

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Commissioners Schmidt, Breeuwer, Schraepfer, Wodash, Hall, Crosby, Contardo

NOT PRESENT: Commissioners Torch and Welles

Also present, Joel Sipress and Art Johnston

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Breeuwer motioned for approval of the April 20th meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Schmidt. Unanimously approved.

4. Presentations

A. Resolution of support to make a new fee structure for Parklets

– Councilor Elissa Hansen and Shawna Mullen Eardley (action requested)

Councilor Hansen has been working with small businesses and administration on parklets. Because they are considered parks, the support of the Parks and Recreation Commission is requested.

The parklet's fee structure is currently assigned under the daily meter fee which is typically private use (generally dumpsters or private parking). Parklets are public use and not solely for that business.

Asking for fee structure to be changed so we can have a few parklets across town. Proposal is for fee of \$250 for April 15-October 15.

Wodash: Anyone can sit in a parklet at any time?

– Hansen: Correct.

Wodash: If a parklet is formed earlier than the fee structure passes, would daily fees already paid be included?

– Hansen: Keith Hamre would have to be asked that question.

– Sipress: Check with the City attorney. As currently written, daily fees would have to be paid and then pay seasonal fee. There is potential it could be amended.

Breeuwer: If these are part of the park system, who is responsible for maintenance?

Also, what obligation do visitors have to business?

– Mullen Eardley: Signage indicates they are open to the public.

Contardo: Can adjoining businesses veto application?

– Mullen Eardley: Need majority of businesses within 100? Feet. Limited to one parklet per block.

Hall: results from last two years?

- Mullen Eardley: Healthy Duluth did surveys with visitors and one-on-ones with local businesses. 2015 had one up for a few months at Amity Coffee.
 - Hall: Please submit that report from 2014 to the commission.

Hall: How many parklets this year?

- Hansen: Hoping for 5.

Hall: trash issues?

- Mullen Eardley: Only a problem when there wasn't a garbage can.

Hall: Any police issues?

- Mullen Eardley: No.

Hall: You feel experiment was a success?

- Shauna: Yes.

Contardo: Who is responsible for garbage?

- Hansen: New policy puts it on hosting business.

Contardo: Liability?

- Mullen Eardley: Hosting business must hold city not responsible.

Hall: You're asking Parks Commission to endorse?

- Hansen: Yes, to support separate fee structure, and the concept itself.

Motion of general support: Contardo moves to support: Second by Crosby, passes unanimously.

B. 2016 Spring Community Parks & Recreation Program Grants – Lindsay Dean (action requested)

Lindsay presented the 2016 Spring CPRP Grant Information: Lindsay read the recommendations. There were 17 application requests, of which 13 projects were selected to receive awards less than or equal to \$5,000. \$50,000 was available to award.

Motion to approve and forwarded to council: Schmidt moved, Wodash second. Passes unanimously.

C. Update on Park Point Projects – Jesse Schomberg, Coastal Communities Extension Educator at UMD and Tari Rayala, City Architect (informational)

1. Rip Currents

Jesse Schomberg gave background information regarding rip currents.

- 2003 - Matthew Rheume, victim of rip current. There hasn't been a death since this event.
- 2004 - Sea Grant started work
 - NWS started
- 2005 - NWS started training

- 2008 - NWS started surf zone forecast
- 2009 - NWS and Sea Grant hosted rip current conference - led to Twin Ports Rip Current Work Group
- 2010 - beach flags (new one at Lift Bridge this year)
- 2011 - annual water safety expo began
- 2012 - website funded by GLRI: site includes bacteria warnings, water temperature,
- 2013 - City purchased electronic sign at s-curve, announcing beach conditions
- 2014 - Volunteer surf rescue group started guarding s-curve beach and educating people
- 2016 - Rescue Kits: The fire department can't reach the beach before a citizen already does the rescue. Would like to establish stands with rescue buoys. Work is underway to model currents, with a camera on the communications tower. A professor in Madison is developing a model on local current.

Schmidt: Who is in charge of monitoring the neon rip current sign?

- Schomberg: The Fire Department. The sign is updated remotely.
- Schmidt: The sign sometimes says beach is open at the end of the point, even after 10:00 at night.

Schmidt: Are hotspots like Lafayette and Franklin Park bad because more people are there or because of the underlying conditions?

