

**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
MARCH 5, 2020**

Commissioner Chu asked if the neighbors have been alerted to these plantings.

The Community Services Manager stated that a blurb was included in the newsletter. He stated that once the plantings come up, staff will contact the neighbors in an attempt to gain participation in another planting event to fill in gaps. He noted in the future they will have interpretive signage.

**FIRE BARNS
PARK RINK
BOARDS**

The Community Services Manager reported that the rink boards at Fire Barns Park have been deteriorating but are very expensive. He stated that the City received pricing and the Little Canada Recreation Association (LCRA) has offered to fund the entire project, which will have a total cost of \$85,266 with an additional \$15,000 to \$20,000 for site preparation and grading. He stated that part of the property falls within City property while the remainder is within Saint Paul Regional Water Supply (SPRWS) property. He stated that SPRWS has confirmed the agreement with this improvement. He stated that if the Commission supports the project, it should recommend approval. He explained that the City would complete the project and would then be reimbursed by LCRA. He stated that the logo of LCRA would also be placed on the rink boards to recognize its donation. He stated that currently there are two gates for skaters, but one has not been used and will be removed which will equate to one small gate for skaters and one large gate on the other end to allow for equipment.

Commissioner Darling asked what would happen if one of the panels incurs damage.

The Community Services Manager replied that this is the 6.0 model and has exceptional durability. He stated that the panels are available for purchase, should one panel be damaged to the point replacement is necessary. He explained that the snow removal process will be changed to lower the chance of damage from equipment. He stated that the panels have an average life of about 25 years.

Miller made a motion to recommend to the City Council approval of the purchase of new boards for the Fire Barns hockey rink and the professional installation of the boards with a cost of \$85,266.06. Horwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**PIONEER PARK
PLANNING**

The Community Services Manager reported that they are starting the process of making a park-specific plan for Pioneer Park. He stated that staff developed a rough cost estimate report. He suggested that the Commission take the next month to review this information and highlighted some of the big questions that future discussions will focus on

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related to cost and the types of improvements. He stated that the splash pad was identified as a water feature within the master plan and noted that a few examples were provided for the Commission to review. He noted that the two large elements (splash pad and community building) could have a cost ranging from \$500,000 to \$2,000,000. He reviewed the proposed timeline for the process including meetings and opportunities for public input, hold a joint workshop with the Commission, and City Council and have a Council approved plan by the end of September.

Chair Miller commented that it seems like an aggressive timeline but he is excited to see this moving forward.

The Community Services Manager agreed that this is an aggressive timeline. He commented that the parks master plan took one year and the goal is to move forward on this while it is fresh in people's minds.

Chair Miller stated that he likes the potential funding source and suggested possibly including the organization to determine if there is interest in making donations for certain elements.

Commissioner Darling stated that receiving input from the public is helpful but noted that there could be a backlash if a certain element that garners a lot of public interest does not move forward, using the example of a splash pad.

The Community Services Manager noted that perhaps some of those elements can be worked out on the front end, again using the splash pad as an example. He explained that the cost could be prohibitive to that item moving forward. He referenced the parcel next to the public work facility that was previously identified as a community garden space but that space will be needed by public works for storage.

Commissioner Ray asked if the intent is to begin construction in 2021.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that \$345,000 has been budgeted for the new playground in 2021.

Commissioner Horwath asked the total cost of the Spooner playground.

The Community Services Manager recalled an estimated cost of \$525,000 for the playground improvements. He explained that the playground equipment had a cost of \$180,000 but the City received a grant for \$80,000 which brought the City's portion down to \$100,000. He advised that the site grading was the most expensive part with a cost of about \$200,000, with the remainder for the trails. He noted that there will be a more in-depth discussion of the park plans at the next meeting.

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Commissioner Chu suggested that the Commission visit different splash pad locations for additional research.

The Community Services Manager commented that most will not open until after May, but stated that if that element is still desirable at that time it could be helpful for the Commission to see that element in use.

Commissioner Ray noted that an alternative option could be a water feature, using the example of Chanhassen which is more cost-effective.

Chair Miller commented that the desire would be to have an interactive water feature rather than something that would be viewed more like art.

UPDATES

The Community Services Manager reported that registration is open for youth activities using the new registration software.

The Community Services Manager reviewed some of the available adult activities that are open for registration.

The Community Services Manager reported that the next Morning Talk is scheduled for March 11th and the topic is Planning for Your Future.

The Community Services Manager stated that staff is continually watching the Coronavirus outbreak to determine if additional action should be taken for the City facilities. He stated that handwashing continues to be the best effort in Minnesota and staff ensured that all facilities are stocked with soap.

Chair Miller asked if the parks tour should occur in April or May. It was the consensus of the Commission to meet at Pioneer Park at 5:30 p.m. before the regular April meeting, dependent on the weather. He stated that the previous year the Commission each adopted a park and asked if the group would like to shuffle parks.

Commissioner Chu stated that if the Commission remains with the parks from the previous year, they would perhaps be able to provide an update on anything that has changed during that time.

Chair Miller stated that the benefit of rotating is to have a fresh set of eyes.

Commissioner Horwath agreed that it is helpful to have a fresh perspective.

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It was noted that staff will assign a park to each of the Commissioners with the intent of the Commissioners providing a quarterly update.

Chair Miller stated that there was a discussion related to the Spooner parking lot and asked for an update.

The Community Services Manager stated that he walked through the area with the Public Works Director a few weeks ago. He stated that because of the drainage concerns, grading that would be necessary, and the mature trees, it would be difficult to put that parking area in the wooded area. He stated that an alternative would be to add to the existing parking area. He noted that engineering is working to provide some alternates that could be reviewed by the Commission as additional parking is needed in that area.

Commissioner Horwath referenced the cul-de-sac trail connections that connect to the Thunder Bay trail and noted that the plow is piling a large amount of snow at the end of the trail, which cuts off the access. He asked that those spaces be included for clearing in the City's snow plan to allow resident access to the trails.

The Community Services Manager commented that as a former plow driver, it is difficult for plows to clear that cul-de-sac. He noted that priority is given to the driveway and hydrant. He stated that he could follow up with public works.

ADJOURN

Horwath moved the meeting be adjourned

Motion seconded by Schletty.

Motion carried 7 – 0.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.