

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

AUGUST 5, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 5th day of August, 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 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

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

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen.

MINUTES

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

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Commissioner Schletty read aloud the parks and recreation mission statement.

OLD BUSINESS: CANADIAN DAYS ENGAGEMENT RECAP

The Community Services Manager reported that the Canadian Days Festival occurred the previous weekend and members of the Commission staffed a booth to obtain input from the public related to the Pioneer Park master plan. He noted that members of the public were asked to place a sticker on the feature they were most excited about and advised that the water feature received the most interest. He stated that Bolton and Menk will be providing an update to the City Council following the community input. He asked for input from the Commission members that participated.

Commissioner Chu stated that she found this process valuable as it was a great chance to interact with the members of the community. She stated that people enjoyed seeing the big picture for the park. She commented that several people were very appreciative of the play node and its location on the Centerville side. She stated that the community also likes that it is an upgrade but not something that will negatively impact the neighborhood. She stated that people like more trees, shade, and soft solar lighting for the trails.

Commissioner Ray stated that people were excited about lighting but wanted to ensure it would not be lit all night. He stated that solar lighting was well received, and people wanted to ensure that the lighting was not directed at private property. He stated that he enjoyed speaking with members of the community.

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Commissioner Hipp commented that the location was excellent. She stated that the artwork from the children was a great method to draw people into the booth. She reinforced that people loved the water features and loved the plan as it is. She stated that people liked the nature theme and there was a suggestion to carry over that theme into the playground. She stated that there were some questions as to whether the water feature would be City water and related to maintenance. She noted that people liked the shade concepts and would like additional porta-potties in the park.

Commissioner Horwath stated that at that type of event when it is warm out and there is a discussion on water features, you wonder if the temperature plays into that. He noted that perhaps there could be engagement opportunities at different times of the year. He stated that he had an extensive conversation with someone related to a pump track. He noted that he told the person that was not planned for this node of the park but there could be opportunities in another area of the park or another park. He stated that another resident brought up a park in another community that has a zipline that goes around the park. He stated that he enjoyed the opportunity to interact with the community. He stated that the car show participants had a lot of interest, even though they may not live in Little Canada.

Commissioner Horwath stated that he has visited many other parks looking for ideas and concepts. He noted that he is very interested in the larger zipline concept.

The Community Services Manager thanked the members of the Commission that participated and noted that the public comments will be shared with Bolton and Menk for incorporation into the plan. He stated that the boards will be on display at City Hall for a few weeks for members of the public to view.

NEW BUSINESS: GERVAIS MILL PARK GRANT

The Community Services Manager stated that the group has been discussing the Gervais Mill entrance for some time and funds had been budgeted. He noted that in 2020 the project went out for bid, but the numbers came back higher than expected. He stated that staff applied for two grants through the MN DNR and the City was notified that it was successful in obtaining one of the grants in the amount of \$97,000. He noted that the total project cost was estimated at \$130,000, so the City would pay the remainder of the cost. Additionally, He referenced the pollinator program in Thunder Bay Park, noting that the City applied for a grant through Great River Greening and was recently notified that the City was approved for that grant as well.

NEW BUSINESS: NRPA CONFERENCE

The Community Services Manager stated that he plans to attend the NRPA conference in September which will be held in Nashville. He stated that he hopes to bring back information that can help guide future planning processes. He noted that he will provide an update at the October meeting.

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REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Miller stated that the ice cream social was held the previous week and believed that staff did a great job putting that together. He stated that he walks around Lake Gervais a lot and asked if the City could trim some of the branches and bushes around that trail.

Commissioner Horwath stated that he also uses that route, and this is the typical time of year when the growth becomes a bit overgrown.

The Community Services Manager noted that portions of that are County but noted that he would follow up on that.

Chair Miller commented that Suni Lee trains at Midwest Gymnastics in the community.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she has spent some time at Spooner and her daughter loves the nature play area. She stated that she visited Thunder Bay Park recently looking for the medallion and it was great to see the wildflowers growing.

Commissioner Schletty stated that he has spent a lot of time at Spooner and Pioneer parks since the last meeting and also visited Thunder Bay looking for the medallion. He stated that it is a great park to wander around and the pollinator project is coming along nicely. He stated that Spooner and Pioneer parks have been great. He commended the parks and rec t-ball program, noting that his daughter had a great time.

Commissioner Horwath noted that he is a big user of Thunder Bay park. He noted that he is a runner and visits many parks. He stated that he visited Rondeau Park which seems to be heavily used with a lot of rubbish left behind. He noted that there was also a broken board on the bench in the northern portion of the park. He commented that generally, the equipment looks to be in good condition. He noted that his family chose Little Canada because of the schools and great neighborhoods, noting that parks are a big factor in what makes a community great.

The Community Services Manager commented that there was a plan in place to replace the trail at Rondeau but that has been delayed. He noted that the playground is scheduled for replacement in 2027 but that could be moved up because of funding eligibility and could perhaps include a shelter that would provide shade and seating.

Commissioner Ray stated that Pioneer Park has been discussed already tonight. He stated that a fountain feature in the pond would be a terrific feature to consider.

Commissioner Chu stated that Gervais Mill looks great. She stated that if she looks at all the parks it would be nice to think about trash can and recycling can placement to keep the parks clean. She stated that after Canadian Days she was in the parade as a member of the School Board. She noted that as she was waiting in line for the parade to start, she was near the

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elementary school float and met an art teacher that participated in the park project. She stated that the teacher had positive things to say about the University of Minnesota students.

Commissioner Hipp commented that the relationship should continue with new opportunities for engagement. She stated that she attempts to visit parks on different walking and running trips. She stated that there were a lot of compliments received about Spooner Park during Canadian Days. She noted that there is still room at that park to add additional concepts, such as mountain bike tracks. She stated that she signed up for the pickleball classes and is excited for that to start. She asked if there is a plan for the sign for the nature play area.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that staff plan to make that sign as time permits.

Commissioner Hipp stated that there were a lot of people at Thunder Bay looking for the medallion. She asked if there would be opportunities to get more features into the parks by offering naming rights for donations.

The Community Services Manager stated that people donate benches that have their names on them. He stated that if someone donated a playground or large amenity, he would believe their name could be displayed.

Commissioner Hipp commented that a lot is done with a small area at Nadeau Park and suggested that perhaps a small nature play area could be added in that park.

Commissioner Schletty noted that people have mentioned that they miss the goats in his recent discussions.

Commissioner Horwath stated that there are a lot of people that are not aware of the features that are found within the park. He noted that perhaps there could be a QR code displayed at each park that brings up information about the park's features.

The Community Services Manager stated that staff is working on that project and noted that each park will have a sign with the park amenities and showing routes to other nearby parks and features.

UPDATES

The Community Services Manager provided an update on youth activities, noting that registration has begun for fall activities. He reviewed upcoming adult activity opportunities. He estimated that around 400 people attended the recent ice cream social. He stated that a unique opportunity was presented to the newly hired Recreation Coordinator and her last day will be August 10. He stated that staff is working to recruit for that position.

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Commissioner Chu stated that it is great to see the City attract good candidates but then they are leaving for better opportunities. She asked if there are exit interviews to determine if there is a theme.

The Community Services Manager commented that employees are looking for additional hours, as most people are looking for full-time employment. He noted that the position has increased from 18 hours to 34 hours with benefits and paid time off in the past couple of years. He stated that it is unfortunate when quality candidates find a better position. He stated that he is trying to increase the position to full-time, which may make someone want to stay longer.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.