Conservation Corps' diversity in hiring practices in which they have fewer kids of color in supervisory roles. Metric also urges the Parks and Recreation Commission to be more present at community events and to monitor events calendars such as the Saint Paul Almanac (<http://saintpaulalmanac.org/>) for opportunities to engage and educate the community about the park system. The commissioners discussed assembling a calendar and volunteering to attend the events as representatives of Ramsey County Parks and Recreation.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kara Coustry