- Schomberg: We don't know. Rip currents can pop up anywhere.

Schmidt: We do have more safety services located at the end of the point. Is there a way for the City to increase safety by funneling people to where we have lifeguards?

- Schomberg: We do try to encourage people to go to the end where the lifeguards are.

Schmidt: With improvements at the beach house, Parks could promote/encourage more use of the beach house.

Hall: Suggested improvement of signage indicating there is a beach at the end of the point.

Hall: The YMCA does beach house reservations right?

Dean: Yes.

Hall: Does the rip current brochure go out there?

- Schomberg: Yes.

Hall: How long have you been working on this project?

- Schomberg: Since 2004.

Contardo: What is your role at UMD?

- Schomberg: Extension educator at Sea Grant, part of UMD. This is part of my job.

Art Johnston: Do you do any school outreach?

- Schomberg: Yes, would like to do it as part of middle school swim lessons.

Art Johnston: Would like to help with school outreach.

2. Park Point Beach House - Tari Rayala

The well-used beach house is in poor condition. Some siding has blown off and the building is rotted through on the lake side. It is requested parks fund capital is used to repair it. Structural members are weak, windows need to be replaced or repaired and it is in overall bad condition. The entire lakeside wall of the beach house will be replaced. The new façade on the lake side will take up to 1 ½ months. The cost from parks fund capital is \$177,000 spread over 2015 and 2016.

Sipress: How much previous work was cosmetic?

– Rayala: Mostly just cosmetic.

Sipress: If we'd looked at this earlier, would cost have been less?

– Rayala: Always, but in this case building science has evolved.

Schmidt: What about showers? They are in need of repair. Just concluded Tier I and Tier II study for beach access, concluded that Beach House should be showcase attraction. Is there a long-term plan?

– Rayala: It's in the city's system. Wasn't aware of problems with showers.

– Dean: Park Point Master Plan moved to 2018.

3. Lafayette bathroom facility. City was approached about need for bathroom facility at Lafayette. Bathrooms in building not available year-round or off hours. 2012 applied for two coastal grants, received one for design, then applied for construction, got the grant but City doesn't own Lafayette Park. When City became a City, it was never transferred from state to city. Reapplied for coastal grant, has been recommended to receive grant. \$100,000 from Coastal, matched by \$100,000 from Parks Fund. Shooting for construction this season.

Dean: Park Point is this week's site for Parks Maintenance neighborhood parks work group.

4. Lake Superior Zoo: Forest Discovery Zone Schematic Design Review– Erik Birkeland, Property & Facilities Manager (informational)

Erik reviewed current plans for the Forest Discovery Zone and Bear Country, explaining that the City is reviewing a lot of technical details, and "we're in the weeds," for example on perimeter fencing.

Julene Boe, interim executive director of the Zoological Society, was glad to hear about saving trees. Also shared staff concern about the elk exhibit, being too small and too muddy. Will examine other species to find one that's acceptable.

Hall: appreciate you bringing this to us, we wanted to stay informed.

5. Asset Management System & Park Facility Update - Erik Birkeland, Property & Facilities Manager (informational)

Erik Birkeland explained the City's asset management program. It is cloud-based, everything from carpet to ceiling tiles to HVAC is in system. Tied to a national service. "Benchmarking is everything." Team of ten people are going through every facility and every campus. Team also uploading Operations and Maintenance manuals into system. This year team is focused on parks facilities. Each park facility treated as a campus, to include smaller buildings. This information will help guide and facilitate decisions. They have been to ten sites so far. Six are fully uploaded. Birkeland explained FCI (Facility Condition Index) and RI (Requirement Index). These results can be compared for each facility to better understand its overall condition. We see we're getting close to replacement value. Worst building studied so far is Portman Square, with an RI of 0.86. Plan is to have results by end of this year. 30 campuses, 100 buildings.

Hall: What are biggest surprises?

- Birkeland: Each community center has customized their facilities with things like old washing machines.

Hall: Need to assess health of communities around campuses.

- Birkeland: We won't go to Community Clubs right away, need to get the big picture first.

Sipress: Pointed out issue on chart with Lower Chester RI being lower than FCI, even though it should be a sum. Also, community partners model might have issue with the capacity of community partners to maintain building.

