



Public Services – Parks & Recreation

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
OF THE
ANOKA PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD
TUESDAY, MAY 17, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
ANOKA SENIOR CENTER
1500 6TH AVENUE, ANOKA MN

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Steve Nelson, Joseph Anderla, Mary Blankenship, Jennifer Shoemaker, Erik Skogquist, Dave Throne, and Ellen Ward

MEMBERS ABSENT: Margret Kallstrom and Dave Steinbring

STAFF PRESENT: Lisa LaCasse, Public Services Administrator and Jon Holmes, Public Services Supervisor

GUESTS: None.

APPROVE MINUTES

There being no changes or corrections to the April 2016 regular meeting minutes, a **motion was made by Anderla, seconded by Throne, to APPROVE THE APRIL 19, 2016, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD AS PRINTED.**

7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

OPEN FORUM

None

NEW BUSINESS

Capital Improvement Plan – LaCasse reviewed the Parks Capital Improvement Plan for 2016-2021, referencing the document provided in the agenda packet. City Council is scheduled to review all departments’ budgets at its Monday, May 23, 2016, work session.

Upon discussion of the Aquatic Center, LaCasse stated that after 2016, capital funds for the Aquatic Center will be depleted. Future improvements for the pool will come out of the general fund.

Some Park Capital Improvement funds can be expected from the Volunteers of America (VOA) and the Heartland Cooperative. No money will be coming from the Riverplace Counseling Center transaction.

The page of budgeted items, their descriptions, and proposed budget year expense were reviewed.

The 2017 reconstruction of the stone house was discussed in greater depth. Staff indicated that expenditure will come out of Park Capital funds. Anderla queried why it does not come out of the Historical Preservation Commission (HPC) funds in that this appears to be an historical reclamation project. LaCasse stated the HPC does not have any money. Anderla stated this is not even public property. LaCasse responded that it is in the Rum River, a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) waterway; so, technically, it is a public property with public ownership.

Upon discussion of the West Rum River Trail, LaCasse stated that City Manager Lee wants the Park Board to meet jointly with the Economic Development Commission and the History Subcommittee to start planning and address historic elements for this trail’s development. He also wants this group to look at



everything in town and determine what does and does not have historic value. These special meetings will take place in August and September 2016. Blankenship indicated she served on the Historic Committee previously and would like to do so again. However, she will be gone in September so would prefer August meetings.

LaCasse reported she has also been asked to be involved in working with a group of individuals to create a marketing strategy outline for the area with regard to the potential riverboat venture. Once said strategy is compiled, they will meet with the riverboat entrepreneur out of Duluth. He was previously interested but had concerns about the tourism and marketing sustainability. Doug Borgland is Anoka's Economic Development Director, but City Manager Lee wants Public Services to take the lead on this.

Anderla ask about the last Community Development letter that went out to riverboat captains inviting their interest in providing a riverboat in Anoka. It was confirmed the city has not changed the letter yet, but has not reissued it either. Anderla added we previously talked about sharing the revenue pot with whoever runs that riverboat business. He would hate to see money put toward someone's pipedream when we could be updating existing facilities, such as John Ward, and wherever else there is need. Nelson stated it is all part of the feasibility study. Holmes added he would doubt if a riverboat would be able to go north of the Ferry St. bridge.

Considerable discussion ensued relative to the Rum River Trail at Fourth Avenue. The need for a safe trail/pedestrian crossing was discussed. Holmes reported the railroad is supposed to construct a Fourth Avenue crossing next year. LaCasse stated the city hopes to get a pedestrian access done at that time. We have asked Hakanson Anderson Engineering what the numbers might look like to accomplish this. Staff will be looking into grant opportunities, as well.

LaCasse reported that City Council has committed to keeping and maintaining the Rudy Johnson Park at its currently location. It is time to do a study of the neighborhood and do some neighborhood planning and determine what is wanted there and to make some improvements. By then the playground will be at the end of its life span. The building needs updates as well.

Nelson asked how the Park Board knows what the balance of the Capital Improvement fund is so that we can determine our priorities based on available funds. LaCasse indicated she will have to ask about that and get back to the board. The CIP plan for the years indicated were mapped out with priorities in mind. Any Park Board input or comments are not only welcome but encouraged. Nelson stated he feels it would be beneficial if the Park Board knew what funds were available when making these decisions.

