



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of May 10, 2017

City Hall – Mayor’s Reception Room 4th Floor
411 W 1st St



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Schmidt called the meeting to order at 5:03 pm.

II. Roll Call

Present: John Schmidt, Kristin Bergerson, Amanda Crosby, Dudley Edmondson, Michael Schraepfer, Erik Torch, Tjaard Brewers, Britt Rohrbaugh, Em Westerlund

Absent: Tiersa Wodash, Dean Vogtman, Frank Jewell, Art Johnston, Alanna Oswald

III. Welcome newest Commission member and Parks staff person

Schmidt: Welcomed newest Parks Commissioner Britt Rohrbaugh who will represent District 3. Continued by welcoming newest Parks and Recreation staff member Andy Holak who is the new Trails Coordinator.

Holak: Thanked Commissioners and shared he is looking forward to working with everyone.

IV. Approval of April 11 and April 12 Minutes

Commissioner Breeuwer motioned for approval of April 11, 2017 and April 12, 2017 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Edmondson. Unanimously approved.

Schmidt: Reads aloud the mission statement of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Continues by reciting a quote by Oren Lyons, “when we walk upon Mother Earth we always plant our feet carefully because we know the faces of our future generations are looking up at us from beneath the ground. We never forget them.” Continues by introducing the meeting presentations and the protocol of microphone use.

V. Presentations

- A. Parks Fund Grant Awards – Kathy Bergen, City of Duluth and Commissioner Amanda Crosby (action requested)

Mrs. Bergen, Interim Parks and Recreation Manager, City of Duluth summarized the results of the grant Selection Committee for the Spring 2017 Parks Fund Grants.

Bergen: Thanked president Schmidt and notified Commissioners she was unable to attend the Selection Committee; however, Commissioner Crosby has agreed to provide additional information as necessary. Summarized by stating 14 applications for a total of \$65,500 had their project proposals reviewed by a team comprised of internal staff members from various City departments to ensure any necessary requirements were met before moving on to the Selection Committee. Further explained the Selection Committee reviews applications for their content, including what they are



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requesting and how often the agency has been funded in the past. Provided Selection Committee's recommendation to award grant funds to 12 organizations as highlighted on the chart Commissioners received in an email. Confirmed each grant recommended by the Selection Committee will receive the full funding they requested. Stated name of applicants and the proposed project:

- Chester Bowl Improvement Club: support for their Summer Adventure Program
- Community Action Duluth: Mechanics that Mentor
- COGGS: Duluth Traverse Trail maintenance
- Friends of Dog Parks: benches at Observation Dog Park
- Gary New Duluth Development Alliance: renovations of the sport court
- Northland Paddlers Alliance: community family and youth paddling program
- Portman Recreation Association: hockey rink improvements
- The Hills Family and Youth Services: hillside basketball program
- Western Duluth Little League: improvements to the fields and pathways to the two fields behind Wade Stadium
- Wheels on Trails Organization: All May Experience Duluth Outside program
- Woodland Amateur Hockey Association: upper rink boards
- YMCA: Youth Outdoors-Duluth Adventure Series

Bergen: Explained the total grant award amount is \$55,500. Requested a separate motion for one pending grant application from the Lake Superior Zoological Society that had numerous unanswered questions from both the project proposal team and Selection Committee. Further explained the time frame has not allowed enough time for the collection of supplemental material from the Zoological Society, therefore requesting this project be tabled until the June Commission Meeting.

Schmidt: Questioned if the group had any questions regarding the awards or grant process. Clarified for new members the grant process happens twice a year with opportunities to join the Selection Committee.

Bergen: Noted that after the Commission makes their recommendations it will go to City Council as they are the authorizing entity. Shared that the organizations recommended by the Selection Committee were notified of these final steps, which puts projects on track to receive funding by early June for the construction season.

Schmidt: Requested feedback and any final questions before voting.

MOTION/Second: Crosby/Schraepfer to approve the \$55,500 for Spring 2017 grant funding as recommended by the Selection Committee. Unanimously approved.

Schmidt: Questioned if the Lake Superior Zoological project is tabled whether it goes back to the Selection Committee.

Bergen: Confirmed that after all the requested information is gathered the Selection Committee is reconvened so they can provide their recommendation.

Breeuwer: Questioned if the funds would still come from the Spring grant budget if tabled.



