

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

MAY 6, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 6th day of May, 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 6:35 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Hipp, Horwath, Miller, Ray (arrived at 6:38 p.m.), Schletty, Chu, and Abruzzese.

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Samantha House

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 Horwath made a motion to approve the April 1, 2021, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Schletty seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Chair Miller reviewed the Parks and Recreation mission statement.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Community Services Manager provided an update noting that the Council authorized staff to solicit an RFP, noting that four proposals were received, and the Council approved to move forward with Bolton & Menk. He stated that this has been budgeted item within the CIP. He stated that a timeline was included in the staff report and highlighted some upcoming dates, noting the scheduled presentations to the Commission and Council. He stated that the proposal

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from the consultant was included in the packet including those dates and additional detail. He stated that staff is excited to move forward and welcomed any questions.

Chair Miller asked if there would be a need for short workshops prior to the regular Commission meetings, or whether there would be adequate time within the regular meeting of the Commission.

The Community Services Manager commented that the first meeting will help to gauge whether there would be additional meetings needed.

OLD BUSINESS: SPOONER PARK NATURE PLAY

The Community Services Manager stated that things are starting to move forward with the nature play area, noting that a piece of equipment was brought in the previous day to clear out some of the materials.

Commissioner Ray arrived.

The Community Services Manager stated that staff also graded the area to identify the smaller more structured nature play area. He stated that Commissioner Hipp visited a few nature play areas in other communities and provided photographs to staff. He commented that this will be a living area that will change over time. He hoped that the area would be set and able to be opened within the next few weeks. He stated that it will be fun to see how the area develops.

Chair Miller stated that perhaps there could be pictures featured on the City website or social media page featuring animals seen in the area or things built in the nature play area.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she is excited to visit the area. She hoped that there could be some huge logs and boulders for kids to climb on.

The Community Services Manager welcomed additional input or photographs from Commissioners if they happen to visit other nature play areas. He shared the images he received from Commissioner Hipp.

Commissioner Schletty stated that he visited another natural area that had a zip line and provided that as a suggestion.

Commissioner Chu stated that as kids and families enjoy this new area it would be nice to collect images and patterns of usage that could be used to improve the area.

Commissioner Ray asked if a name has been decided upon and suggested that it be named to honor Mayor Blesener.

Ray introduced the following motion:

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***RECOMMENDING DEDICATION OF THE NATURE PLAY AREA IN MEMORY
OF WILLIAM BLESENER***

Further discussion: The Commission commented that perhaps it would be helpful to further discuss a naming policy in the future.

Commissioner Chu stated that she would want to ensure support from the family as well.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that she was unsure whether this area would even have signage and therefore perhaps a step back should be taken as to naming the area in memory of someone.

The Community Services Manager commented that there would be a small sign as previously discussed and that this was only a motion of recommendation.

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Horwath.
Ayes (4). Nays (3) (Abruzzese, Chu, and Hipp). Motion passed.

It was noted that some members of the Commission that supported the motion hoped that this would generate discussion by the Council on the naming of smaller areas within parks. Some members that voted against the motion noted that their action was not against the idea but wondering if there was a policy that should be followed or whether this would be an appropriate thing to dedicate in former Mayor Blemeden's honor.

NEW BUSINESS: NEW RECREATION COORDINATOR

The Community Services Manager introduced the new Recreation Coordinator noting that she began on April 19th and has been doing a fantastic job. He stated that the Recreation Coordinator brings with her a great deal of experience, noting that more detail can be found within the staff report. He stated that she has already been doing great things in her first few weeks.

The Recreation Coordinator highlighted some of the things she has been working on including the farmers market and a new four-week youth naturalist program.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she is happy to see the addition of EBT at the Farmers Market and the new youth naturalist program.

Commissioner Chu commented that she also supports the idea to make the Farmers Market more inclusive and asked if there would be any additional advertising to market to people that may not be aware of the market.

The Recreation Coordinator commented that she will be working with someone to include additional signage that includes different languages in an attempt to bring in more people.

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REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Abruzzese asked for an update on the progress of bike racks.

The Community Services Manager stated that the bike racks will be programmed into the 2022 budget and noted that if there were savings this year, staff would look to install some yet this year. He stated that although he anticipated some savings, there have been some projects that have used those funds. He hoped to know more about that potential later in the summer or early fall.

Chair Miller referenced the previous concept to allow businesses or residents to sponsor the purchase and installation of a bike rack.

The Community Services Manager stated that he would follow up on that idea.

Commissioner Schletty stated that he visited Thunder Bay park a few times since the last meeting and it is in great shape noting that the pollinator areas are starting to grow.

Commissioner Hipp stated that she visited five different parks with nature play areas in other communities and is excited to see that project moving forward. She stated that she also visited her assigned park, which looks good and has nice playground equipment. She stated that the netting above the playground is a bit dirty and asked if that could be rinsed off.

Commissioner Horwath stated he is excited to have the new Recreation Coordinator on board and see what she will do.

Commissioner Ray stated that his park is Pioneer and noted that there has been much discussion on that park over the past several meetings. He noted that a water feature continues to be included in the discussion and believed that plantings could enhance a water feature.

Commissioner Chu stated that she is excited to hear about the ideas for youth programming related to nature that the Recreation Coordinator spoke about. She stated that she visited her assigned park and walked the trails noting that the park is in good condition. She asked if recycling bins could be placed next to the trash bins.

Chair Miller also welcomed the Recreation Coordinator and welcomed any questions she may have for the members.

UPDATES

The Community Services Manager commented that there has been a good response to youth activity programming and provided an update on registration. He stated that they are also excited to offer non-sport programming opportunities. He stated that staff is also working on adult programming opportunities. He recognized the change in guidance from the Governor and

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noted that in-person meetings could be possible beginning in June and also believed there would be an opportunity for a hybrid format but would need to do some additional checking on a hybrid option. He asked for input from the Commission on their preference.

It was the consensus of the Commission to pursue a hybrid format that would allow members to choose whether they would like to attend in person or continue to attend virtually.

The Community Services Manager noted that historically the group has completed park tours before regular meetings. He stated that staff could attempt to start those tours back again once the structure is better known related to hybrid attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:33 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.