

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

OCTOBER 5, 2023

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 October, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Howarth 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: Abruzzese, DeLong Miller, Hipp, Horwath, Mui, Schletty, Williams, and Youth Commissioner Churcher.

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Director Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Sierra Hietala.

MINUTES

Commissioner DeLong Miller made a motion to approve the September 7, 2023 Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Hipp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK UPDATE

The Parks & Rec Director commented that a grand opening ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, October 17th.

Commissioner Williams asked if the water feature would be ready as well.

The Parks & Rec Director replied that they plan for everything to be completed at that date, except for a few punch list items. He provided additional details on the anticipated winterizing schedule.

Chair Horwath commented that he has watched the progress over the summer, and it has been great to see.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK PHASE II UPDATE

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the Council reviewed the initial design concepts and Commission comments at a workshop and provided staff with direction to proceed with an attempt to purchase the property at 2884 Centerville Road.

MINUTES

PARKS & REC COMMISSION

OCTOBER 5, 2023

OLD BUSINESS: TOBACCO AND CANNABIS USE IN THE PARKS AND PARK FACILITIES UPDATE

The Parks & Rec Director recapped the discussion of the Commission on this topic at the last meeting. He stated that staff presented the topic with a modification at a Council workshop. He explained that the modification was to create a new chapter that addresses the use of tobacco and cannabis use in its own chapter as well as having additional language related to enforcement. He reviewed that enforcement process. He noted that no formal action has yet been taken as the Council discussion was only done in a workshop.

Commissioner DeLong Miller provided details on the enforcement implemented by Saint Paul, which uses verbal warnings and administrative citations.

Commissioner Abruzzese thanked staff for taking into account the concerns of the Commission and developing a better process for enforcement.

NEW BUSINESS: RECREATION COORDINATOR UPDATE

The Recreation Coordinator provided an update on recent community events and activities. She also highlighted recent and upcoming programs and community events.

NEW BUSINESS: PICKLEBALL COURTS

The Parks & Rec Director provided some background information from the previous discussions in 2017 which led to the dual striping of courts for tennis and pickleball. He stated that since that time pickleball activity has increased, noting that it is the fastest-growing sport in America. He commented that they have learned some things since 2017 and summarized those items. He then reviewed some of the things that have been considered as options. He noted that the most cost-effective option would be to convert existing courts to dedicated pickleball courts. He also provided input on noise complaints related to pickleball, which is a nationwide issue. He noted that Spooner could be a good location for dedicated pickleball courts and if that were done, he would suggest the Pioneer be converted to dedicated tennis courts.

Commissioner Schletty commented that he does see people playing tennis at Spooner and wondered if changing the setup would irritate those users.

The Parks & Rec Director agreed that not everyone would be happy with the change, but stated that this would be an option to have dedicated courts for both tennis and pickleball.

Commissioner Hipp commented that could be an inexpensive solution. She asked if the community building would impact the courts.

The Parks & Rec Director replied that the community building would not impact the courts and that could be part of the design discussions in the future.

MINUTES

PARKS & REC COMMISSION

OCTOBER 5, 2023

Commissioner DeLong Miller asked if an additional court could be added in phase II of Pioneer Park.

The Parks & Rec Director confirmed that could be a part of the discussion.

Commissioner Schletty noted that perhaps the additional courts could be multi-use courts.

The Parks & Rec Director stated that if new courts were added, the multi-use courts could be better sized to support both activities.

Commissioner Mui recognized that tennis players may have to go a bit further, but there are currently no dedicated pickleball courts in Little Canada so this would provide some equity.

Chair Horwath commented that he did not imagine that elementary school is offering tennis, but perhaps they would be interested in pickleball.

The Parks & Rec Director commented on the different programming opportunities that would be available if there were dedicated pickleball courts.

Commissioner Mui commented that pickleball is not going anywhere and is played by a full spectrum of players, both young and old.

Commissioner Hipp commented that from her experience living near a court, she did not think either location would be an issue for noise.

Chair Horwath commented that he likes seeing the public engaged in this new sport.

Mui introduced the following motion:

RECOMMENDING MOVING FORWARD WITH DEDICATED PICKLEBALL COURTS AT SPOONER PARK

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Williams.

Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Churcher commented that Pioneer Park looks nice.

Commissioner DeLong Miller commented that she has been by Pioneer Park once per week to check out the progress. She commented that she has enjoyed getting out on the different trails.

Commissioner Schletty referenced the basketball court at Rondeau Park and asked about the status of resurfacing.

MINUTES
PARKS & REC COMMISSION
OCTOBER 5, 2023

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the court no longer can be resurfaced because of the condition and therefore it has been scheduled to be reconstructed next year as the drainage problem has now been resolved.

Chair Horwath asked for an update on the new Thunder Bay trail connection.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the trail is scheduled to be completed by the first week in November. He commented that the Lennar development anticipates the same timeline for its trail.

Chair Horwath stated that he and city staff attended the MRPA conference, where The Parks & Rec Director presented. He noted that The Parks & Rec Director will also be presenting at the national conference, which is a great opportunity and accomplishment.

The Parks & Rec Director provided additional details on the MRPA conference.

Commissioner Mui asked for updates on the new media staff member.

The Parks & Rec Director replied that the Community Relations Manager is doing a great job utilizing different platforms to engage residents. He also highlighted some other projects she has been working on related to branding and signage.

Commissioner Hipp commented that it has been fun to watch the progress of Pioneer Park and the new trail connections. She noted that she also attended the Council workshop where phase II of Pioneer Park was discussed. She commented that the Spooner Park nature play area changes all the time with new materials and new setups from the children. She noted that she did spend some time removing itchweed.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she has been to Rondeau a lot recently with her children, which continues to be a great experience. She noted that her family found the geocache in that park and will try to find more in other parks.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.