

**PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**  
Friday, February 8, 2019

**Members present:** Dave Barsness, Dorothy Dybvig, Tony Vavricka, Mary Franklin, Eric Sturtz, Karry White, David Chasson

**Members absent:** Council Liaison Tim Franklin

**Staff Present:** Administrator Kathy George

**Guests:** None

**Call to Order**

Chair Dybvig called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Agenda**

**Motion Barsness, second Franklin, to approve the agenda with one change: City Skate & Slide was added to New Business. Motion passed 7-0.**

**Minutes**

One change was made to the minutes. The following sentence was removed from the KREEC Committee Update: *Chasson also stated that when the site was developed, the Audubon Center of the North Woods was not established.* It was clarified that the Center was established, but there was debate about whether or not the education component was developed. Commissioners decided to remove the sentence entirely. **Motion White, second Sturtz, to approve the minutes of the December 14, 2018 meeting with the noted change. Motion passed 7-0.** The Park Commission did not meet in January.

**New Business**

- A. Arbor Day – The City received information that the Pine County Soil & Water Conservation District was offering up to \$500 to cities in the County to help offset the costs of an Arbor Day Event. Arbor day is April 26<sup>th</sup>.

Commissioners discussed the possibilities of doing something at the KREEC site, Robinson Park, and/or the softball field property. The KREEC sub-committee agreed to talk about it and bring the discussion back to the March meeting.

- B. Farmers Market Expenses – Administrator George noted that the City’s budget for the Farmers Market is \$750. The funds are intended to cover the cost of advertising and toilets. In 2018, the total spent by the City was \$1,186. In 2017, it was \$1,021; and in 2016, it was \$1,280.

Commissioners discussed the need to provide toilets, with the Library, Family Pathways, and the Bowling Alley close by. It was decided that it would be helpful to invite the organizer(s) to the March meeting to talk about the actual needs of the Farmers Market.

- C. Special Event Permits – Administrator George asked for discussion on the approval process for Special Event Permit Applications. Current City Code states that the City Council shall review the applications and decide whether or not to issue the permit. The current practice has been to bring the applications to the Park Commission and then the Park Commission makes recommendations to the City Council, with the City Council taking final action.

George stated that this process can be lengthy and cumbersome. She noted that the Park Commission has come up with a standard list of conditions relating to the use of Robinson Park. She asked the Park Commission to consider recommending an amendment to City Code to allow the Administrator to review and approve or deny permit applications. She stated that appeal language could be added for cases when the application is denied – the applicant could appeal to the Park Commission who will then review and situation and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioners noted that they want to be informed of Special Event Permit Applications. This could be done via e-mail. It was noted that there have been typically five recurring events at Robinson Park – Ice Fest, Peter Fest, Paddle Fest, Fall Climbers Fest, and Canoe-U. Last year, there were quite a few Boy Scout groups using Robinson Park as well.

After discussion, George was directed to bring proposed changes to the March meeting for review and discussion.

- D. City Skate & Slide Event – Commissioners discussed hosting a City Skate & Slide event to highlight the offerings of Lions Hill. They decided February 23<sup>rd</sup> would be a good date, allowing time for advertising.

### **Continuing Business**

- A. Legacy Grant Application – Robinson Park – The City’s grant request was not funded. The project scored 65.5 points out of a possible 100 and was “quite high in the ranking”, according to the letter received from the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks & Trails Commission. Administrator George stated that the biggest thing that hurt our chances was the amount of local match. We provided \$60,000, which is 5.2% of the project cost (which is \$1,154,175).

In order for the City’s application to score more points, the match should be at least \$115,418. Administrator George noted that the City has been setting aside \$20,000 towards this project each year. So far, through the 2019 budget cycle, \$60,000 has been saved up. Assuming another \$20,000 will be added in the 2020 budget cycle, the local match increases to \$80,000. This still leaves a gap of \$35,418 to earn more points. After discussion, **motion by Barsness, second by Chasson, to recommend the City allocate \$35,500 from the KREEC fund towards the required match. Motion passed 7-0.** The current balance in the KREEC fund is \$77,055.31. If \$35,500 is used for matching funds, the balance will be \$41,555.31.