Skogquist indicated a priority of his with regard to park improvements would be the John Ward restrooms. Their existing dank, dark, unpleasant condition makes them not only worthless to the city, but a potential liability. LaCasse stated that will be an expensive project and not an easy fix, which is why it gets pushed out on the budget timeline. Skogquist felt this should get fixed sooner rather than later, perhaps in 2017 or 2018. The Station Park can wait another two to three years if need be. We need to get those John Ward Park bathrooms fixed. If the Peninsula Point docking and access project does not occur, that \$140,000 can go toward the John Ward Park restroom project. Blankenship suggested the city could leave \$100,000 in the Peninsula Point Park budget and put \$40,000 toward the J.W. Park bathrooms. She added those bathrooms are an awful embarrassment that does not provide a good picture for Anoka.

Nelson added he felt the city should invest park dedication funds toward the Station Park. He stated recent improvements to John Ward Park itself and its fields are great, but agreed the restrooms need to be fixed.

Upon discussion about what budget year the John Ward Park bathrooms should be done, it was suggested to move this project to 2018. Anderla and Skogquist disagreed, recommending staff put them in 2017 and compromise to 2018 if necessary.

Blankenship asked about the status of the Emerald Ash borer infestation. Holmes stated none have been found so far in Anoka. However, we are seeing old ash trees distressed and dying off in the middle all across the metro area. At a certain age they simply die off. Cottonwood trees are showing a large ant population and becoming hollow. When this occurs, we must take them down.

A motion was made by Skogquist, seconded by Blankenship, to AMEND THE PARKS CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BUDGET PLAN FOR 2016-2021 AS DISCUSSED.

LaCasse suggested the update to the George Enloe playground could be moved to 2018 if we need additional John Ward Park funds to upgrade the restrooms. All agreed with this suggested amendment from LaCasse.

Vote: 7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

George Enloe Park Tennis Court – LaCasse reported staff has closed the George Enloe Park tennis court due to the dangerous condition of the court due to substantial cracks. The nets have been taken down and the gates locked. The city is currently pursuing pricing for complete court milling and three inches of new asphalt. They expect to have to do soil correction underneath. \$25,000 has been budgeted for tennis courts this year. The question to the board is: Do we put back the two tennis courts, or do we convert them to pickle ball courts? That seems to be a huge trend these days. We can get four pickle ball courts on the same sized court that services tennis.

Following discussion, it was unanimously agreed that staff should create pickle ball courts at this George Enloe Park location rather than tennis courts.

Park Reservation Policy Update – LaCasse reported the city made changes to its special events policy regarding any fundraising, etc. that occurs on public or city property. Any such requests that come through the Public Services office will be considered first by the City Clerk as a special events activity before we consider allowing a park permit. This proposed change to the existing Park Facility Rentals and Reservations Policy was noted in the agenda packet.

The question was asked if all park building interiors are alcohol free. LaCasse responded, yes, but not the park in general. With these proposed policy changes, the staking of canopy tents in city parks would not be allowed; only free-standing weighted structures would be allowed.

In comparing the language in the Park Facility Rentals and Reservations Policy with that of the Performing Arts Policy regarding the requirement of a Special Event License, Blankenship suggested the language in both policies read the same. LaCasse indicated that would be appropriate.

A motion was made by Blankenship, seconded by Ward, to RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL ACCEPT THE PARK FACILITY RENTALS AND RESERVATIONS POLICY AS PRESENTED BY STAFF WITH THE AMENDMENT THAT THE LANGUAGE FROM THE PERFORMING ARTS POLICY RE THE NEED FOR A SPECIAL EVENT LICENSE PRIOR TO THE CITY ISSUING A PARK FACILITY USE PERMIT, BE IDENTICAL TO THAT PARAGRAPH IN THE PERFORMING ARTS POLICY.

7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Performing Arts Policy Update – LaCasse reviewed the proposed Performing Arts Policy changes. The crossed-out language under item IV.F is addressed under the city's special event policy, and is, therefore, unnecessary here. The Public Services Department should not deal with anything that city policy or code would address.

A motion was made by Skogquist, seconded by Ward, to RECOMMEND CITY COUNCIL ACCEPT THE PARK FACILITY RENTAL FOR PERFORMANCE ARTS EVENTS POLICY AS PRESENTED BY STAFF.

