



Park Commission Meeting

November 4, 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

Luke Cardona
EB Graham
Peter Borman
Melissa Luna
Tim Kirk
Don Whalen

Absent

Ken Schultz

Also Present

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Agenda for November 4, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Cardona to approve the November 4, 2024 meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Graham. The motion passed unanimously.

Approve Parks & Recreation Commission Minutes for October 7, 2024

Motion by Commissioner Kirk to approve the October 7, 2024 meeting minutes. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

1. Welcome and Introductions – New Parks and Recreation Commission Member Melissa Luna

The Commission welcomed new member, Commissioner Luna, and all Commissioners introduced themselves.

2. Commons Park Recreation Building Project Update

Mike Maher, Parks and Recreation Director, provided background information noting that at the last meeting the Commission reviewed the schematic design for Commons Park. He stated that staff has been working with the architect on the exterior and floorplan of the park building in anticipation to go for bid later in the winter. He reviewed some of the renderings of the outside of the building, the current floor plan for the space, as well as some other information about the space.

Commissioner Whalen asked if the bathroom would be cleared by a person rather than an automatic lock system to ensure there is no one in there. Mr. Maher commented that the bathroom at Moore Lake is on an automated lock system and explained that there is a motion sensor that would alert public safety in the case that someone were deciding not to vacate the space after a reasonable amount of time. He confirmed that someone could get out of the bathroom if the lock were activated while someone was in there.

Chair Borman asked the capacity of the meeting spaces. Mr. Maher replied that the rooms are a little smaller than the classrooms at Springbrook. He estimated seating for 20 to 25 in a classroom setting with tables and chairs, whereas 30 to 35 kids could fit in that space if it were a scenario where they were sitting on the floor. He commented that they maximized the amount of space they could get for their budget. Chair Borman asked if the design was made to accommodate a future expansion. Mr. Maher replied that the original plan included an indoor play area but that was removed due to costs and confirmed that could be added on as an addition in the future if the opportunity presented itself.

Commissioner Cardona asked for details on the timeline. Mr. Maher stated that the hope would be to complete the construction documents in January, bid the project in February, with construction to begin after July 4, 2025. He explained that the City worked with the sports association to ensure that the baseball season would not be disrupted.

Motion by Commissioner Graham to endorse the schematic design for the Commons Park Recreation Building. Seconded by Commissioner Cardona. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Moore Lake Community Building Rental Policy Review

Mr. Maher stated that at the last meeting, the Commission considered two applications from nonprofit organizations which requested a reduced or waived fee for use of the Moore Lake Community Building. He reported that the Commission approved the requests but directed staff to bring the fee schedule back for additional discussion. He reviewed the current rate structure and fee waiver request process for nonprofits.

Commissioner Cardona commented that while he does support the scholarship program and benefits for residents, he does not see the same benefit in a fee waiver for the building and would prefer to keep the resident and non-resident fee structure. He asked if staff has a different idea on this. Mr. Maher stated that he does not have a strong opinion on this but commented on the

administrative time that the requests take to process and put before the Commission and then City Council. He stated that the maintenance and operation costs of the building are considered and should be kept in mind as well. He noted that if there is a waiver of the fees, there is still an administrative and cleaning cost incurred by the City.

Commissioner Cardona acknowledged that parks and recreation is not a money maker and the programs and space rentals attempt to cover some of the costs but that will always run in deficit. He stated that he could perhaps support a once-per-year fee waiver for a nonprofit, but would prefer to move forward with the rate structure as they had previously set with no fee waiver process. Chair Borman agreed.

Chair Borman asked if the rental fees received have been compared to the operation and maintenance costs to see how those compare. He asked if there were any damages that occurred from rentals. Mr. Maher replied that type of analysis has not been completed. He noted that there were a few incidents of damage that occurred, and the deposit was held in those instances. He stated that perhaps after a full year of operation, they can do a detailed analysis. Commissioner Cardona commented that he would be interested in that analysis after the first year and perhaps that could also be compared to other City facilities.

Commissioner Whalen asked who makes the call whether to keep the deposit. Mr. Maher replied that the parks and recreation staff would make the determination. He noted that if there is damage noticed during the cleaning, photos are taken, camera footage is reviewed and if they are able to tie the damage to a certain group/event they would then hold the deposit.

Commissioner Cardona provided his experience on a recent building rental in Roseville.

Mr. Maher stated that he had some scenarios that he would like input from the Commission on and asked for input on whether recurring rentals should be allowed. Chair Borman stated that if someone wanted to rent the space every Wednesday for six to eight weeks, he would agree with that. Commissioner Whalen commented that they could always revisit that if it became an issue.

Commissioner Cardona commented that he believes these types of rentals should only be allowed on weekdays but perhaps there should be some type of cap.

Mr. Maher confirmed the consensus of the Commission to allow recurring rentals, Monday through Thursday, with a cap of six to eight weeks. He noted that he will make the edits to the rental policy as they discussed tonight and then bring the updated policy back for approval at the December meeting. He reviewed the next scenario, rentals where items may be available for sale and provided different examples. He also brought forward the scenario where a class or workshop is being held in the space at a cost to participants and whether that should be allowed. He then reviewed different examples of those scenarios to gain input from the Commission.

Commissioner Kirk stated that perhaps there are questions on the application as to whether admission would be charged, or items would be sold and there could then be discretion to staff

as to whether those items would be allowed. Mr. Maher commented that the City continues the recodification process. He stated that the current language does provide room for exceptions to allow or disallow different activities. He recapped the consensus of the Commission on the different scenarios that he reviewed and stated that he will bring updated language back for the Commission to review.

Motion by Commissioner Cardona to recommend maintaining the nonprofit rate at the resident rate. Seconded by Commissioner Whalen. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Borman recognized the timing necessary to bring a nonprofit waiver before the Commission and City Council and therefore process a waiver request.

Commissioner Luna asked if a nonprofit would still be able to rent the facility without paying taxes if they had the tax-exempt form. Mr. Maher confirmed that the tax-exempt form is requested from a nonprofit as part of the nonprofit rate application.

Staff Reports

4. Springbrook Nature Center Report

Mr. Maher provided highlights from his written report and thanked everyone who assisted with making the recent Pumpkin Night in the Park a success.

5. Fridley Parks and Recreation Division Report

Mr. Maher provided an overview of the report.

6. Park Maintenance and Construction Report

Mr. Maher provided an overview of the recent activity of park maintenance and progress of construction projects. He also provided feedback received on a recent park sign placement.

Chair Borman announced that on Friday, November 8th the Autumn Sampler will be held at Springbrook Nature Center and advised that tickets are available to purchase online for the event.

Unfinished Business

None

Adjournment

Commissioner Graham made the motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:28 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Luna. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Maher, Staff Liaison