- B. KREEC Site Redevelopment – Commissioners Chasson, Barsness, and Vavricka have been meeting to discuss the future of the KREEC site. The following report was provided and discussed:

**Vision for KREEC Development – February 5, 2019**

Create opportunities for **Non-motorized** Outdoor Recreation and Environmental Education for local residents and out of town visitors

All development will be done in a manner to maintain present natural state with minimal impact

There will be no future logging – Tony V

All development should consider present and future economic sustainability

**Possible** examples that would fall under vision:

Multipurpose Trails - non-motorized - hike, bike, ski, horse and connectors with other trails and places of interest

Camping – primitive and developed

Gardens – native species/bee forest management, natural history – specific sites of interest, outdoor skills – camp craft, orienteer, etc

Local Arts – photography, painting, natural crafts, etc

Use of existing building – sale, find tenant – Hostel, Campground office/store

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**Possible Partnerships**

City of SS, Banning State Park, Wild Scenic, East Central School, Audubon Center, Home Schools, Old School Arts, Sentence to Serve – Willow Boot Camp, Master Gardeners, SS Chamber, Lions Clubs

**Reasons for non-motorized:**

There is no historical context for the use of motorized recreation in the KREEC history. In fact an argument could be made that motorized recreation would be in conflict with the original vision(s).

Sandstone has been establishing its latest growth and value based on its natural resources. Global Warming was a topic at the MN State Legislature on 1/15/19.

Whether our effort to reduce greenhouse gases by not allowing motorized vehicles at KREEC actually will have an affect or be mainly symbolic is debatable but Minnesota governments of all sizes should be making a statement. Ice Climbing and global warming are at odds.

It is more challenging to include motorized recreation in the mix of multipurpose trail vs keeping all the options specific to non-motorized and it is questionable if the land size is adequate.

Concern for the terrain was also noted if motorized uses were allowed – soil erosion, disturbing the stormwater runoff, etc.

Chasson stated that he recently went skiing through the property. He felt that some clearing could be finished fairly easily and people could start using the property for some of the uses mentioned above. The bridge needs work and perhaps a boardwalk will be needed over the wetland areas in the future. A parking area is needed, perhaps

by the current KREEC building. Perhaps some brush hogging could be done using volunteers or for minimal costs. Chasson suggested the Park Commission think about what to do with the building and the turbine.

- C. Kettle River Watershed Mural Project – The grant deadline 6/30/2019. Work is expected to continue as weather permits.
- D. Angle Park – Mayor Spartz and Administrator George attended a School Board meeting to ask about the 4 lots located at the northeast corner of 7<sup>th</sup> Street and Court Avenue North. The City suggested the School Board sell the lots for \$1. The School Board has not made any decision at this time.
- E. Pine Avenue – Big Spring Falls –City Engineer/Inspector Steve Rose and Streets & Parks Supervisor Craig Hiler are working together to come up with a plan to improve the City’s portion of the road, along with cost estimates.
- F. Gin Pole – No additional updates.
- G. Stage at Robinson Park –We will continue to work with Mike Johnson on the possibilities as weather permits.
- H. Train Park Kiosk – Work continues for designs of the following:
  - City Parks
  - Robinson Park
  - Directory of Businesses in town
  - Directory of non-profits and service organizations in town
  - Quarry Days
  - History of Sandstone
- I. Robinson Park Camping Statistics – There were no registrations for camping during the months of December or January.

## **Other**

- A. MN Climbers Association Update: James Loveridge reported that they did not get to the ice lights this fall because they need to rebuild everything from scratch. The volunteers who have the knowledge/skills to build it were too busy this fall. They are planning to get the lights going in 2019 and have budgeted \$2,000 for the project. They anticipate working on it in August/September.
- B. MN Conservation Volunteer Magazine: The January-February issue included an article on Winter Whitewater – focusing on the people who run the Kettle River rapids all year long. Commissioner Dybvig pointed out that her granddaughter is also featured in the Nordic Influence article in the same publication. Her granddaughter is Olympic skier Jessie Diggins.

**Adjournment**

**Motion Franklin, second Vavricka, to adjourn the meeting at 9:20 a.m. Motion passed 7-0.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathy George, City Administrator