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Bergen: Confirmed, yes and explained there was carryover from Fall 2016 so there is enough grant funds to award this project if approved.

Schmidt: Requested for sake of public record additional information regarding why the project was not accepted as provided. Explained that the Selection Committee felt the project was not consistent with the Zoo's mission, while also having concerns regarding where the funding was coming from.

Bergen: Confirmed Commissioner Schmidt's explanation of the initial disapproval for the Zoo's grant award.

Torch: Expressed the Selection Committee's concerns that requiring community members to pay an admission fee made this project less of a priority as it didn't promote accessibility.

Bergen: Explained they are currently gathering information to bring back to the Commission.

Breeuwer: Questioned why this particular grant was undergoing a new process and whether the applicant could simply reapply in the fall.

Bergen: Clarified the Zoo would like to start this project in the summer.

Jim Filby Williams: Shared that the Lake Superior Zoo is a 100-year old institution that is currently under severe distress financially. Expressed the importance of providing time for additional background information, regardless of personal views, as the success of this exhibit speaks to the current financial challenges the Zoo is experiencing.

Schmidt: Requested questions or comments from Commissioners.

MOTION/Second: Torch/Crosby to table the Lake Superior Zoological Society's grant application, "Mining in Minnesota" until a future meeting when all supplemental materials are gathered. Unanimously approved.

- B. Project Updates – 2017 Park Construction, Erik Birkeland, City of Duluth; St. Louis River Corridor Neighborhood Parks, Lisa Luokkala, City of Duluth; Hartley Projects and Western Waterfront Trail, Jim Shoberg, City of Duluth (informational)

Mr. Birkeland, Property and Facilities Manager, City of Duluth provided an update on 2017 Park construction projects.

Birkeland: Called attention of Commissioners to the screen where 2017 construction projects were listed. Encouraged interruptions if any questions regarding project specifics arose. Continued by summarizing status of each project:

- Quarry Park: disc golf underway with combined efforts of disc golf group and City staff
- Irving Park: phase 1 design with LHB, getting ready for bid this summer



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- Lincoln Park: design of phase 1 of the Mini-Master Plan, will begin after Miller Creek FEMA restoration, anticipate will be ready for bid this summer
- Harrison Park: in design phase 1 of the Mini-Master Plan, putting together construction documentation for bid this summer
- Lafayette restrooms: project is near bid with plans to complete work this summer, adding male and female restroom facility onto back side of building
- Hartley parking lots: active construction phase, working with KTM on this portion of implementation, impacts parking access for coming weeks
- Morgan Park: has been bid, getting ready to give notice to contractors, replacing roof and adding additional insulation, windows will be bid with work completion based on financial feasibility
- Hartley accessible trail/interpretive signage: Jim Shoberg to present shortly
- Park Point Beach House: currently in construction, lake facing wall and windows being redone, hoping for completion by wedding season
- Round House restoration: Jim Shoberg to present shortly
- Miller Creek: FEMA restoration is ready for bid, last flood related project, rebuilding stream bed
- Lakewalk Water Street segment: Engineering Division managing and designing this project
- Chester Creek pedestrian bridge: working with DNR to get permission to move forward, much like bridge completed at Lester Park last year
- Chambers Grove: park restoration nearly complete, waiting on bathroom fixtures and signage package, gates will open Friday May 12th
- Duluth Traverse: Jim Shoberg to present shortly
- Cross City Trail: Engineering Division project
- Clyde Connector: combining with Stewart Creek Bridge project, trail work and bridge restoration over high creek
- Ely’s Peak equestrian loop: close to design, finished wet land delineation, will bid soon
- Western Waterfront Trail/Superior Hiking Trail: Jim Shoberg to present shortly
- Grand Avenue Nordic Center: finishing wet land delineation, final design phase, ready for bid

Edmondson: Questioned if there was additional information about the Lakewalk.

Birkeland: Explained the Lakewalk is an Engineering Division project that he could not speak to.

Torch: Requested information about the fire damage at Quarry Park.

Birkeland: Confirmed he has not been to Quarry since the fire or heard a report from Park Maintenance regarding the impact.

Schmidt: Thanked Mr. Birkeland and noted the importance of staying up to date as the public often approaches the Commissioners for information, particularly during construction season.

