



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

May 03, 2021

7:00 PM

Fridley Civic Campus - 7071 University Avenue N.E.

MINUTES

Call to Order

Chair Heinz called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call

Members Present: Mike Heintz, EB Graham, Ryan Gerhard, Ken Schultz, Shauna Larson, and Eric Evanson.

Members Absent: Peter Borman

Others Present: Mike Maher, Springbrook Nature Center Director/Assistant Director (CSER); Parks and Facilities; Deborah Dahl, Director of Community Services and Employee Resources (CSER)

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Larson to approve the agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. MOTION passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

1. April 5, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Motion by Commissioner graham to approve the Meeting Minutes of April 5, 2021. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. MOTION passed unanimously.

New Business

2. Election of Officers

Commissioner Graham nominated Mike Heinz as Chair and Shauna Larson as Vice-Chair. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. MOTION passes unanimously.

3. Frights Frenzy Softball Tournament Application

Deborah Dahl noted that this is the second application for the year and the tournament will take place June 5-6.

Motion by Commissioner Graham to approve the Frights Frenzy Softball Tournament Application. Seconded by Commission Schultz. MOTION passed unanimously.

4. Parks Master Plan Update

Ms. Dahl stated that as of 4/27 nearly 900 surveys have been received on the Storymap. 605 on Neighborhood parks, 140 for Moore Lake, 80 for Commons Park, and 47 for Community Park. The comment period will close 5/3. Community engagement efforts included emails were sent to the participant data base/social media. Postcards, flyers were sent to neighborhood, participants, groups and e-newsletters, six pop-up events were held at various parks, the Eco Dash Event took place, Fridley Liquor Digest post and electronic billboards and mobile traffic signs. Resident phone survey was conducted of 400 households with questions about the parks master plan and results are being analyzed and compiled. Preliminary results show residents are very supportive of the parks and park improvements which validates many of the themes we've been hearing. Parks, trails, and recreation is valued. The City's demographics have changed significantly since 2013 and there is positive feedback that the City is headed in the right direction. The Capital Investment Program (CIP) is a regular part of our annual budgeting process and there is a 5-year plan.

5. Parks Capital Investment Projects

Ms. Dahl reported that an average of \$233,658 is spent per year on parks capital investment projects from 2012-2018. Since 2018, the City has increased spending to accommodate the Civic Campus and surrounding park/trail improvements as well as to begin some planning for the Parks Master Plan. Expenses were 2018 - \$15,151.63; 2019 - \$486,089.30; 2020 - \$438,513.92; 2021 - \$902,000 with an average of \$460,438.70.

Ms. Dahl said that the proposed recommendations include playground equipment replacements, part improvements, general park system improvements, court surfacing and overlays, park furnishings, SNC security upgrades and green roof finishing, parks system master plan improvements and snc fireplace installation for a total of \$787,000 for 2022.

Chair Heinz stated that we all hope that the master plan goes through, but he is concerned about spending that much money in 2-3 years. He asked if the green roof could be split over a few years or a different type of roof be installed. Or maybe the Springbrook Nature Center Foundation can help with those expenses.

Ms. Dahl replied that the current roof is functional and working but this has been delayed several years. We are still in the process of looking at other options for the roof and can reprioritize if need but funding would need to stay within the nature center as they operate under a different funding system and levy.

Chair Heinz recalled that the roof was supposed to be done at construction and there are other options to consider like solar shingles etc.

Jeff Jensen stated that this was part of the design and they are still in the process of getting donors to complete the project. We have to keep funds to finish this project which is why it has been carried on for three years. We do not know the future of the Parks Master Plan but need to make sure funds are kept in there to complete the roof. They are looking at different alternatives to make the roof look more attractive visually and cost less.

Commissioner Larson asked why the donors fell through and if they were experiencing hard times.

Mr. Jensen replied that the foundation worked to get donations and are hoping to continue. We are prepared with funds in the budget so we can finish the roof when the time comes.

Commissioner Schultz asked about the parks master plan vs. dealing with current issues. Ms. Dahl replied that this is the system has been managed over the years and knowing what maintenance needs to take place. Some projects were put on hold due to the parks master plan.

