



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2016

Council Chambers
City Hall – 411 West First Street



I. Call to Order

Ed Hall called the meeting to order at 5:05pm.

II. Roll Call

Present: Dean Vogtman, Tjaard Breeuwer, Amanda Crosby, Ed Hall, John Schmidt, Erik Torch, Jodi Tervo Roberts, Michael Schraepfer, Jon Welles, Duluth City Councilor Joel Sipress, St. Louis County Commissioner Frank Jewell

Not Present:

III. Approval of Previous Meetings' Minutes

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of August 10, 2016 meetings minutes; second by Commissioner Breeuwer. Unanimously approved.

A. President Hall moved to agenda item 7

Hall: Welcomed Dean Vogtman, the new District Five commissioner representative.

Vogtman: Introduced himself and shared he is a resident of Morgan Park and enjoys hiking, fishing and hunting. Further shared his wife and himself are active trail walkers on the west side and expressed his excitement to be a part of the Parks and Recreation Commission and be able to give back and contribute.

Hall: Informed group that John Schmidt is now an at-large Commission member.

IV. Presentations

A. Park Point Update – Keith Hamre, Planning and Business Development and Lindsay Dean, Parks & Recreation (informational)

Mr. Hamre, Planning and Construction Services Director, City of Duluth, and Ms. Dean, Division Manager, City of Duluth, Parks and Recreation Division provided an update on Park Point projects.

Hamre: Informed group that the kick-off is next week at Denfield High School at 5:30 PM, which is the first step of the public process, preceding the survey which is open until the end of September. Further shared that there are twelve guiding principles to the project and they are adding two new principles, one of which is health, which promotes parks and activating living.

- The focus is to set the course of Duluth for the next 20 years.
- Looking for people to join focus groups in October, contact Lindsay Dean if interested.
- Commissioners Hall and Schmidt are on the vision committee.
- The project has four study areas: Housing, Employment, Transportation and Open Space

Hamre: Explained that transportation focuses on where people live and play, noting that only 60% of people use cars as a main means of transportation. Further indicated that there will be big questions



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about the focus of public space and trails.

Hall: Requested more information about the Open Space Committee.

Hamre: Explained there is a great deal of open space in the city, including tax forfeit, city-owned, etc., and that much of the recreation infrastructure is on tax forfeit property. Further explained that the group looks at the parks in the Parks Master Plan, paying attention to those without programming in the near future, in order to analyze and make decisions. Emphasized that when looking at quality of life, open space is important, and therefore a plan is necessary. Informed group that Lindsay Dean will receive information about and communicate the first meeting and any social outreach meetings coming up, for example the group anticipates residents in District Four to have interest in protecting Piedmont ski trails.

Jewell: Shared with group that tax forfeit parcels have been an important topic and there exists good communication with the county at this time, however on occasions when decisions are made without discussion, it shows the importance of collaboration.

Hamre: Responded that they have lined up their policies with the county and are looking at mechanisms for getting properties back on the tax rolls, further sharing they have worked with Minnesota Land Trust in looking at land issues.

Hall: Questioned if Mr. Hamre is the best point of contact for Parks Commission members interested in open space.

Hamre: Confirmed he was the best contact.

Schraepfer: Requested clarification of what is complicated about tax forfeit.

Hamre: Discussed conditional use permits, and shared an example of having to go through records for parcels before 1975 in order to make a decision. Further explained that when using places like Spirit Mountain, it had to be determined how to obtain ownership.

Hamre: Shared with group that they came to the Park Point space in January of 2016, which was about a two-year process for the small area plan. Explained that they identified 15 tier 2 access points, however the community informed that until tier 1 site improvements are made for visitors and residents, tier 2 should not start, which resulted in a couple instances over the summer where people tried to use tier 2 access points but were told by residents not to.

Lindsay Dean: Tari Rayala, former City Architect, presented updates on these two Park Point projects at the April Parks & Recreation Commission meeting.

- \$175,000 worth of Park Point Beach House repairs coming this fall or early next spring.
- The Coastal grant program is providing \$100,000 towards the Lafayette exterior restroom project, for a total project cost of \$200,000.

