



PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 13, 2016

Council Chambers
City Hall – 411 W 1 St.



1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 5:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

PRESENT: Patrick Contardo, Erik Torch, John Schmidt, Tjaard Breeuwer, Ed Hall, Jodi Tervo Roberts, Amanda Crosby, Tiersa Wodash

NOT PRESENT: Tom Albright, Jon Welles, Michael Schraepfer

Also present: Joel Sipress

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of the May 11 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Breeuwer. Unanimously approved.

4. Presentations

A. 2016 Western Trails Plan – Andrew Slade, Assistant Manager (informational)

Andrew Slade: This is an update on 2011 Trails Plan, but focused on SLRC. A lot has happened since 2012 (flood, ½ and ½ tax). There were missing elements in original plan and we're filling in those gaps now. Today is informational. In August, it will be posted on the website after stakeholder review, then it will be open for public comment. In September, the Parks Commission will be asked to vote on it. Submitted to City Council in September after Park Commission approval. At this point, we're looking for information. Andrew read the Trails Plan Background and Need section. On p.5, Andrew reviewed the plans that have been completed since the 2011 Trails Plan. Andrew reviewed the larger vision (p.11) from the trails plan. The heart of the plan is the maps – they are in draft only right now, but the planning process is underway. We are creating maps for winter and summer use based on complexity of trail system. For a number of user-groups, we're using specific maps for stakeholder outreach. Maps include both existing & proposed trail. We have an accessible trails map and water trail map. It includes a section on trail development process & recommended potential phasing.

Ed Hall: This is a true master plan with a lot of implementation. Consult with the trails committee so that they have an opportunity to dig into the details before the parks commission is asked to vote. Have the committee make a recommendation to the Parks Commission for approval.

Breeuwer: Make sure trails committee and user groups are included on stakeholder meetings. Have the committee look at how different user groups come together.

Schmidt: Do we a protocol to restore trails?

Slade: Yes. Contractors are needed to restore trail.

Schmidt: Is there a protocol when a trail use changes?

Gibbs: We use our project proposal process to vet any changes to trails by user groups.

Schmidt: Accessibility – do we have a breakdown of levels of difficulty for existing trails? He'd like to

advocate for beginner trails.

Slade: Yes, we are following ABA standards and marking that on the map. In the Indian Point Campground area, we have a strong desire for universal access loop on WWFT.

Schmidt: Return to Mayor's state of the city address. Can we start a dialog with user groups – what can they do to bring low income folks into our parks and using our trail system?

Slade: The Guiding Principles includes ensuring equitable access to quality parks and trails in all areas of the River Corridor.

Torch: He's been working with user groups, organizations, and government agencies to leverage this once-in-a-generation funding opportunity. The dialog is happening, and many groups are around the table and they are engaged and excited, but it's a matter of how to move forward.

Hall: He seconded Schmidt's suggestion. Take another look at guiding principles to fully flesh out what they mean and further incorporate Schmidt's suggestions.

Schmidt: It's our responsibility to ask tough questions and push them to action. You want more trails? So what are you going to bring people who don't have the resources/access into the mix? We need to push that issue anytime a user-group wants more investment/usage. Maybe we could highlight this at our next annual parks meeting?

Crosby: Transportation is a huge issue, but the WWFT is on a major bus line, which makes it easier to access.

Sipress: make guiding principles more explicit (i.e. access based on income). If income is not explicitly addressed, it becomes invisible.

Denette Lynch (Citizen): In 2008, Council ordinance approved off-leash trails, one was in the west. Is this incorporated into plan? Off-leash trails are widely accessible and important to the community.

Gibbs: We need to have good regulatory signs, as well as wayfinding, in order to enforce laws.

Hall: Make sure there's a reference to already-passed rules and adopted standards on trail use and behavior.

Tervo Roberts: Is there something in the plan for a standard of beginner, intermediate, and advanced trails?

Slade: We have a lack of "green" trails in the City.

Gibbs: Yes, we tried to incorporate more Duluth Traverse beginner trails, but it's challenging. Some of the beginner trails go along roads. This summer, we're building a new green Mountain Bike trail. We understand that we need more beginner trails for people to get into the sport and learn. We will have a number of green trails across our system.

Wodash: Will we label difficulty on map? Slade: Yes, that would be good general information.

Hall: This plan is going to be our bible for a long time. Articulate these issues in the plan so they are incorporated into future signage.

Bill Lynch (Citizen): Grassy Point is wet (ankle-deep).

Gibbs: Grassy Point is closed. It's tied to the Kingsburg Bay restoration in 2018.

Breeuwer: What accessibility groups have we engaged as stakeholders?

Slade: We've worked with Wheels on Trails, Amanda Crosby, Courage Kenny.

Breeuwer: What's the funding plan?

Slade: A number of these projects have ½ and ½ funding. We also intend to submit Legacy asks.\

B. Signage & Wayfinding Project – Judy Gibbs, Trails Coordinator (informational)

Judy Gibbs explained that the city has hired Visual Communications, group that did Skyline Parkway signs. Inventorying everything in Duluth. Judy showed pictures of Hartley entrances, examples of "sign



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pollution." We'd like to be able to consolidate signage, including regulatory signs. Want to get degrees of difficulty. But these are a local thing. A green trail in Duluth should be consistent across city. Kiosks will have signs and maps that can be switched out seasonally, such as no hiking on groomed ski trails. This project is integrated with Western Trails Plan. Ideally QR codes at the trailheads, so you can download maps ahead of time.

Process: two stakeholder meetings and a public open house. Judy handed out link to the PDF and the Survey Monkey looking for input on the designs. Gibbs reviewed Design Options A, B, C, D.