Birkeland: Shared that by July they will be up to full speed and could provide progress updates to the Commission at a later meeting.

Schmidt: Questioned if the group anticipated any projects being added to the list.



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Erik: Confirmed the potential always exists; however, they will do their best to keep the workload where it is to offer their best work.

Schmidt: Thanked Mr. Birkeland for presenting and requested any additional questions or comments.

Ms. Luukkala, Project Coordinator, City of Duluth provided project updates on the St. Louis River Corridor Neighborhood Parks.

Luukkala: Provided background information on the St. Louis River Corridor Neighborhood Parks Mini-Master Plan that was approved in June 2016 by the Commission, explaining its use as a guiding document for internal staff and community members in regard to the 13 corridor parks. Explained the current Administration adjusted the funding match requirements to \$10,000 in either cash or in-kind services. Explained that herself and City staff have met with community clubs about implementation and project scope, realizing there is great interest to meet or exceed the fundraising requirement to move projects forward. Further explained that because of this and other construction projects, completing all 13 projects at once is not feasible. Directed attention to monitors where the following project steps were highlighted:

- Step 1 Planning: public planning process and approved Mini-Master Plan completed
- Step 2 Predesign: scope of work and cost analysis, Community Club enters Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with City
- Step 3 Fundraising: \$10,000 match fundraising
- Step 4 Design: after funds secured a formal design phase entered
- Step 5 Bid & Build: project bid out and final scope of project determined
- Step 6 Construction: after contractor awarded project, timeline set and project construction begins
- Step 7: Celebrate successes

Luukkala: Noted the entire process takes roughly 1-3 years depending on its complexity. Shared that Harrison and Irving have met their match and implementation will begin, starting with a Public Meeting on May 16th where design options will be shared with community members. Highlighted projects at Harrison as a circulation sidewalk from front to back, removal of an existing tennis court, possible lighting and landscaping, and possible removal of back fencing. Shared projects for Irving park as an ADA accessible ramp from the parking lot on the main street to the ball field, improvements to the existing gathering space, new playground to be moved further outside the flood plain, and site lighting.

Schmidt: Questioned if there are bathrooms at Irving.

Luukkala: Confirmed that they were not part of the Mini-Master Plan scope; however, the slab and screen will be re-done to accommodate a porta john.

Schmidt: Questioned if there was a timeline or end date for the ½ and ½ Tourism Tax funding.

Lisa: Confirmed no and explained the \$90,000 allocated for each park will not go away.



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Schmidt: Shared his attendance at community club meetings recently, noting that Merritt is working on their match and waiting on an assessment of the hockey rink boards. Questioned if the Commission could assist in any way.

Luukkala: Explained she will reach out to Merritt but is unaware of anything specific the Commissioners can do at this time.

Torch: Thanked Ms. Luukkala for her hard work and for creating the project phases document.

Luukkala: Explained that there are many moving parts and staff look for community members to engage in meaningful ways in order to implement projects and create stewardship. Clarified that only 2-3 parks per year along with other construction projects is the capacity at which they can implement, therefore projects will go on for 4-5 years. Requested patience during this process.

Denette Lynch (public): Thanked Ms. Luukkala for her work and questioned how organizations reach out to initiate an MOU and predesign items.

Luukkala: Clarified that once groups or task forces are ready to move forward they can contact Parks to initiate the scoping process. Explained that due to staff capacity and other projects they will not be conducting scoping meetings until the fall.

Lynch: Shared that when the ½ and ½ Tourism Tax started it was initially a 50% match, but now changed to a \$10,000. Questioned if fundraising a small portion of that is an option to move projects forward.

Lisa: Confirmed that the \$10,000 match is largely based on City staff's ability to manage projects, and breaking them into smaller chunks can create a larger workload.

Lynch: Provided information about Merritt as an example, noting their volunteer efforts which help get the momentum going in terms of fundraising.

Luukkala: Expressed her willingness to work with groups and meet to identify clear roles and responsibilities before drafting the MOU.

Mr. Shoberg, Project Coordinator, City of Duluth provided update on the Western Waterfront Trail and current projects at Hartley Park.

