

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

April 1, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 1st day of April, 2021 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Dave Miller called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Hipp, Miller, Ray, Schletty, Chu and Abruzzese.

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Claire Hoffman.

In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes.

Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the Commission members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.

Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.

MINUTES

Commissioner Ray made a motion to approve the March 4, 2021, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Hipp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PARK AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Chair Miller commented that he thought it would be a good idea to review the mission and vision as a reminder to the Commission members and to those residents that may be watching the meeting. He briefly reviewed the mission and vision statements.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK WORKSHOP RECAP

The Community Services Manager commented that a brief recap was included in the Commission packet.

Chair Miller commented that a few members of the Commission attended the joint meeting with the Council and consultant to discuss and develop an RFP for Pioneer Park. He provided details

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on the discussion that occurred and preferences for lighting, water feature, playground, and multi-use facility. He stated that the biggest message he took away from the Council was that they should continue to work forward at elements that could move forward sooner, such as lighting, while still keeping the master plan in mind.

The Community Services Manager agreed that the consensus was to keep the momentum going and not let the multi-use facility hold up progress. He displayed a timeline of the next steps, noting that it is an aggressive timeline.

Commissioner Ray stated that he liked the discussion related to the center building and making that second floor usable with picnic tables and an open concept on the main level.

Commissioner Abruzzese asked for input on the water feature and the context, noting that the minutes state “small”.

Chair Miller provided additional context stating that the purpose is to have something smaller for the children but not large enough where it would draw in too many visitors or cause too much noise.

Commissioner Hipp agreed that it seemed the consensus was to have a natural type water feature that children could run through. She commented that the lighting on the path seemed to be a priority. She noted that she has received comments that the path is not wide enough and asked if that could be improved or whether a secondary path could be added for bikers and others to use that would alleviate some of the traffic from that path.

Commissioner Chu asked how the information from the studies that were completed was incorporated into the discussion and plans.

The Community Services Manager commented that feedback has guided this process and will be included in the RFP as well.

Commissioner Schletty referenced the community input period included in the timeline and asked for details on what that would involve.

The Community Services Manager commented that they were able to get the contact information for those that participated in the previous round of community engagement and therefore it should be easy to reach out to those residents to gain additional input.

Commissioner Chu commented that community events would be another opportunity to gather input from the community.

Chair Miller commented that the City Council does not want the Commission to wait and wants to continue to move forward on this project, while continuing to think big.

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Commissioner Chu commented that she would want to ensure that updates to the public continue to be provided throughout this process to keep residents engaged and informed.

OLD BUSINESS: RECREATION COORDINATOR UPDATE

The Community Services Manager reported that there were 34 applicants, and eight applicants were interviewed and further refined to four candidates. He commented that it was a tough decision as any of the four candidates would have been a great fit. He stated that the City offered the position to a candidate, who accepted the position and will begin on April 19th. He hoped to introduce the new employee at the May Commission meeting.

NEW BUSINESS: NEW BASKETBALL CLINIC

The Community Services Manager stated that the City is offering a new basketball clinic this year in partnership with iBALL4LIFE. He commented that participation had to be limited to ten children because of COVID restrictions. He reported that eight children have already signed up for the clinic. He stated that staff is excited about this new programming opportunity for the community.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Miller had nothing to report on Veterans Park.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that her family has been getting out more on the warmer days. She had nothing to report on Spooner Park.

Commissioner Ray commented that the group already discussed Pioneer Park. He commented that during the joint meeting with the Council it became clear that Pioneer Park is basically an athletic field park and therefore may not be the best fit for a community center type building.

Commissioner Chu commented that she has not recently visited her park. She stated that she has been visited parks in other communities and is proud of the trails that Little Canada has for its residents.

Commissioner Schletty had nothing to report on Thunder Bay Park. He stated that during the next month he would like to walk to the park to review the results of the seeding that was done.

The Community Services Manager commented that staff has been working with another agency to review and monitor the seeding that was completed and coordinate maintenance.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she visited her park a few times since the snow has melted and was pleased to discover some additional trail areas. She commented that children are out and putting things together through nature play. She stated that she has been picking up trash when visiting the park as well. She asked for an update on the nature play area, as that seems to be a low cost opportunity that could move forward quickly.

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The Community Services Manager commented that a crew was in that area to clean out the deadfall and trees that could be dangerous. He noted that they are continuing with that once the crew is able to return. He stated that a sign will be added but the entire area can be used for nature play.

Commissioner Hipp asked if this would be a good time to attempt to connect Pioneer Park to Thunder Bay Park.

The Community Services Manager commented that two pieces of private property would need to be navigated through to provide that connection. He noted a potential connection that could be formed through the development of the farm property and commented that may be an opportunity to negotiate and procure the trail easement through the other two properties.

Commissioner Chu commented that she lives near the Water Works Trail and has seen signs related to a watershed project and asked if staff is aware of the details.

The Community Services Manager commented that the watershed is cleaning out the creek area within the Owasso Basin area.

UPDATES

The Community Services Manager stated that the City has been seeing good numbers for youth activities and registration, providing a brief update. He stated that the City's sister city in Thunder Bay in Canada hosts a tech and gaming event and Little Canada is advertising the virtual event. He provided details on the adult activities and registration. He provided an update on Gervais Mill Park, noting that the City submitted two grants. He stated that the Spooner Park lower shelter will be ordered once all final engineered drawings have been approved and they will wait to remove the existing shelter until there is a definitive date for the new shelter to arrive.

Commissioner Schletty asked for an update on the bike rack presentation schedule.

The Community Services Manager commented that in discussions with the City Manager, there have been some cost savings this year and therefore the project may be able to move forward without a Council presentation. He stated that he will continue to update the group.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.