Also different ideas for signature parks. Plantings vary from location to location. Map for Hartley shows specific locations for specific signs. Kiosk design has changeable signs for seasons, indicating appropriate uses. Shared trail signing system seems to be working.

Breeuwer: Some of these had neighborhood access signs. But what about highway access signs?

Judy: These will be on our website and on printed maps. Part of this project is to identify parks that don't have road-to-park signs and getting them there.

Breeuwer: Organize by Tiers. Tier I needs more signs.

Ed Hall: He had recently gone to Thompson Hill visitor information center. Most everything there relates to state of Minnesota, not to Duluth. Seems like we should have more there.

Tervo Roberts: Second what was said about wayfinding from highway. It's hard as outsider to access these trails (from North Shore perspective). Outsiders don't know about the Parks website. Hawk Ridge could use signs from freeway. There are a lot of people headed to North Shore that want to stop in Duluth for a day.

Wodash: Is new website part of Duluth City page? Judy: It starts at Duluth Parks webpage, then links out from there.

Wodash: How many clicks does it take to get from Duluth Home page to trail info? Too many.

Schmidt: Many cities have a phone app.

Torch: Conversation raises many questions about Duluth getting recognition for green space. How can we promote that even more? Visit Duluth has a role. One of five gold level ride centers in the world. Mountain Project App or Hiking Project App.

Breeuwer: Visit Duluth takes seven clicks to get to trails inf.

Wodash: App would be awesome. Trails could be on Google Maps.

Judy Gibbs: First park to get these new signs is Chambers Grove. Encourage you all to make comments.

Schmidt: Really liked native name on sign. Strongly encourage having theme that is respectful.

Judy: We've met with Indigenous commission. Tan bar on Information kiosk could be anything.

Breeuwer: Visual impairments? Crosby: talked about using accessible print. Didn't talk about Braille.

Wodash: Couldn't find open door at June 21 meeting for wayfinding at Evergreen senior center.



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Contardo: What is budget for signage? Gibbs: \$400K from ½ and ½ Tourism Tax, including gates at vulnerable parks like Magney. Will only cover signage in the half and half area. But others, like Chester Bowl, are very excited. Hartley, Hawk Ridge also interested.

Hall: What is the timeline? Gibbs: Sometime in mid-August consultants will present on three final choices, another round of comments. Then one design possibly for September meeting.

Denette Lynch (Citizen): There's an emphasis with signs in parks, there's a lack of signage to the parks in the Corridor.

Gibbs: Installation for road to parks signs coming for Grand Avenue following MnDOT.

Breeuwer: Multiple names are an issue, e.g. Mission Creek trails at Chambers Grove.

Ed Hall: Thank you for all the work. Exciting project.

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 – John Schmidt, Patrick Contardo, [Lindsay Dean]
No update.

C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA

Chair – Tjaard Breeuwer – Jodi Tervo Roberts, Tiersa Wodash, Art Johnston, Judy Gibbs]
No update.

D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: TBA

Chair – Jon Welles – Jodi Tervo Roberts, Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, [Pamela Page]
No update.

6. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Lindsay Dean: Patrick Contardo joined the Parks Commission in 2015 and we're very sad to see him go. We thank him greatly for his contributions to the Parks Commission and to the E-Board. We have a plaque for him.

Contardo: It's been a great pleasure working with you. One of the finest groups I've been part of. Thanks to Councilor Sipress especially.

7. New Business

A. Nomination of Amanda Crosby for Secretary
Moved by Ed Hall. Second by Wodash. Unanimous support.

8. Old Business

A. Update on Hartley Park Legacy grant implementation

Slade: If you haven't been in Hartley Park in two months, things have changed dramatically for the better. We've had great improvements to Old Hartley road, thinning the pine plantations, improved accessibility, improved multi-use Duluth Traverse trail, improved nature playscape, interpretive signage is underway, and extensive buckthorn removal process has been completed.

B. Update on St. Louis River Corridor & Neighborhood Park Plans

Slade: We've increased funding to \$90,000 for 13 neighborhood parks. Lisa Luokkala is meeting with communities to start the funding process and explain the matching fund requirements. We're eager to help the community complete this work.

Hall: Break out neighborhood parks on the SLRC Project Update that's sent out. We need to make an effort to get the information out there – flyer, mailer, etc.

Tervo Roberts: The community club is a great start, but there are a lot of people who don't know where or when they meet. Maybe you could add the address and time/date of community club meetings to the mailer when it's sent out?

Breeuwer: Could go to schools in order to get people involved.

C. Update on 2016 Capital Budget

Dean: Brief update on 2016 Capital Budget now that we're halfway through the fiscal year. No substantial changes to the original budget, which was presented to Parks Commission in January. Almost all projects are either underway, or almost underway.

9. Public Comments

Denette Lynch had an exciting update on 1800 feet of fence that was installed at the East Duluth dog park. 1000 hours from 39 volunteers. 1500 post ties. Fence will be under \$2300. Professional estimate was \$66,000. City put in driveway last fall. This spring, the City put in cement for bench pads. Benches ordered. Signs are ordered. Still working on details. Not open yet. Difficult to find the new dog park since there is no address. It's located directly across from UMD test fields. It's adjacent to the SHT.

Ed Hall: Great success story. Look forward to opening and seeing pictures. Great to open this up for that part of the city. Impressive volunteer crew that put in a lot of hours.

10. Division Manager's Report

11. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned. Moved by Wodash. Second by Breeuwer.

12. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held 5 pm, Wednesday, August 10 in Council Chambers (City Hall).