Mr. Jensen added that some playground equipment needed to be replaced because it was so bad. We need a plan to continue maintenance in the parks.

Commissioner Larson asked why Moore Lake continues to be put on hold.

Mr. Jensen replied that an analysis came in at \$4.5m to fix Moore Lake and we didn't want to put all funds into one park.

Ms. Dahl said that City Council will meet from June-October to discuss and finalize budget and CIP. Some projects may be subject to change and major projects are on hold until the Parks Master Plan is finalized. We will continue to make general improvements as in the past. Adopt-A-Park sponsorships have been helping reduce maintenance. Grants or donations may change the timing of some projects as well. The Parks Master Planning Process will develop a long-term strategic plan for park maintenance in 2023 and beyond.

6. Deer Management Summary

Mike Maher provided an update on the deer management activity that is now completed. We received approval to remove up to 30 deer. Deer management period was between 11/1 and 3/31. This year the management activity took place in month of March. They worked closely with the public safety department to determine locations so officers were on hand to be a point of contact. The sites included Springbrook Nature Center, private corporate property along the Rick Creek Corridor and Locke County Park. 11 deer were removed over three nights and they are

recommending doubling the budget for next year for deer management to get closer to remove 30 deer.

Commissioner Larson asked what was done with the deer once they were removed.

Mr. Maher replied that the DNR has a list of approved organizations that meet criteria and accept deer harvested for meat. In this case out of 11 deer, 7 went to individuals or organizations in need and the U of M did a study on urban foxes and coyotes and asked for donation of a few deer to use in their research project.

Commissioner Gerhard asked if there was anything proactive that could be done to limit the deer population, non-lethal population control.

Mr. Maher replied that a number of communities' partner with bow hunting organizations to do control hunts in larger park reserves where there is more room. Because most of Fridley parks are smaller size and close to residential areas, this does not work. Will continue to research other programs and options to be most budget effective.

7. EcoDash Recap

Short video was shared.

8. 49er's Festival Update

Ms. Dahl stated that there will be no event this year due to COVID. We have decided to continue to meet and find additional people to be involved in the group. The committee is doing vision and strategic planning sessions.

Staff Reports

9. A monthly report of activities, programs and events at the Springbrook Nature Center.

Mr. Maher shared the following:

- Tara Rogness was promoted to the Springbrook Nature Center Manager, she has been working at the Center for 20 years. As part of the staffing plan there is a position now open for an Interpretive Program Coordinator. Over 50 applications have been received so far.
- At the 4/26 City Council Meeting, Malcom and Annette Mitchell were recognized for their service at the SNC foundation. May 5th is designated as Malcom and Annette Mitchell Day in the City of Fridley.
- Outdoor classroom rental space was resumed in May.
- In partnership with recreation staff, SNC will participate in the summer concert series.
- Summer camps are completely full with waitlists.

10. Community Engagement Report

Ms. Dahl noted that community engagement is strong and promotional efforts for the Parks Master Plan. Adopt-A-Park is recruiting new volunteers. Lock Park Playground Opening Celebration is June 17 from 6:30-8 p.m. with a pre-concert welcome to the neighborhood at 6 p.m. at Civic Campus. Citywide Garage Sale is June 25-27 and registration includes promotion, on-line map, and signs. Staff are compiling results from the Resident Survey and developing a communications plan.

11. Recreation Division Highlights

Ms. Dahl stated that a brochure will be hitting mailboxes this week. Summer registrations are going strong, shelter rentals are picking up, summer hiring continues, pop-up events to support the Parks Master Plan are in place, May Day baskets were delivered by Rec N Roll Truck and the Senior Golf begins May 6.

Ms. Dahl said that COVID Protocols are still in place and continue to present challenges. Some changes to outdoor mask-wearing. An electronic packet will be printed for commission members. We will continue to work on long-term financial plan for Springbrook and Recreation Divisions. Mike Maher will be starting May 22 in his new role and Tara Rogness was promoted to Springbrook Manager effective May 22.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Graham to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Larson. MOTION passed unanimously and meeting adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Krista Peterson
Recording Secretary