

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, January 10, 2020

Members present: Dave Barsness, Dorothy Dybvig, Eric Sturtz, David Chasson, Karry White, Tony Vavricka, Oliver Dykstra

Members absent: None

Staff Present: Administrator Kathy George

Other: Council Liaison Val Palmer, Streets & Parks Supervisor Craige Hiler

Call to Order

The meeting took place at Sprouts on 5th and was called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chair Dybvig.

Approve Agenda

Motion by Dykstra, second by White, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion passed 7-0.

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion by White, second by Sturtz, to approve the minutes from the December 13, 2019 meeting. Motion passed 7-0.

New Business

Commission Appointments – Commissioner terms are for 3-years. Expiring terms in 2019 are Dorothy Dybvig and Oliver Dykstra (filling Mary Franklin’s term). Both agreed to serve for another 3-year term. **Motion by White, second by Barsness, to recommend the City Council appoint Dybvig and Dykstra to the Park & Rec Commission for 3-year terms. Motion passed 7-0.**

Banning State Park Friends Group – The City was notified by Park Manager Clarissa Payne that there is interest in starting a Banning State Park Friends Group. All are invited to attend a meeting to discuss the possibilities on January 29th at 6:00 p.m. at the North Pine Government Center building. Several Commissioners stated that they plan to attend.

City Skate & Slide – The Commission discussed the upcoming City Skate & Slide event. Commissioner Dykstra offered to work with Deputy Clerk/Utility Billing Leah Jackson at the City to promote the event on Facebook. Commissioners discussed the promotion currently being offered by the Pine County Courier for ½ page ads at ½ price. **Motion by Vavricka, second by Barsness, to take advantage of the promotion and purchase a ½ page ad for the event. Motion passed 6-0 with Commissioner White abstaining as she is employed by the Courier.**

Commissioners also discussed contracting with the *Pine County Courier* for all of the ads that will be placed during the year, hoping to get discounted pricing.

Continuing Business

The following update was provided on the various items listed as Continuing Business on the Agenda:

Robinson Park:

Legacy Grant Application –

A grant application for the cultural landscape report was submitted October 11th to the MN Historical Society. The City received notice that our request for \$7,200 was approved. However, after having conversations with Laura Kindseth from MNHS, it was determined that we would be better off declining this grant because the consultant chosen does not have the required credentials. Also, it is not possible to do a cultural landscape report for all of Robinson Park for under \$10,000.

The correct thing to do, according to Kindseth, is to put out a Request for Proposals for a Cultural Landscape Report that encompasses all of the historic sites. Kindseth explained that this would be like a Historic Structure Report or a Conditions Assessment, but on all of the features in Robinson Park. The report is very thorough, looking at all features, determining their current condition, and recommending/prioritizing work that is needed to preserve the artifacts. The application deadline is May 29th.

There was discussion about next steps regarding the overall Legacy Grant project. The Legislature will consider the recommendations of the Greater MN Parks & Trails Commission. The Robinson Park project is one of the recommended projects. If approved by the Legislature, grant documents will need to be executed before work can begin on the design of the project. Commissioners would like to consider options regarding which firm to work with for design and implementation of the project.

Gin Pole –In discussions with the MN Historical Society, it was originally determined that a separate Conditions Assessment report is needed for this project, but then Laura Kindseth said that we could proceed with the design/drawings phase because of the information we already had from SEH and Advanced Masonry. The deadline to apply for a grant was January 10th. Administrator George put out an RFP to 15 structural engineers for the drawings, and it soon became apparent that this will not fall under the \$10,000 small grant threshold. Additionally, after speaking with Kindseth about Robinson Park, it was recommended that we just wait for the Cultural Landscape Report from that project because the Gin Pole will be included.

Robinson Park Camping Statistics – There were 3 registrations for 3 days of camping in December.

Ice Fest was last weekend. James Lovebridge of the Minnesota Climbers Association reported that attendance was up to about 320, evening festivities at the Audubon Center had record attendance, climbing clinics were 90% full (significantly up from last year), they raised enough money to pay for repairs from last season's freeze-up

and also for some things they bought for this season, the featured speaker was Raphael Slawinski, more vendors were added, ground based classes were added, participants came from Detroit, Vermont, New York and California.

Commissioners discussed how to engage the community and other businesses more with this event. Some suggested a banner be placed above the street to announce Ice Fest, some suggested area businesses offer Ice Fest specials, some volunteered to work together outside of the Park Commission purview to try and garner more interest. It was suggested that parking be encouraged in the downtown business district with shuttles running back and forth. George will follow up on this idea with the Climbers Association to see what their thoughts are.

KREEC Site Redevelopment. The public input session was held on Tuesday, December 3rd, from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Dovetail Partners provided an update to the EDA at the December 16th EDA meeting. The minutes of that meeting, along with the report received by Dovetail was e-mailed out to Park Commissioners on December 18th. The Dovetail report was also provided with the meeting Agenda. Dovetail consultants plan to attend the January 22nd EDA meeting to present a concept plan for review and discussion. All are welcome to attend.

Commissioners discussed the process by which the feasibility study came about, feeling that it represents a decision against a proposal for non-motorized use. They would like to see some effort towards considering other options. They feel that the money spent on a feasibility study for only one use (ATV Training/Obstacle Course) is not a good use of taxpayer money.

Commissioner Chasson reported that he reviewed documents going back to 1989 which revealed that multiple efforts had been made to utilize the property for environmental education, wildlife, and conservation. There was one proposal for a shooting range and ATV course, but nothing materialized. He stated that the Roadmap to the Future document, which was finalized in 2016, involved a lot of public input and the desired focus for the area was on natural resources (not motorized uses).

Commissioners were encouraged to share their thoughts by attending the meetings regarding the ATV Training/Obstacle course feasibility study, sending comments to Dovetail Partners, sending comments to the EDA/Council, and/or contacting individual EDA/Council members.

Motion by Chasson, second by Dykstra to draft a letter to the City Council and the EDA suggesting a more comprehensive study to include non-motorized uses of the KREEC site. Motion passed 7-0. Chasson agreed to draft the letter and share it with Commissioners for their input. He also expressed a willingness to attend the January 22nd EDA meeting on behalf of the Park & Rec Commission.

Other – The written journal/notes kept by Warming House Attendant Barb Heil were shared with the Commission. Commissioners were amazed at the number of people using the Lions Hill facilities. Commissioners expressed their appreciation for the work Heil is doing and decided to pass the hat for the purchase of a gift card for Heil which can be presented at the City Skate & Slide Event on February 1st. \$70 was collected.

Adjourn

Motion by White, second by Chasson, to adjourn at 9:47 a.m. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator