

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

MAY 7, 2020

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 7th day of May, 2020 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Dave Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Horwath, Darling, Miller, Ray, Chu, and Abruzzese.

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Claire Hoffman.

In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes.

Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the City Council members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.

Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.

MINUTES

Commissioner Horwath made a motion to approve the March 5, 2020, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Ray seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK PLANNING UPDATE

The Community Service Manager stated that some preliminary information was presented to the Commission in March and asked for feedback. He stated that the City applied to join Resilient Communities Project (RCP) program through the University of Minnesota and hoped that the group will assist with the outreach and planning process.

Chair Miller stated that there were a lot of options included in the proposal. He stated that he likes the idea of a community meeting center, which seems to be missing in the community. He also asked what could be done with the soccer field, whether turf is important to ensure sufficient use of the field. He agreed that community input will be important.

**MINUTES
PARKS & REC COMMISSION
MAY 7, 2020**

Commissioner Chu stated that she also likes the idea of the community building but believes that one of the highest priorities should be a water element. She stated that the cost for a splashpad is expensive and perhaps there would be an option for a water feature. She asked how the pandemic would interplay with that type of element and other park improvements.

The Community Service Manager stated that following the last discussion he reached out to a company to gather input and received pricing on the misting rocks feature.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that although water features are typically expensive, some water features have a much lower cost than other improvements. She stated that she also believes that a water feature should be higher prioritized. She stated that she would also support a community-building, but at a lower priority to the water feature.

Commissioner Darling agreed that the residents identified that item as a desire and the water feature should be the highest priority.

Chair Miller agreed that the water feature should be included in the RFP. He noted that this is a long-term plan and therefore the water feature and community building could both be included and would not necessarily need to be constructed at the same time, but space should be planned for both.

Commissioner Ray agreed that both elements should be included, and the water feature could be constructed first with space for the building as well.

Commissioner Horwath noted that the water feature and community building could have shared bathrooms at a cost savings but noted that the projects would need to then be completed concurrently.

The Community Service Manager confirmed the consensus of the Commission to keep both the community building and splashpad/water feature in the RFP. He asked for input on the open-air shelters proposed.

Commissioner Ray stated that he likes the open-air shelters as those would be a quick improvement. He believed that the existing shelter plus two more would be sufficient. It was confirmed that the existing shelter would be improved.

Commissioner Horwath commented that he would be concerned with parking, using the high levels of parking that occurs near Spooner for the shelters.

Chair Miller replied that if the shelters are kept to a smaller size, there should be sufficient parking. He asked if the shelters would be rentable or first come first serve.

**MINUTES
PARKS & REC COMMISSION
MAY 7, 2020**

The Community Service Manager replied that all shelters are first come first serve unless rented.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she did not believe that the shelters would be the size of the Spooner shelter and perhaps the Commission has different ideas on the size of the shelters. She stated that she was thinking the shelter would be more of a picnic table with a cover.

Commissioner Darling commented that the shelter that supports four picnic tables would be a sufficient size. She also believed that signage should be placed in the shelter has been reserved to ensure that others do not use the shelter during that time.

The Community Service Manager replied that the shelters the City has currently have cases where the permit can be placed showing the reservation. He noted that if the shelter is going to be a single picnic table with a cover to get out of the sun, those would not be reserved.

Commissioner Chu stated that perhaps one option would be to add more picnic tables and enhance the current shelter and another option would be to add more shelters. She asked for details on the land acquisition mentioned.

The Community Service Manager provided additional details on the possibility of additional land acquisition. He noted that in the past there was discussion about perhaps using that land for a dog park and public garden, but it now makes more sense to use that property for public works use. He confirmed that the City would not pursue the property unless it becomes available.

Commissioner Chu asked how the economic position of the State impacts the City because of the pandemic.

The Community Service Manager stated that staff continues to have those discussions. He agreed that there are a lot of uncertainties right now that will continue into the future.

Chair Miller stated that this reinforces the need for priorities to ensure that the most important elements are executed and included in the plan. He noted that some of those improvements could be delayed into the future but should still be included in the plan/RFP.

Commissioner Chu stated that there should be contingency plans in place to ensure that some elements could move forward, using the example of delaying the splashpad but move forward with a water feature.