7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Adopt-A-Park Program Update - LaCasse noted the agenda packet draft Community Service Project Application, indicating that our adopt-a-park program needed some updating. She tried to identify specifically what the four types of community service projects were for adoption. She then attempted to spell out what the city will do for them as recognition. This is informational only and is open for Park

Board feedback; it does not require approval. Once finalized, LaCasse plans to turn this into a flyer and make it more available to the public.

Throne asked if information will be provided addressing clean-up requirements and safety equipment/clothing. LaCasse stated that information will be provided to anyone doing these projects.

Shoemaker suggested providing a brochure to local businesses for their groups doing community service.

Blankenship suggested a certificate, letter, or something thanking and recognizing these volunteers and businesses that would show their customers they are giving back to the community might be appreciated. LaCasse stated staff could do that.

MISCELLANEOUS

Request to Consider Changing Park Board Meetings' Start Time – Ward presented the request to consider changing the Park Board meeting start time to a time significantly earlier than 7:00 p.m. Her reasoning was the convenience for staff after a full day or work. If immediately or at least soon after work, staff would not even have to go home until after the meeting. Many other commissions have done this.

Blankenship stated this has been discussed in previous years. While a 7:00 p.m. meeting has been a long-standing time, she indicated she would be in favor of moving it to an earlier start.

LaCasse respectfully requested the board not include staff in this consideration; meetings are part of their job responsibilities.

Skogquist's comments: He was fine with whatever is decided. He is also OK with the 7:00 p.m. start time; it is good to have dinner with family. However, he was aware some people would have trouble making an earlier meeting due to their work schedules. He preferred to get the best people we can on this board and not inhibit their ability to serve because they can not make an early meeting.

Throne: 7:00 p.m. allows more people to participate. He, for one, could not serve on the Park Board if the meetings were any earlier than 7:00 p.m. Besides, for him it is beneficial to deprogram from the work day, if there is time, before coming to these meetings. The 7:00 p.m. start time is preferred by Throne.

Shoemaker: With four kids at home, she needs time to get things done before these meetings. She could not do mornings. If it had to be earlier, she would manage; but she likes the 7:00 p.m. start times.

Anderla: Earlier might be a hardship for those working outside the home. Traffic is an issue. Also, for those guests who attend, especially during open forum, they could likely not make it if we start earlier because of their jobs. As a long-time Park Board member, he finds that 7:00 p.m. appeals to him.

Nelson: He comes to these meetings straight from work. He agrees with Anderla's point about open forum guests having a difficult time coming earlier. He has trouble getting to the 5:30 p.m. Castle Field Association meetings once a month on time. However, he does understand and will accommodate whatever is decided.

Blankenship concluded that it sounds like the 7:00 p.m. start time for meetings works for everyone. She did add, however, that she simply can not handle those meetings that run to 9:30 or 9:45 p.m., at least not as a regular practice.

Nelson suggested perhaps we revisit this issue occasionally, suggesting once a year. Also, if we have no real agenda for the month, he preferred that month's meeting be postponed/canceled.

LaCasse stated that future July or August joint meetings with the HPC might be the time with little or nothing else on the agenda. Staff will try to be mindful of the agenda lengths. She suggested if the meetings are not completed by 9:00 p.m. that the remaining items be tabled to the following regular meeting. Blankenship and Ward concurred.

Other Miscellaneous

- Staff confirmed for Blankenship that Seventh Avenue from Main Street south is a city street now. Blankenship asked if there could be considerably fewer NO PARKING signs on the streets. She felt it an eyesore. Holmes indicated that is a decision of the Parking Advisory Board and would have to be addressed by them. LaCasse explained the neighborhood has lobbied their issue with the Parking Advisory Board because of the bus company personal vehicle parking during work hours.
- LaCasse reminded the board that Tom Hammer's cancer benefit will take place Thursday, May 19, 2016, at the Anoka American Legion from 5:00-8:00 p.m. It is an open house with a live auction.
- Skogquist stated John Ward fields look nice. Now adult softball players want a warning track.
- Joe Anderla will not be present at the June 2016 regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further discussion, a **motion was made by Anderla, seconded by Skogquist, to ADJOURN THE MEETING.**

7 ayes – 0 nays. Motion carried.

Time of adjournment: 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa LaCasse
Public Services Administrator

Mava Mikkonen
Public Services/Recording Secretary