

**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES**

Friday, February 12, 2021

This meeting took place via Zoom Video Conference

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

Members absent: None

Staff Present: Administrator Kathy George, Streets & Parks Supervisor Craig Hiler

Other: Council Liaison Val Palmer

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:36 a.m. by Chair Dybvig.

Approve Agenda

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

Approve Meeting Minutes

Motion White, second Chasson, to approve the minutes from the January 8, 2021 meeting.

Motion passed 7-0.

New Business

Ice Climbing Day for School/Community – Commissioner Barsness reported that he has been working with representatives from the Minnesota Climbers Association and from East Central School to coordinate an ice climbing day for students and community members. Barsness stated that the school may be able to participate through their strength/conditioning classes. The event would have to take place during the week / school day. The MCA contact stated that an official guide service would have to be hired to provide gear and facilitate safe climbing. They estimate the cost of this to be around \$800 for the day. Barsness asked if the Park Commission could cover the cost, or help with the cost.

Commissioners expressed concern with the timing – they are looking at holding the event in March. Also, concerns with COVID restrictions. Some suggested the idea start with rock climbing, rather than ice climbing. Some thought planning for next year may allow for better organization.

Motion White, second Dykstra to approve the \$800 expense from the Park Fund. During discussion on the motion, there was concern that an ethical issue would be raised if only the Sandstone school were invited. Others thought that if this event is successful, maybe it can be offered to others in the future. Commissioner Vavricka stated that he is an official guide and he does have the equipment. He is also available during the week, where others may only be available on weekends.

Chair Dybvig called for a vote on the motion. Motion passed 6-0, with Vavricka abstaining due to a conflict of interest.

PHASE Adirondack Chair – Joyce LaMere of PHASE reached out to the City to see if we would like to place an oversized Adirondack chair in Train Park. The chair is made by PHASE participants and sold for \$375. It can be painted. Commissioners thought it could be placed near

the kiosk, so it is visible from the street. Perhaps it can be painted in a Sandstone theme by a local artist. Streets & Parks Commission Supervisor Hiler stated that his crew could install a concrete pad and anchor the chair. **Motion Barsness, second Vavricka to approve the purchase of an Adirondack Chair from PHASE for \$375 contingent on Hiler reviewing the chair/details. Motion passed 7-0.**

Continuing Business

Cultural Landscape Report: Update - The Commission met with the LHB team last month to kick off the Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) project, which is required for the Phase 1 Robinson Park Legacy Grant Project. The team is in the process of reviewing literature and maps regarding the park and the quarry. They are creating an archeological interest map and generating a database of archeological sites within five miles of the project site. They plan to visit the site in the next couple of weeks and will do above-ground field survey work after the snow melts.

KREEC Update – Commissioner Chasson provided a written plan for 2021. The plan includes:

- Signage – restricting motor vehicles
- Removing the old school house – The Fire Department has been asked if they would like to conduct a training burn; Hiler will get a quote from MPJ to demolish the building and clean up the site.
- Parking – Commissioner Dykstra suggested there be an area for staging, benches, and a kiosk. The parking surface would involve gravel, a culvert, and a driveway; with space for 6 cars to start. Hiler will get a quote from MPJ for this work as well.
- Explore options to sell the property on the west side of Old Military Road (approximately 42 acres) and use the funds for the KREEC redevelopment. Commissioners were in favor of selling the property, but some thought there is no urgency and it could be kept as an asset and to prevent development. The property is low land with saturated soils and Popple trees. There had been talk in the past about creating an RV park, but there is no long-term plan for the property today. Some suggestions were to see if the DNR is interested in a land swap, or if it can be transferred for land preservation/conservation (such as the Trust for Public Land) – Chasson will look into this. Perhaps an appraisal should be done on the parcel – Administrator George will look into this.
- Boardwalks – the Commission received the engineer’s report regarding options at the January meeting. Hiler will see if his crew can add a step on the existing bridge. Chasson will talk to the County about wetlands.
- Trail maps/signage
- Seasonal brushing and maintenance
- Promoting the property and monitoring use
- Explore connections to Robinson Park and other areas

Robinson Park

Camping – There were 7 registrations for 9 days of camping in January. Staff is *still* looking into on-line registration options. Google statistics were provided: 383 people asked for directions, 122 visited the website, 7 people called for info, 133 people visited the park, 127 visited the ice park. Comments received included: “Lovely quiet park with great rock climbing”, “Bomber routes!”, “This was such a hidden treasure! Beautiful trails, cliffs, and right next to the river. It was a great spot for some rock climbing”, “Definitely a nature walk”, “Beautiful park”, “I love to take a walk on their great trails. Lots of great nature to look at. Never camped there, but its available.”

2nd Legacy Grant Application – The grant application was submitted for FY22 funding to include the items that were not allowed in the Phase 1 project – vault restroom, picnic shelter & tables, and concrete shelter plaza. Total updated estimated cost is \$357,500 (local match of \$35,750).

We received a congratulation letter on our successful funding application. Our grant is the first on the list IF Legacy collections are larger than originally projected. GMRPTC recommendations will go to the Legislature during the upcoming 2021 session for approval.

Lions Hill – Warming House Attendant Barb Heil provided her journal, noting a high attendance of 149 on January 9th. She logged a total of 951 visitors from December 28th to February 5th. Due to health reasons, the warming house will not be open again until late-February. The second warming house attendant we hired has left the area.

We have had problems with the new water line freezing. Hiler stated that the water line is mounted to the outside wall. They plan to add insulation and skirting in the spring/summer, when they will also paint the bathroom addition. Hiler also reported that the skating rink ice is frozen.

New Playground – On January 26th, the MCCU property became ours. The DNR Outdoor Recreation Grant Program is accepting applications until March 31st. New development/construction projects are eligible. The maximum grant award is \$250,000. A 50% local match is required.

So far, the New Playground Task Force includes the following: Karry White, Dave Barsness, Cassie Gaede, John Gaede, Megan Bennett. Oliver Dykstra expressed interest in participating. Craige Hiler will also be included. A meeting of the Task Force will be set up very soon to get started on planning. A survey of the property has been ordered and, hopefully, will be done by the end of February.

Special Event Permit – Scouts BSA Troop 5 from Woodbury plan to hold a Whitewater Campout July 9th – July 11th. They will use Group Camp Sites 1 and 2 for two nights. They anticipate 30 participants. Commissioners recommend the Scouts secure a port-a-potty.

Other None

Adjourn

Motion Vavricka, second Dykstra, to adjourn at 9:35 a.m. Motion passed 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy George, City Administrator