



Park Commission Meeting

May 6, 2024

7:00 PM

Fridley City Hall, 7071 University Avenue NE

Minutes

Call to Order

Chair Borman called the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present

EB Graham
Peter Borman
Suad Maow
Tim Kirk
Ken Schultz
Don Whalen

Absent

Luke Cardona

Also Present

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director
Karen Blaska, Anoka County Parks Planner

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Agenda for May 6, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Kirk to approve the May 6, 2024 meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Graham. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes for April 1, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Graham to approve the April 1, 2024 meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. The motion passed unanimously.

Open Forum

No comments.

New Business

1. Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor Master Plan Update

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced Karen Blaska from Anoka County Parks who is present to share the final draft of the Rice Creek West Regional Trail Corridor Master Plan.

Karen Blaska, Anoka County Parks Planner, identified the 4.5-mile Rice Creek West trail corridor within Fridley as well as the connections it has which make it a 41-mile trail. She stated that the trail has been broken into segments, reviewing each segment within Fridley and identifying the long-range plans for the segment and adjacent amenities. She reviewed the estimated total development cost, highlighting some elements that are planned in the near future and noting that the remainder of the improvements would be about 10 to 20 years out. She confirmed that this would be a phased project over the next 20 years.

Commissioner Schultz noted a portion of the trail that ices over in the winter. He asked and received confirmation that would be addressed when that trail segment is improved. Commissioner Kirk noted that the State will be doing some safety improvements at two locations on University and asked if that would be helpful. Ms. Blaska commented that she did share the tunnel plans and it was stated that project could be included with the pedestrian improvements. She noted that she would follow up again to ensure that would still be included.

Commissioner Graham asked and received confirmation that through the project the entire trail would be resurfaced, although it would be completed in segments.

Chair Borman asked for details on timing. Ms. Blaska commented that they would plan to begin on the Locke Park segment in the next three to five years. She asked if the Commission would recommend approval of a resolution of support.

Motion by Commissioner Schultz to recommend that the City Council support the proposed Rice Creek West Regional Trail Long Range Plan. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed unanimously.

2. 2025 Parks Capital Investment Program Recommendation

Mr. Maher stated that each year the Park Commission reviews the Capital Investment Program (CIP) projects for the coming year to make a recommendation, noting that tonight he would review the projects anticipated for 2025. He provided an overview of the CIP, noting that traditionally the Parks CIP budget has ranged from \$300,000 to \$600,000 annually but explained that has increased in recent years with the implementation of the Parks System Improvement Plan. He provided a summary of the 2025 CIP for parks for the Commission to review.

Chair Borman asked if there will be a roundabout in front of Springbrook and whether that would impact the trail that runs in that corridor. Mr. Maher confirmed that the construction project has started for the roundabout project and noted that will not disrupt the trail project. He provided additional information on the existing conditions of the trail/boardwalk and the poor condition it is in.

Motion by Commissioner Kirk to recommend approval of the proposed 2025 Capital Investment Program. Seconded by Commissioner Maow. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Commons Park Recreation Building Discussion

Mr. Maher stated that construction on Commons Park is estimated to begin in 2025 and be completed in 2027, noting that a significant portion of the project is the park building. He reviewed the guiding themes of the Park System Improvement Plan as well as providing background information and the concept for the gateway to Commons Park. He reviewed additional features of the proposed recreation building including the indoor playground concept and indoor playground concept alternatives. He also provided information on the recreation building service delivery and staffing. He stated that he would like input on the vision presented tonight, with the recognition that this would require additional funds of the budget to be allocated towards the building.

Commissioner Kirk commented that if something is going to be incorporated for an indoor play space, it should probably be more than McDonalds has but did not see a need to compete with something like Eagle's Nest. Mr. Maher clarified that the intent would not be to build to the scale of Eagle's Nest but to have something right sized for Fridley.

Commissioner Schultz commented on indoor recreation facilities in Maple Grove and Golden Valley that seem similar, noting that it has been a great experience with his grandkids. Mr. Maher commented that staff has been in discussion with staff from those communities to gain information and comparable data.

Commissioner Graham asked if increasing the building size would have impacts on the fields. Mr. Maher replied that staff continues to work with the School District and FYSA to ensure that the needs of the baseball community can be met. He confirmed that the building footprint would not have an impact on the fields.

Commissioner Maow commented that an indoor play space would be a great amenity for local families. She asked if there would be a capacity to ensure that the space is not overrun. Mr. Maher commented that staff continues to develop the operational model.

Chair Borman commented that there were staffed park buildings in the community where he grew up and he would like to see that in Fridley as well.

Motion by Commissioner Graham to support the Commons Park recreation building concept featuring classroom space, indoor playground and gathering spaces to be open to the public on a regular schedule and staffed by Fridley Parks and Recreation. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. The motion passed unanimously.

Staff Reports

4. Springbrook Nature Center Report

Mr. Maher commented on the success of the recent fundraising event and highlighted the upcoming spring and summer programming and events.

5. Fridley Parks and Recreation Division Report

Mr. Maher provided a brief overview of the robust programs offered for residents of all ages and noted that staff has been busy confirming community rentals for upcoming events. He also provided an update on hiring for the summer season, Fridley 49er Days, and the community concert series.

6. Park Maintenance and Construction Report

Mr. Maher noted his written report with updates on park maintenance and construction projects.

Unfinished Business

None

Adjournment

Commissioner Graham made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:26 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
Recording Secretary