

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

OCTOBER 7, 2021

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 October, 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, and Abruzzese.

ABSENT: Chu

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

MINUTES

Commissioner Horwath made a motion to approve the September 2, 2021, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Schletty seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Commissioner Schletty read the Parks and Recreation mission statement.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK UPDATE

The Community Services Manager stated that the document is final and available online for viewing. He stated that the plan identified many projects and therefore the next step will be to work on prioritization and phasing. He stated that a consultant will be assisting with the final design for the play node along with bidding on that project. He noted that they would then attempt to gain grant funds in 2022 with hopeful construction in 2023. He stated that as opportunities arise, they could begin with some of the smaller projects in 2022, such as trail lighting.

Commissioner Hipp asked how the trail lighting would work with the winter loop that had been discussed.

The Community Services Manager commented that the trail lighting mentioned for 2022 is for the exterior of the path.

NEW BUSINESS: RONDEAU PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The Community Services Manager stated that Rondeau Park has been moved up for park improvements. He stated that this park is within a qualified census tract, which could bring

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forward additional funding opportunities. He stated that staff is looking to bid a project over the winter that would be ready to go for construction in 2022. He noted that the Council is scheduled to review this project at its October 13th meeting. He stated that staff would suggest using an online survey tool to acquire input from the Commission along with community engagement. He reviewed the details of the draft noting that the playground and trail footprints are not proposed to increase, but a pavilion has been proposed.

Commissioner Horwath asked if there is a concern with builders being able to fit this project into their schedule.

The Community Services Manager replied that there is no concern with builders, but the question would be related to equipment as there continues to be a delay with materials.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that there is a lack of shade near the playground, and it would be great to see that type of feature incorporated.

Commissioner Horwath agreed, noting that shade continues to be a large concern in parks.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that she believed the survey process worked well in the past to provide input. She noted that she is excited about potential improvements as she uses that park.

NEW BUSINESS: LITTLE FREE LIBRARY REQUEST

The Community Services Manager stated that he received a request from a resident that would like to construct and maintain a Little Free Library near Thunder Bay Park. He stated that the City does have an ordinance related to Little Free Libraries and reviewed those details. He stated that the resident has provided all the required documentation and will work with staff to find the determined location. He noted that staff believes that this would be a benefit to the community.

Hipp introduced the following motion:

***RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF A LITTLE FREE LIBRARY REQUEST
AT THUNDER BAY PARK***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Horwath.

Further discussion: Commissioner Ray stated that he looked online and only noticed one Little Free Library.

The Community Services Manager replied that those are only the registered libraries and noted that there are more in the community.

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Commissioner Horwath asked if the resident would be building the library herself and it was confirmed to be so. He stated that he is a woodworker and would be happy to help. He stated that this design has been used by the Minneapolis Parks Foundation in 30 or 40 parks and holds up well.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that having the library near a park is a great resource as families can read a book while at the park and put it back or choose to take it home.

Commissioner Ray commented that it would be great to have a library at Rondeau Park as well. It was noted that the libraries are sponsored.

Ayes (6). Nays (0). Motion passed.

REQUEST FOR VOLUNTEER ON SIGNAGE COMMITTEE

The Community Services Manager stated that a volunteer is needed for the Little Canada Gateway Signage Committee, which will review the welcome to Little Canada signs posted throughout the community. He stated that the committee will be made up of a member from the Park Commission, Planning Commission, two members of the Council, City staff, and a resident.

Commissioner Schletty volunteered to represent the Park Commission.

COMMISSIONER TERMS AND REAPPOINTMENT PROCESS

The Community Services Manager reviewed the terms and reappointment process. He stated that Commissioners Ray and Schletty would have expiring terms and would both be eligible for reappointment if desired. He stated that the interest of reappointment shall be submitted by November 19th. He noted that applications are also being accepted and reviewed the interview and appointment process.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Abruzzese had no report.

Commissioner Horwath commented that the brush has overgrown the trail near the pump station on the northeast corner of the lake.

The Community Services Manager replied that section is in Maplewood, but he could pass the word on.

Commissioner Horwath commented that there were cones and barriers put up at the crossings and no one seemed to know why. He stated that perhaps Xcel was doing work in the area. He referenced the crossing at Labore Road, where speed signs were placed but noted that perhaps enforcement by police would help. He noted that he had a recent experience with a truck traveling at high speed that almost hit him.

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Commissioner Schletty stated that he has been to Thunder Bay Park, and everything looks great. He referenced Spooner Park, noting that it would be helpful to have garbage receptacles by the playground.

The Community Services Manager replied that there are two or three, but people are moving them to different areas.

Commissioner Schletty asked for an update on the bike racks.

The Community Services Manager stated that \$13,500 has been scheduled within the CIP for next year. He stated that there was a donation that would support three bike racks at Gervais Mill Park, and he is attempting to get that completed this year.

Chair Miller stated that he participated in Explore Little Canada and enjoyed it. He asked if there are plans to install more park signs.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that there were plans for additional park signs but noted that staff member has left the City. He stated that the project is still a priority, but staff has not yet had the time to complete the project. He hoped to bring a consultant on board to assist with the project.

Commissioner Ray referenced the lacrosse field at Pioneer Park and asked if the drainage improvement have been completed.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that sand was added to the soccer field, and he believed that there has been some improvement, but the conditions this year were very dry so it might not have been the best test. He stated that they will continue to do this over the next three years and then reassess.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she enjoyed the farmers market and received positive feedback from the vendors. She stated that she also enjoyed the informational signage that has been placed on some trails/parks. She stated that Gervais Mill is well kept and mowed and noted that she would love to see some trails within the wildlife area. She asked if the Council has approved the Pioneer Park master plan.

The Community Services Manager replied that the plan has been received and has been posted to the website, but it will not be formally adopted as it is a working document. He confirmed that the projects would come through one at a time for consideration and approval.

Commissioner Hipp asked if the bridge was included in the play node.

The Community Services Manager commented that the bridge was a part of the water feature but noted that will come down to final design and cost.

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Commissioner Hipp stated that she would also like to see a temporary play structure in the east while the play node is under construction. She stated that she would also like to see a priority on the winter loop. She noted that there are wonderful snowshoeing opportunities at Spooner and offered to host a snowshoeing activity in the park this winter. She commented that she also likes the sign for the nature play area.

UPDATES

The Community Services Manager reported that the old shelter at Spooner Park has been removed with the new footings put in and the new shelter will be installed the following day. He stated that after the shelter is installed the concrete would be poured and electric work would be completed along with the grass and seeding. He stated that there is another project installing a stormwater improvement project at the park as well. He provided an update on youth activities and adult activities. He stated that snowshoes have been obtained and they are working on a rental program for this winter. He stated that staff will reach out to Commissioner Hipp in an attempt to schedule an activity. He reviewed details for the planned Cookies with Santa event planned for the first Saturday in December. He provided an update on a recent conference he attended.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.