



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019
Parks & Recreation Annual Meeting

City Hall – Room 303



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 5:04 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Amanda Crosby, Jill Joyce, Tjaard Breeuwer, Dennis Isernhagen, Britt Rohrbaugh, David Demmer, Jenny Peterson.

Not present: Erik Torch, Dudley Edmondson, David Kirby (ISD 709 School Board Liaison), Frank Jewell (St. Louis County Board Liaison), Em Westerlund (City Council Liaison).

III. Approval of June 12th Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Breeuwer motioned for approval of the June 12th meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Isernhagen. Unanimously approved.

IV. Presentations

V. Commissioner Committees

- A. Administrative (E-board) – meeting date: Thursday, June 27th at noon at the Parks Office
Chair – Amanda Crosby, Jill Joyce, Tjaard Breeuwer [Alicia Watts, Lisa Luokkala, Jim Filby Williams]

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

VII. New Business

VIII. Old Business

- A. Revisions to the Brighton Beach Mini-Master Plan Design Update (Action Requested) – Lisa Luokkala, Stewardship Assistant Manager

Luokkala reflected on the June Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting that discussed the draft Brighton Beach Mini-Master Plan. Shared the plan was revised due to the last storm surge, where there will be infrastructure placement changes to become more resilient to future storms. Shared the plan changes include

1. Reduce City infrastructure within the DNR 10 foot wave zone of the shoreline
2. Increase circulation safety for all parks users – vehicular, bicycle, and pedestrian



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019
Parks & Recreation Annual Meeting

City Hall – Room 303



3. Increase shoreline resiliency by formalizing trails, access points and parking areas to minimize shoreline erosion
4. Provide high quality experience for recreational access to the lake and adjacent green space

Questions from Parks and Recreation Commissioners:

Demmer questioned if the distance of the new road alignment is the minimum distance from the wave action. Jim Filby Williams stated the elevation is ten vertical feet above, not ten feet off the shore in regards to the ten foot wave action zone. Filby Williams shared this is an aggressively resilient plan for the Brighton Beach area and the plan far meets the coastal policy. Peterson questioned what would happen if the State Water Access Grant is denied. Luokkala mentioned there is always the possibility of not receiving a grant, but this project holds a high merit and would seek additional grant opportunities if needed. Luokkala highlighted additional work is being done with FEMA for additional funding for shoreline resiliency. Joyce shared she was happy to see the road entry being a 90 degree angle and how this enhances safety.

VOTE: Breeuwer motioned to approve the revised draft Mini-Master Plan for Brighton Beach. Rohbaugh second. **Motion carried.**

- B. Western Waterfront Trail Mini-Master Plan Update/Mud Lake (Informational) – Lisa Luokkala, Stewardship Assistant Manager

Luokkala reflected on the Mud Lake Workshop that occurred in May 2019. Indicated Parks and Recreation will be looking for action during the August Meeting. Reflected on the goals being to

1. Increase connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods
2. Increase recreational and development opportunities
3. Enhance neighborhood quality of life
4. Restore and protect natural habitat
5. Determine whether to retain/improve remaining riverfront rail line and renew LS&MR lease for excursion rail trips

Luokkala shared the City looked at many options to narrow down the cost for Segment 1. Stated the following updates for the project being

1. Funding for Segment 1 is not financially feasible, costing \$1.6 million dollars to complete, and BNSF denied the easement permissions
2. USS will likely pay for Segment 3, and a final agreement is near
3. Three alternatives options being rail on causeway, trail on causeway, and causeway removal



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019
Parks & Recreation Annual Meeting

City Hall – Room 303



Parks and Recreation Commission Questions:

Demmer requested a status update on the historic designation. Adam Fulton reflected on the Mud Lake Workshop, where it was determined to pursue historical designation for the Lake Superior and Mississippi Railroad. Indicated this designation process needed to be restarted by the Planning Commission for action during the July Planning Commission Meeting. Mentioned the next step is to go to City Council in two readings and a single ordinance to be a local historical landmark. Indicated voting from the Heritage Preservation Commission will occur, and the vote would be appealable by City Council. Crosby questioned what the historical designation will reflect specifically. Fulton shared the local landmark designation would include the corridor from Boy Scout Landing to Spring Street. Fulton highlighted this was the first railroad coming to Duluth in 1870. Demmer questioned if the designation would include the type of use. Fulton stated it is for the corridor, and modifications would need to be approved by the Heritage Preservation Commission. Demmer questioned the timeline if modifications were to occur. Fulton indicated Minnesota Statute 1599, which has a deadline of 120 days for action. Jim Filby Williams requested Fulton to go over the HPC's oversight for the designation in the event City Administration wanted to make a change to the corridor that departs from HPC's wishes. Fulton stated the HPC is not the final decision if this were to be appealed by the City Council.