Shoberg: Thanked Commissioners and began by displaying the 2017 construction list. Highlighted the following projects in Hartley Park:

- Main parking lot at the Nature Center is in progress, curb and gutter installation in coming weeks
 - Hoping to complete by Hartley Nature Center Preschool Graduation Day
- Two accessible trail improvements slated for completion in June
 - Old Hartley Road restoration from flood damage
 - Accessible loop from Nature Center over to the north side of Tischer up to the dam,



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eventually tying into Old Hartley Road

- Pollinator meadows in progress to restore storm damage and area where thinning occurred last summer (flowers and grasses)
 - Southeast corner of the pond
 - Trail road behind Rock Knob
- Interpretive signs narrowed down to seven locations that will talk about natural landscape, ecology and history, scheduled to install by June 30th
- Duluth Traverse construction through Hartley Park is on an extended deadline and will connect the parking lot to the pines behind Rock Knob
- Satellite parking lots at the north end of Fairmont, Woodhaven, and the south end of Old Hartley Road scheduled for June 30th completion

Schmidt: Requested that any construction that impacts programming be communicated. Thanked Mr. Shoberg for doing so.

Shoberg: Spoke to restoration of the DWP Roundhouse and that it is a US Forest Service project at Polk and Ramsey Street above the Fairmont neighborhood. Explained they were awarded funds for invasive removal, to cap contaminated areas, and replant with native vegetation.

Shoberg: Continued by providing an update on Duluth Traverse construction, explaining they are currently finishing a segment around Chester Bowl with completion scheduled for the end of the month. Further explained trail construction progress on county tax-forfeit state land behind St. Scholastica, which will come out into the intersection of Pecan Ave and Rice Lake Road. Explained an agreement exists with Marshall School in order to go through the school to come out at the intersection of 53 and Pecan Ave. Summarized remaining projects being a final mile build out of the trail center at Mission Creek Park, with additional grant monies used to close the gap from Green Street to the Zoo.

Shoberg: Updated Commission on the Western Waterfront restoration, noting it's currently in the planting phase after the completion of invasive removal last year along the waterfront corridor that roughly follows the trail. Explained that this year, zones with new growth will be addressed and native vegetation will be replanted with project completion estimated for June 2018.

Shoberg: Provided update on Superior Hiking Trail projects in Brewer Park loop, noting the completion of a hiking only loop in Brewer and start of a similar project at Spirit Mountain that will go from the lower chalet and shoot up to Knowlton Creek, cross over to the campground and finally reconnect to the lower chalet. Expressed excitement for this multi-hour hiking loop that provides amenities at both the top and bottom of the loop. Highlighted third loop by Ely's Peak that is being designed, pending completion of trail accessibility for climbing and the Duluth Traverse.

Edmondson: Requested information about the Lakewalk at Water Street.

Jim: Confirmed this was an Engineering Division project, however he could look into it.

Breeuwer: Questioned if the trail was going east or west from Green Street to the Zoo.



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Shoberg: Confirmed northeast towards Keene Creek.

Breeuwer: Raised questioned about the trail restrictions in this area.

Shoberg: Explained they will be careful when working on hot zones and areas with ATV use to ensure a usable segment of trail.

Torch: Thanked Mr. Shoberg for his hard work.

Schmidt: Thanked Mr. Shoberg and requested additional updates to the Commission as necessary.

Mike Casey (public): Requested explanation of what a hot zone was.

Shoberg: Clarified that a hot zone is an area with intense use and erosion.

Casey: Requested clarification on Commissioner Breeuwer's question and whether additional trail was being built to remedy a hot zone.

Shoberg: Confirmed no that the hot zone is an area of property that is in need of restoration due to excessive ATV use. Explained that after they get a handle on restoring the area they can look into natural surface trails.

C. Lake Superior & Mississippi Railroad – Andy Webb and Harold Dols, LS&M RR (informational)

Mr. Dols, Lake Superior and Mississippi Rail Road provided historical overview of the rail line.

Dols: Introduced himself and his background with the railroad, including his fondness for the City of Duluth and time growing up here. Noted the importance of preservation and presented slideshow of images while noting the following key points:

- Unique non-profit that provides tremendous service to Duluth
- In August 1870 the last stagecoach came out of Superior, Wisconsin
- Railroad brings visitors down the river and provides a recreational opportunity
- Noted cultural, industrial and historical significance of railroad
- 20% of users are local, 80% are tourists
- Highlighted volunteer efforts and time
- 2011 flood damage was significant
- Currently have two trains from 1912

Dols: Expressed that rail and trail is a viable option.