Hall: Suggested putting together an informational press release about these two projects and that they were discussed at the Commission meeting in order to provide a clear description and



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confirmation that the projects are moving forward.

Hamre: Directed groups attention to the importance of wayfinding, using an example of people stopping at 13th Street Beach and not knowing about Lafayette or the Beach house, explaining that residents want the city to invest in signage to display a commitment to these access points.

Dean: Updated the group on the Citywide wayfinding project, sharing that they anticipate it going before the Commission in October for an informational review and any specialized signs, like Park Point, will go through an MMP process. The Park Point MMP is slated for 2018.

Hamre: Confirmed to group they are attending the Park Point Community Club meeting on Tuesday, September 20th.

Tervo Roberts: Requested confirmation of what types of questions will be asked at this meeting.

Hamre: Explained they will ask about restrooms, tier 1 accessibility issues, street ends, etc.

Schmidt: Requested clarification about what will be said about tier 2 sites.

Hamre: Shared that Park Point MMP will identify what will happen, what improvements will look like and how to involve the community, further explaining this is scheduled for 2018.

Torch: Requested a definition of Tier 2.

Hamre: Explained that tier 1 are for visitors, such as 13th Street and Lafayette, whereas tier 2 is meant to be every four blocks and utilize public access at the ends of streets. Further explained there are about 35 street ends and tier 2 was about access management as neighbors should only have to walk two blocks. Defined tier 3 as basically every street end, although untenable in terms of access management. Clarified that tier 2 is now called "neighborhood access".

Sipress: Provided group with additional context by stating this was one of the most controversial issues he's seen and that the city has undeveloped right of ways on virtually every street, which go right to the beach. Explained that residents used "street ends" as informal access points, which went on for many years and became increasingly more controversial with more development. Further explained the position of the City based on legal research that if the city owns public right of ways, unless the city develops the right of way, the public has no legal access there, and that unless the city has developed the right of way, it is considered trespassing. Additional context provided to group:

- Left the city with only three access points that seemed insufficient, starting a long process of identifying.
- The model considered was to put in a path and a marker, but first identifying major access points before working on tier 2, which won't be advertised.

Hall: Questioned if the master planning process will identify with ones to develop.

Sipress: Confirmed that the council was about to vote on Tier 2 recommendations, however public was opposed, and the council created a task force instead.



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Hall: Questioned if the access points on the handout are the result of the task force.

Hamre: Confirmed yes.

Hall: Requested confirmation of whether these access points would be made official now, or will it wait for MMP in 2018.

Hamre: Explained the importance of allowing the neighborhood time to digest these and that zoning violation notices are supposed to be sent out as many of these properties have violations. Shared that about 110 letters could have been sent, however study committee requested otherwise. Further explained that the MMP will have a robust discussion of the 15 access points and what level of development is appropriate, however recommends a low level of development from the city perspective that it will take time yet to finish Tier 1 work.

Sipress: Requested clarification if the intent was to sit on these until 2018, and then have the MMP confirm or deny these points, with designation and improvement beginning no sooner than 2019.

Hamre: Confirmed this sounded correct except for 19th Street on Lakeside which currently receives a lot of use and may be one that moves forward, as well as Sand Point Yacht Club as part of their Special Use Permit.

Sipress: Shared that between now and 2019, landowners can still trespass people off the access points.

Schmidt: Questioned what the final vote on that committee was.

Hamre: Confirmed It was affirmative.

Breeuwer: Requested clarification on whether, generally speaking, in the city just because we don't develop a right of way now doesn't mean we're vacating it for the future.

Hamre: Explained that undeveloped streets for right of ways into parks, etc. are used, however if there isn't a trail or signs, we don't have rights to use that access, unless the city exercise its right to use the access. Further explained that the city retains the possibility unless they vacate, which currently the policy is not to vacate, and the Park Point process is important for setting a citywide precedent.

Vogtman: Questioned how parking is planned for Tier 2.

Hamre: Confirmed that these were meant for neighborhood residents, so no parking is needed.

