



Park Commission Meeting

September 5, 2023

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

Luke Cardona
Peter Borman
Suad Maow
Tim Kirk
Ken Schultz
Don Whalen
Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director

Absent

EB Graham

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Agenda for September 5, 2023

Motion by Commissioner Kirk to approve the September 5, 2023 meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes for August 7, 2023

Motion by Commissioner Schultz to approve the August 7, 2023 meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Cardona. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Proposed 2024 Meeting Dates of the Parks and Recreation Commission

Parks and Recreation Director Mike Maher reviewed the proposed 2024 meeting dates

Motion by Commissioner Kirk to approve the 2024 meeting dates of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz.

Further discussion: Chair Borman recognized previous comments about potentially not holding as many meetings. Commissioner Schultz recalled that the discussion was to cancel a meeting if there was no business to consider rather than simply holding a meeting to hold a meeting. Chair Borman agreed that he could make the decision with staff to cancel a meeting if there was no business to consider.

The motion passed unanimously.

2. Innsbruck Nature Center Park Name Discussion

Mr. Maher provided background information on Innsbruck Nature Center, its naming, and how the park has transitioned in use over the years. He noted that perhaps there would be value and clarity in changing the name, as nature center typically implies a staffed park with a visitor center, indoor restrooms, and other amenities. He commented that New Brighton has an Innsbruck Park nearby which features typical park amenities and also causes confusion for visitors.

Chair Borman asked about the process for renaming a park and how that would be rolled out to the public. Mr. Maher commented on the practices the City would follow to update the name as well as other actions the City would take. Chair Borman commented that if the name were changed to Innsbruck Natural Area that would seem to better describe the area.

Commissioner Schultz asked if there is a reason for the Innsbruck name and whether there would be pushback from neighbors if that portion were changed. Mr. Maher commented that he would think the neighborhood is sentimental to the Innsbruck name while it does also lead to some confusion with Innsbruck Park. Commissioner Schultz stated that perhaps they reach out to the neighborhood for input, as he would favor changing the entire name to eliminate all the confusion.

The Commission agreed that this would be a good opportunity to reach out to the community for input on a total name change or changing the name to Innsbruck Natural Center. There was agreement that natural area would better describe this rather than nature center or park.

3. Community Engagement Summaries for 2024 Park Projects – Logan Park and Plymouth Square Park

Mr. Maher stated that they recently wrapped up community engagement for the four parks scheduled for improvements in 2025 and the intent tonight is to review the input collected for the first two parks. He provided an overview of the community engagement for Logan Park.

Commissioner Whalen asked when these parks were last updated, he acknowledged that Plymouth Square needs updating but commented that the playground equipment at Logan does not look old. Mr. Maher commented that the equipment is past the typical 20-to-25-year lifespan and explained that maintenance becomes an issue as replacement parts are not often available. He noted that accessibility also becomes a factor.

Chair Borman commented that he was surprised at the popularity of the spring ride structure. Commissioner Schultz commented that they should attempt to provide the amenities wanted by the neighborhood as this is a neighborhood park, using the example of the basketball court if that is feasible. He commented that they could cut back on other park features to provide the neighborhood with what is wanted.

The Commission commented that it would prioritize a full basketball court over the paved trail loop if the budget does not allow for both amenities.

Motion by Commissioner Cardona to recommend playground concept A for Logan Park with the addition of a spring rocker, colors to be determined by staff, a full basketball court, inclusion of a trail loop; priority should be given to the basketball court over the trail loop if the budget does not allow for both. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen.

Further discussion: Commissioner Kirk noted that there is no off-street parking at this location and basketball can often bring in visitors that would need to park on the street.

The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Maher reviewed the community engagement for Plymouth Square Park.

The Commission acknowledged the desire for pickleball.

Motion by Commissioner Cardona to recommend approval of playground concept A with the addition of shade sails for Plymouth Square Park. Seconded by Commissioner Kirk. The motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Cardona to recommend a full basketball court and full tennis court for Plymouth Square Park; the full tennis court should be substituted for a pickleball court if the budget is limited. Seconded by Commissioner Schultz. The motion passed unanimously.

Old Business

Staff Reports

4. Springbrook Nature Center Report

Mr. Maher provided an overview of the report, highlighting some events and upcoming plans. He stated that tickets for Pumpkin Night are available online or at City Hall.

5. Fridley Parks and Recreation Division Report

Mr. Maher reported a successful summer season.

6. Park Maintenance and Construction Report

Mr. Maher provided an overview on the progress for Moore Lake Park.

Mr. Maher noted the five-year celebration for the Civic Campus that will be held Saturday, September 9th.

Adjournment

Commissioner Kirk made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:32 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
Recording Secretary