Webb: Shared that the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad provides access to St Louis River for those who don't want to walk or paddle. Advocated for rail and trail option just like the Lakewalk, explaining how lucky Duluth is to have two tourist trains. Passed out business plan developed for the Parks Department, noting page 13 which highlights issues the City requested they work through.



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Extended invitation to the Commissioners to come down and ride the train.

Webb: Confirmed they are a 501(c)(3) organization and do not want to burden the City in any way.

Dols: Expressed appreciation for the \$20,000 from the City, hoping they can preserve the line with minimum support.

Schmidt: Thanked Mr. Dols and Mr. Webb and note the important history presented, as well as the dedication and involvement of many volunteers to keep the railroad going.

Pete Brank (public): Shared he is a volunteer with the railroad and that it provides a great service to locals and tourists, while being a significant part of history, much like the City Hall building.

Mike Casey (public): Shared that he is a chair of the Friends of West Duluth Parks and Trails. Noted the recent editorial in the Duluth Tribune that supported a rail and trail option. Referenced points made by Mr. Webb that the train provides a scheduled experience for people to visit Duluth. Noted local Native American cultural events and his recent participation at an Indigenous Commission meeting, where he extended invitation for members to ride the train. Further explained Friends of West Duluth Parks and Trails hope the City does due diligence in working on a rail and trail option, as having both is better than just one, despite the large dollar amount to have it complete.

Schmidt: Thanked group and speakers for their input.

VI. Commission Committees

Schmidt: Discussed the committees and appointed Dean Vogtman to the Parks and Facilities Committee; Britt Rohrbaugh, Dudley Edmondson and Dean Vogtman to the Trails and Bikeways Committee; Dudley Edmondson and Kristin Bergerson to the Recreation Programming Committee.

- A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA
Chair - Michael Schraepfer – John Schmidt, Dean Vogtman [Dale Sellner]
- B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: Thursday, May 18 at 12:00pm in the Parks office
Chair – John Schmidt – Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby [Kathy Bergen]
- C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBD
Chair – Tjaard Breeuwer– Tiersa Wodash, Britt Rohrbaugh, Dudley Edmondson, Dean Vogtman, Art Johnston, Mike Casey, Eric Viken, Shawna Mullen [Andy Holak]
- D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: TBA
Chair – Erik Torch – Amanda Crosby, Dudley Edmondson, Kristin Bergerson, [Pamela Page]
 - Update on Chester Creek Concerts

Schmidt: Requested that non-Commissioner appointments to the committees go through the Executive Board as stated in the Commission's bylaws.



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VII. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Torch: Provided summary of the recent Bridging the Adventure Gap fundraiser event put on by the Northland Foundation which highlighted the work of nonprofits across the community to advance access for at risk youth to get into the parks. Noted six different organizations provided presentations and their efforts to expand access.

VIII. New Business

A. Staffing Changes

Bergen: Provided update on the vacant Parks Manager position, noting she has agreed to continue through June in the hopes that the new manager will be on-boarded during this time. Explained there are three strong candidates that will go through the second round of interviews and meetings with internal staff. Updated Commission on new Trails Coordinator Andy Holak, and explained he will be largely job shadowing for the next six months to learn policies and procedures before taking on new projects. Shared the Assistant Manager position will remain open until the new Manager begins, as they will have an active role in the selection process.

B. Review of Annual Meeting and brainstorm possible themes for 2018

Bergen: Shared letter from Mayor Larson which thanked Commissioners and City Staff for their participation and efforts.

Schmidt: Questioned if there were any comments or future topic ideas for the next annual meeting.

Torch: Noted that at a previous Executive Board meeting, former Manager Lindsay Dean shared the idea of putting the spotlight on youth programming as the City makes extensive investments.

Westerlund: Shared idea of spotlighting community members who aren't necessarily associated with a specific community club or group, but take ownership of their neighborhood parks, providing necessary volunteer efforts and time.

IX. Old Business

X. Division Manager’s Report

XI.

Bergen: Shared there are updated Parks staff and Commissioner directories available, as well as Chester Creek Concert Series posters.

XII. Public Comment



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XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm. Moved by Commissioner Torch. Second by Commissioner Breeuwer.

XIV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday June 14, 2017 at 5pm in the City Hall Council Chambers.