Schmidt: Thanked group for the discussion and explained that this has been a contentious issue, however the meetings that included a walk-thru of the sites was helpful in the whole process.

Hall: Shared that there is currently a vacancy on the Commission for District 3, which includes Park



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Point.

- B. East Duluth Dog Park Naming & Designation –Lindsay Dean, Parks & Recreation (action requested)

Ms. Dean, Division Manager, City of Duluth, Parks and Recreation Division provided a recap on the naming process thus far and covered future next steps.

Dean: Shared with group that the dog park opened on August 26, 2016 and that a site plan was passed a year prior without a formal name. Explained that in 2016 a naming process was incorporated in MMP's, starting with Quarry Park. Further explained that this process was not in place in August 2015 for a dog park and that the Naming Commission meets irregularly. Further points to consider were provided:

- Heidi Harrison submitted an application to the Naming Commission one year ago, suggesting it be named, "Lynch's Wiggley Field."
- Naming Commission recommended the dog park be named, "Jean Duluth Dog Park", while recommending a commemorative plaque in honor of Bill and Denette Lynch's work and commitment to the dog park, however the Naming Commission works on commemorative names, not place-based names and no formal process is in place for this situation.

Hall: Confirmed Dean's point that they do have a recommendation from the Naming Commission that the dog park receive a place-based name like "Jean Duluth", however a thoughtful letter about the process was received which reiterates that fact that the process has been confusing all along. Provided support in including naming in the parks planning process.

Tervo Roberts: Thanked group for bringing the topic up and explained that she is a part of the Commission because Denette Lynch brought her into work on Merritt Park. Acknowledged the letter from Ms. Lynch and explained the value of being acknowledged for all the hours and hard work put into the city, further emphasizing the hundreds or thousands of hours put in by Ms. Lynch personally and its significant value. Requested a larger discussion take place before approval of the Jean Duluth name.

Breeuwer: Asked Ms. Dean for clarification of whether she recommended deciding how to name the park versus what the name should be.

Dean: Confirmed that this is a Commission's decision about how to move forward.

Sipress: Questioned if it is City Council that has final authority.

Dean: Confirmed yes.

Sipress: Provided input that what the group has is a naming recommendation from a bizarre committee and that from a council perspective, there are clearly parks name after people, like Magney Snively and Enger. Also explained to group that in the case of Quarry Park, the new process was a much better system with 30-day input.

Vogtman: Shared with group that he knows Ms. Lynch well and that Keene Creek is always full of dogs and that some recognition here would be appropriate. Requested information on the funding.

Dean: Confirmed it would be funded by the City's dog park fund.

Tervo Roberts: Shared with group that she believed Ms. Lynch was responsible for collecting many of the funds for the dog park and that if it went through a 30-day process those currently using the park would have a voice.

Hall: Explained the groups responsibility in making a recommendation at some point, however this is the first time we've had the opportunity. Recommended putting together a more public process and explained that Ms. Dean could meet with the E-board on the 21st and put together a public notice. Shared his uncomfortableness in voting on the issue tonight, however hoping for something to come of this meeting and reiterated the Commissions position in making any recommendation they want. Requested the group make a plan to review at the next meeting.

Torch: Explained the importance of having more public input this time to get a better sense of what park users are interested in versus just the recommendation of the Commission.

Schmidt: Shared his thoughts that although this process would be more cumbersome, it's the right thing to do.

Crosby: Questioned if naming a park is the same as naming a trail.

Dean: Provided response that it was the same process.

Crosby: Shared that they had some choices a year ago on the Campus Connector, among others.

Sipress: Explained the reasoning for a commemorative committee is that you're naming it after a person and that in itself can be very sensitive. Further explained that naming a park or trail after anything other than a person a different process was used, and that there was in fact a special commission for the Campus Connector.

Hall: Confirmed that they do have a recommendation to name it after a place, i.e. Jean Duluth Road.

Sipress: Expressed that he's heard four names thus far: Jean Duluth, Wiggly Field, Riley Rd., and Lynch's Park.