Commissioner Horwath agreed that it would be helpful to at least move forward with some small items to provide some improvements to the park for the community.

Commissioner Ray asked if the City Maintenance Staff is working during this time.

**MINUTES
PARKS & REC COMMISSION
MAY 7, 2020**

The Community Service Manager provided an update on how City Hall activities and staffing has changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. He explained that some employees work remotely, others work in shifts to ensure social distancing. He stated that all regular staff continues to work.

Commissioner Horwath left the meeting.

The Community Service Manager stated that the next step will be to review this with the City Council at a workshop on May 13th to seek additional direction.

Commissioner Chu asked for additional details on the soccer field.

The Community Service Manager replied that the field currently has very poor drainage and therefore either cannot be used when wet or incurs damage. He reviewed possible improvements that could occur and confirmed that it would be a rentable facility that would generate income back.

Commissioner Chu commented that she would like to see information showing the revenue that could be generated as the cost to improve the field is high. She stated that although she would want to see a playground, there is an ADA compliant playground in place and perhaps that is not the highest priority to move forward first.

The Community Service Manager confirmed that identification of priorities will be important during this planning process.

OLD BUSINESS: FIREFIGHTER HISTORICAL TRAIL SIGN

The Community Service Manager stated that this was discussed in June of 2019 when staff presented a new trail sign by the Firefighter Historical Trail, noting that the existing sign needs repair. He stated that when the City went out for the bid the cost was high and the City decided to modify the scope of the project. He noted that the proposed sign would now look more like other City signs, except for using the steel that is used in the memorial. He noted that the sign would replace the existing sign, would remain unique, and would flow with the memorial at a substantially less cost.

Chair Miller stated that he likes the look which is consistent with the other City signs.

Commissioner Chu asked the difference in cost.

The Community Service Manager replied that the original design had a proposed cost of about \$30,000 or \$40,000 while this design should be around \$12,000.

Commissioner Darling introduced the following motion:

**MINUTES
PARKS & REC COMMISSION
MAY 7, 2020**

***RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF A REPLACEMENT OF THE
FIREFIGHTER MEMORIAL TRAIL SIGN WITH THE DESIGN AS PRESENTED.***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Abruzzese.
Ayes (5). Nays (0). Motion passed.

Commissioner Ray asked the timing of the project.

The Community Service Manager replied that this will move forward to the City Council for consideration and if approved, should be completed by July 31st.

OLD BUSINESS: QUARTERLY COMMISSIONER REPORTS

The Community Service Manager explained the purpose of the quarterly reports.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she did not have any additional input on the park she visited other than the fact that there is still graffiti on the sign and additional bicycle parking is needed.

Commissioner Chu asked for an update on signage.

The Community Service Manager replied that he will look into it and provide an update at the next meeting.

Commissioner Darling commented that she has not yet visited her park.

Chair Miller stated that the park he visited had trails in great shape and the half-court basketball was in good shape as well. He stated that he will visit the park again to view the plantings that occurred the previous year.

Commissioner Ray commented that he did not have a chance to visit his park yet.

NEW BUSINESS: PARKS & RECREATION COVID-19 UPDATES

The Community Service Manager reported that public facilities remain closed to the public, but staff is still working and answers calls and emails from the public. He stated that parks and trails remain open to the public with signage encouraging users to follow social distancing. He stated that signage has been posted that playgrounds are closed, and the basketball hoops have been removed in an attempt to deter large groups from gathering. He stated that the athletic fields are unavailable for organized activities until further notice. He reported that several events and programs were canceled or postponed due to the pandemic. He stated that it is yet to be determined if the summer programs and events will occur or be canceled. He stated that the City has been able to create socially distanced family-friendly activities available online. He confirmed that there will be an impact on the budget because the spring programming could not occur. He stated that another element that could impact the budget is whether or not the shelters and facilities can be rented.

**MINUTES
PARKS & REC COMMISSION
MAY 7, 2020**

UPDATES

The Community Service Manager had nothing further to report.

Commissioner Ray asked the normal start of the farmers market.

The Community Service Manager replied that the typical start for the farmers market is the first Monday after July 4th. He stated that as of now, that is planning to continue and noted that staff is reviewing options that could be implemented for social distancing along with hand sanitizer stations.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.