- EB: Woodland, Fryberger Arena, Duluth Heights, one more are also under evaluation.
- Contardo: Excellent tool, points out the concerns about deferred maintenance. EB: With our current maintenance needs, we should have fewer buildings. EB has met with Parks Maintenance about work orders and automated system, linking actual projects with the costs to address them.

Schraepfer: Does system allow analysis of deferred maintenance? Yes.

Wodash: Is City advocating for preventive maintenance?

- Birkeland: Trying to give deciders the tools they need to make wise decisions.
- Dean: Erik and I talk about 2010 Master Plan, which talks about quality over quantity, five hubs, etc.

Schraepfer: Need to look forward as a Commission.

Hall: We need to address this quickly, planning process is moving forward quickly. New plans mean new money.

5. Commission Committees

A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA

Chair – Michael Schraepfer – Jon Welles, Ed Hall, John Schmidt, [Dale Sellner]

No update.

- B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: TBA
Chair – Ed Hall – Jon Welles, Erik Torch, [Lindsay Dean]

No update.

- C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA
Chair – Tom Albright - Andy Holak, Tiersa Dodge, Art Johnston, Tjaard Breeuwer, Eric Viken, [Judy Gibbs]

No update.

- D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: TBA
Chair - Jon Welles – Andy Holak, Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, [Pamela Page]

No update.

6. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Schmidt: Received a letter yesterday from a resident about improving the parks. The letter mentioned working closer with school district, especially ball fields and hoops. He questioned the City's history working with the school district on sharing facilities.

He suggested working to make our parks more available to all populations. He also questioned the validity of numerous reports of conflicts between bikers and other trail users.

Sipress: Supports Schmidt's call for inclusion. Notes loss of a parks and rec specialists and how that affects some neighborhoods more than others. Some neighborhoods aren't able to provide those resources as well as others. Also, he supports concerns about trail conflicts, especially on multi-use trails. Multi-use trails need to be maintained as multi-use.

- Dean: We are working on better signage, to help citizens understand. The first wayfinding project, (report by August) is to be implemented in the River Corridor.
- Sipress: Cautioned against making multi-use trails better for mountain biking over other uses.
 - Breeuwer: That mostly happens in Hartley. The master plan for Hartley states multi-use trails will be multi-use, not bike-specific.
- Contardo: Is there policy stating bikes must yield to hikers?
 - Breeuwer: IMBA has a "yield triangle" that show bikers yielding to hikers.

- Hall: Is there not enough signage?
 - Dean: This project will standardize the signage.
- Hall: Let's publicize new signage when it comes out.
- Wodash: "Signage education" needs to take place before arrival at the trail. Are there plans for doing more online?
 - Dean: Yes, we're hoping in 2017. The website now has a trails page indicating what's open and what's not and it is updated as conditions change. Overall the trail map specifies the use(s) of each trail. Currently the western trails master plan is being updated with issues clarified. The western plan will be brought to the June Commission meeting.
- Schmidt: We're going to have a lot of new mountain bikers hitting the trails. Signage is good, but we need to work with the user groups. People will hear from their peers.

7. New Business

A. Greater MN Parks & Trails Legacy Designation

Dean provided background on Legacy funding, including 14% to Parks and Trails. The process recently changed for Legacy grants. The new process is overseen by Greater MN Regional Parks and Trails Commission and there is need for trails to be considered regional trails to be eligible. Duluth submitted applications for Hartley, Lakewalk, and River Corridor. They will receive a high, medium or low rating. A master plan would be developed after receiving a high rating. Hartley has been submitted and River Corridor will be submitted to the Commission in June. Once it is designated as significant, we can apply for any element.

8. Old Business

No old business to discuss.

9. Public Comments

Question from audience (Mike Casey) asked a question about "Western Waterfront Trail properties" and further clarification about what that means.

Audience member (Denette Lynch): Community centers and the use of them, and the use of the schools. At Memorial Park, why build a gym there when there's one at Macarthur School 100 yards away. Merritt is an example of high expectations from community but low involvement in community groups. School and City could work together to provide off hour uses of school facilities.

10. Division Manager's Report

- A. Received \$50,000 from US Bank for Lincoln Park, an important win. There will be a public announcement, but holding off announcement until results are learned about other Lincoln Park grants.

11. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned.

12. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held 5 pm, Wednesday, June 15th*, in Council Chambers (City Hall).

* Note date change to June 15th. Previously scheduled for June 8th.