Breeuwer requested for clarification regarding the trail only option and if it would include the cost of the removal of the causeway. Luokkala indicated the trail still has an upland route, which would allow the causeway to be separate. Luokkala also mentioned the prices listed will increase once amenities are included to the project. Isernhagen questioned if there would be a work around for Segment 1. Luokkala shared the option would be to have further conversations with BNSF. Isernhagen questioned if there is there an opportunity to go further inland. Luokkala indicated it is near a neighborhood and an active roadway, which would not meet the goals of the WWFT Master Plan. Demmer questioned the length of time of the LS&MR lease. Filby Williams shared the lease is 5 years. Isernhagen questioned how long the interruption would be without the rail and hiking trail. Filby Williams indicated the commencement and duration of the work is ongoing, but the aspiration would be 2 years – which is ambitious and could potentially be for three years. Amanda indicated she serves as the liaison for the Commission on Disabilities and read the opinion of the Commission of Disabilities as followed,

“June 12, 2019
Comments on Mud Lake

The Duluth Commission on Disabilities appreciates the work the City has done in identifying different alternatives for Mud Lake on the St. Louis River. These are difficult decisions that have long lasting impacts.

People with disabilities live, work and play in our community. Accessing outdoor recreational space can sometimes be challenging or even impossible due to lack of accessibility. We have an opportunity here to create public recreation space that is accessible. We understand the historic significance of the train, but it is not accessible to many people with disabilities. And, it is unlikely that it will be made accessible. At Mud Lake, a trail can be made that is accessible. Train tracks can be



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019
Parks & Recreation Annual Meeting

City Hall – Room 303



made into great, wide, flat trails that people of all abilities can enjoy.

The Commission feels that whenever there is the opportunity to make a space accessible, we need to do it. Especially when using public funds. In reviewing the proposed alternatives, we think that Alternative 3 (causeway retained for trail) would provide the best option for accessibility for everyone."

Mike Casey (public) questioned what the City's position is on the historical designation.

Fulton indicated the delay in the designation was due to insufficient available information related to remediation of US Steel and other related sites. Shared that upon receiving the further information, and subsequent to the Mud Lake Workshop, the Planning Commission took action and brought forward to City Council. Filby Williams indicated City Administration is not opposing historical designation.

Public Comment:

Bruce Fehringer (public) member of the Western Duluth Parks and Trails, shared he realizes the cost would be cheaper with removal of the tracks should it be converted to trail. Indicated it is shortsighted to not promote the business that LS&MR brings, which was stated as \$1.3 million dollars to the City. Reflected on the report that was submitted to the City from the EPA. Stated the report listed the pros and cons of each alternative except alternative 2 version 2, where it does not have any cons. Disagreed with the inaccessibility comments, mentioned that having ramp has been discussed. Shared that his dad may not be able to walk the trail, but he could ride the train.

Dwight Morrison (public) Co-Chair of Wheels on Trails, shared he strongly supports the idea to extend the WWFT. Stated if you have an abandoned rail – it is great place to put a trail because of the accessible grade. Indicated this is a common trend. Shared a 7 mile trail accessible trail is too long without multiple accessible access points.

Mike Casey (public) requested the Parks and Recreation Commission to review the EPA study. Shared alternative 2 is a win-win. Indicated many people do not know about the train, but those who have do favor the train.

Tom Arbor (public) shared he is a volunteer with the LS&MR, tax payer, and citizen. Questioned why is Mud Lake suddenly became a priority. Indicated the map of the lake has not changed much from many years ago. Shared there is no reason to move the causeway.

Joel Manns (public) President of the LS&MR, stated the railroad and members fully support a trail. Indicated maintenance has been funded for 35 years – questioned how the City would save money because they have not funded this. Shared it is not feasible to have grandparents take their grandchildren down the trail for 7 miles. Shared the concern of not having a definitive timeline. Indicated a trail on rail is an option. Mentioned they can operate safely with having both uses and is willing to talk with the city with other concerns.



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of July 10, 2019
Parks & Recreation Annual Meeting

City Hall – Room 303



Peter Braneu (public) shared he is lifetime resident of Duluth, and encouraged everyone to take a ride. Stated the train was here before the Depot. Highlighted people from all over the world to have taken a ride on the train. Stated LS&MR generates over a million dollars per year, which is run by volunteers.

Breeuwer requested commissioners to consider wild rice.

XIII. Division Report

Peterson reflected on the new programs and how it represents the heavy workload within the Division. Provided the Campus Connector Trail and the Chester Park Mini Master plan update. Mentioned she has attended the past stakeholder projects for those meetings. Indicated the timing is important and will do our best to be clear.

Isernhagen reflected on the action taken on the Lower Chester Park. Stated this was approved, and has not seen progress.

Filby Williams shared \$400,000 set aside to implement the most important elements of the Mini- Master Plan. Stated he is not entirely certain when we can get to this. Luokkala mentioned we are working on some predesign at this time, but only to vet for probable cost estimates. Shared staffing capacity is very limited during construction season.

Isernhagen questioned if the neighbors were informed of the sod and the potential for the second ice rink.

Public Comment

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

XIV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, August 14th, 2019 at the City Hall Council Chambers