Denette Lynch: Explained that a group came up with the name "Wiggley Field", and they were told to submit names to this process, not just commemorative names. Further explained they have a very active Facebook group with 1000 names which had a vote from 95 people which resulted in a split between "Lynch" and "Wiggley" so they proposed to combine the names as "Lynch's Wiggley Field". Provided opinion that if you look across the country dog park names are fun and happy, not dreary like "Riley Road." Denied support of a penny of the dog park fund being used on a



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commemorative plaque as the money was raised through hard work and volunteers.

Breeuwer: Shared opinion that the dog park group has done so much work in the community that it would be good to have a way of acknowledging this groups' hard work. Explained that generally, the public doesn't know how much work these groups do and maybe there's a different funding source for plaques and acknowledgment.

Hall: Shared that he was impressed when he came to Duluth and saw the extensive work done by volunteers and community groups. Further explained that volunteers have been recognized in many ways, but there looking for more ways. Requested that this topic be deferred until the next meeting, after the E-board had time to discuss it.

C. 2016 Western Trails Plan– Andrew Slade, Parks and Recreation (informational)

- Deferred to Trails Committee

V. Commission Committees

A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA

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

B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: 9/21/16 at 12:00pm in the Parks office

Chair – Ed Hall – John Schmidt, Amanda Crosby [Lindsay Dean]

C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA

Chair – Tjaard Brewer– Tiersa Wodash, Jodi Tervo Roberts, Art Johnston, [Judy Gibbs]

- Committee delayed meeting in order to give city staff and the Committee ample opportunity to review public comments, while including them into the new draft. With Labor Day holiday and a lack of time, as well as the need for consultants the meeting was postponed.
- Committee is looking at public comments and how they should be incorporated as well as technical components like references to past plans like WWFT 1979.
- Working on contentious or contradictorily issues in preparation for full commission review for future clarity.

Hall: Shared his appreciation for the transparency in this process and ensuring enough time for public review before finalizing.

Torch: Expressed support of the plan and recommendation.

Vogtman: Questioned if this applied to all trails.

Slade: Confirmed yes all trails in the River Corridor, which is west of 14th to Fond du Lac.

Breeuwer: Confirmed the next meeting is September 19th, however the exact time still undetermined.

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

Chair - Jon Welles – Jodi Tervo Roberts, Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby [Pamela Page]



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VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

VII. New Business

- A. Welcome New Parks & Recreation Commissioner
- Dean Vogtman (District 5)
 - John Schmidt (moving from District 3 to At-Large)

VIII. Old Business

- A. Update on St. Louis River Corridor & Neighborhood Park Plans
- Gary New Duluth – Phase 1 has received a grant from the Lake Superior Coastal program and ½ and ½ funding. Anticipating a Phase 1 completion celebration early October.
 - Western Waterfront Mini-Master Plan stakeholder meetings and public meetings are being scheduled which will provide more information for future meetings.

B. Rec 1 & Fees

Dean: Shared with group that Parks and Recreation is rolling out a new software, with an expected launch date of January 1st, 2017, which will include any new fees approved by City Council.

Explained the systems' ability for different fee structures for residents and non-residents and that this would cause an update to fees for City Council, based on research with comparable cities. Further explained the Parks Fund Budget will be presented to City Council on October 6, and after council approval it will be brought to the Commission.

Schmidt: Commented that the charge was to make the city more inclusive and questioned if there was a way to include scholarship help for people who don't have money to rent our facilities or parks or to get married at them.

C. Parks Fund Grants

- Applications due 10/1/2016

IX. Division Manager's Report

X. Public Comment

Carole Neukement (President of Riverside Community Club): Shared excitement about the River Corridor, especially the 10:30 match and noted there will be a celebration September 24th from 1-3pm to include brats, chips and games.

Mike Casey (LSMR train): Expressed on behalf of Andy Webb the WWFT MMP will have a big impact on the train and its 36 year operating history. Invited group to come out as to better understand the resource, which plans to run through mid-October from 10:30 and 12:30. Further shared to contact Mike or Andy for a high-rail or to learn more.

XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned. Moved by Schmidt. Second by Breeuwer.



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XII. Next meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, October 12th, 2016 at 5pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall, Room 303.