

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

APRIL 7, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 7th day of April, 2022 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Acting Chair Horwath called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

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

ABSENT: Miller and Mui

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Director Bryce Shearen, Recreation Coordinator Sierra Hietala, and Parks Maintenance Supervisor Derek Anderson.

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Commissioner Hipp made a motion to approve the March 3, 2022, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Chu seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Commissioner Abruzzese read the parks and recreation mission statement.

OLD BUSINESS: RONDEAU PARK UPDATE

The Parks & Rec Director stated that staff continues to work on Rondeau Park. He stated that the City Council has approved the site improvements with Sunram Construction and reviewed the project scope. He stated that the majority of this project has been funded through the City's ARPA funds. He stated that the community build will take place on July 15th and 16th and noted that the subcommittee will be meeting in late April and will provide an update to the Commission at the May meeting. He noted that he has recently been made aware of the nonprofit organization, Kids Around the World, which utilizes used play equipment. He believed that this would be a fantastic use of the existing playground equipment. He noted that the organization would remove the existing playground equipment within the next few weeks. He stated that notice would be sent to residents in that area alerting them to the project and inviting participation in the community build.

Commissioner Schletty asked and received confirmation that the communication to residents would include notice that the existing playground equipment would be removed from the site.

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Acting Chair Horwath asked for the anticipated opening dates.

The Parks & Rec Director replied that the contractor would begin in early May and would be completed with most items in mid-June. He stated that the rubber surfacing is anticipated to be installed the following week after the community build and believed the remaining punch list items would be completed and a ribbon-cutting would occur in early August. He noted that the schedule is dependent upon the weather. He provided additional details on the activities that would occur on each day of the community build.

Commissioner Chu asked that the communication for the residents also be sent to her so that she could share that information with the residents in her association as well.

The Parks & Rec Director noted that staff has a list of residents that participated in the last community build and invitations would be sent to those residents as well. He provided additional details on the targeted number of volunteers for the event, noting that in addition to those assisting with the build there will most likely be additional volunteers used for childcare and other services.

NEW BUSINESS: RECREATION COORDINATOR UPDATES

The Recreation Coordinator highlighted the upcoming indoor farmers market which will take place Monday, April 11th, the Arbor Day event which will take place on May 6th, the Sap Run scheduled for May 7th, the Wildlife Walk at Spooner Park on May 21st, and movies in the park.

Acting Chair Horwath noted that Little Canada Elementary is a Spanish emersion school and therefore he would recommend Encanto for a movie in the park night. He noted that it is a very popular movie for both English and Spanish speakers.

NEW BUSINESS: PARK MAINTENANCE REPORT

The Parks & Rec Director introduced the Parks Maintenance Supervisor, noting that he asked him to prepare a report to share with the Commission.

The Parks Maintenance Supervisor introduced himself, noting that he has been with Little Canada for about 22 years. He welcomed any questions or concerns the Commission may have.

Acting Chair Horwath asked if staff is receiving what they need from the Park Commission.

The Parks Supervisor believed that he was. He stated that he and the Parks & Rec Director are working on some programming to improve communication-related to tasks and project schedules.

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Commissioner Hipp thanked the parks staff for assisting in creating the snowshoe trails this year, which she enjoyed. She also thanked staff for the clearing of the trails. She asked if it is known who owns the fence between Pioneer Park and the apartments, as it has been damaged.

The Parks Supervisor commented that the apartment building owns that fence and stated that he has alerted the apartment building that the fence needs repair.

Commissioner Schletty asked what is left to be completed in the Spooner shelter. He commented that it looks very nice.

The Parks Supervisor commented that some punch list items are remaining including the establishment of turf. He stated that they may hold off on allowing rentals until those things can be done.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the City is hiring summer seasonal staff, noting that ideally, they would like to add three people.

The Parks Supervisor commented that they prefer people 18 and over, but on occasion hired 16 and over, but noted that brings additional regulations. He stated that rink number two will most likely require financial help as the boards are reaching their life expectancy.

Acting Chair Horwath commented that the trails have been well maintained throughout this year and thanked the City staff.

The Parks Supervisor recognized his staff that assists in maintenance activities.

Acting Chair Horwath referenced a specific trail section that has gaping cracks in the trail and will need repair.

The Parks Supervisor noted that the condition will likely get worse during the spring thaw. He noted that staff did walk that entire trail, took notes of the needed repairs, and developed a repair schedule.

Commissioner Hipp referenced the entrance to Gervais Mill Park and asked who is in charge of the landscaping.

The Parks Supervisor commented that he handles the maintenance.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the Historical Society volunteered many years ago and believed that some of those previous members may have been continuing to assist with landscaping. He noted that the City is still finetuning its grant application to improve that area.

Commissioner Chu thanked the parks maintenance staff for all of their work to make the parks a great amenity.

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Acting Chair Horwath stated that he has seen the Parks Supervisor out working in the field as well.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Schletty stated that he has not visited Thunder Bay since the last meeting and noted that the parks he has visited look great.

Commissioner Chu commented that recent walks that she has taken in the parks and the wonderful condition.

Commissioner Schletty asked for information on a pole that was done at Spooner.

The Park & Rec Director replied that a strong wind brought a light pole down this winter.

The Parks Supervisor noted that he was made aware of the pole coming down immediately and his staff addressed the issue. He confirmed that there is still work to be done and advised that it would be completed before Canadian Days.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she is excited about the upcoming trail connections.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she has not visited Pioneer Park yet. She stated that she has visited Nadeau Park, and everything is in good condition, although damp during the spring. She stated that it would be nice to receive an update on ongoing projects.

UPDATES

The Parks & Rec Director provided updates on the May park tour, bike racks, and Thunder Bay/Westwinds linear trail.

Acting Chair Horwath commented that he is excited about the trail connections planned and commended staff and everyone that has been involved in that process. He stated that the next step would be to determine how pedestrians could cross from Pioneer Park across the freeway.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the City is once again working with RCP students who will compile information on pedestrians, cyclists, and public transportation.

The Parks & Rec Director advised that the City submitted a grant application for Pioneer Park. He noted that park entrance signage that had been paused due to supply chain issues is now moving forward and that the sign order has been placed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

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Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.