



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes December 13, 2023

Evergreen Community Center



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Tjaard Breeuwer, Sarah Beehler, Hailey Sigafus, Dave Cizmas, Terrance Lovejoy

Not Present: Josie LaPorte, Noah Hobbs – City Council Liaison, Annie Harala – St. Louis County Commissioner, Kelly Durick Eder – ISD 709 School Board Liaison

III. Approval of the September 13 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Breeuwer motioned to approve the September 13 meeting minutes. Commissioner Demmer second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

IV. Presentations

A. Duluth Foot Trails Alliance (Informational) Jesse Schomberg

Beehler questioned what some of the barriers to accessing trails are. DUFTA representatives stated that DUFTA polled their membership to learn what barriers they face. Stated that there is a need for education and clarification. Stated that there are economic barriers. Stated that there is a need for those of all ethnicities to feel welcome on the trails. Stated that they are looking at neighborhood connections to trails. Stated that there are sometimes user group conflicts, which can be a barrier.

Cizmas questioned if DUFTA foresees having DUFTA specific trails. DUFTA representatives stated that they looked at where foot trails are. Stated that DUFTA looks to adopt trails that do not already have a designated group to care for them. Stated that DUFTA partners with other user groups as many trails are multi-use.

Pedersen questioned if they fundraise, as well as where they get trail supplies. DUFTA representatives stated that they do fundraise and are looking for more opportunities in the future. Stated that they bring supplies for trail maintenance, as well as borrow from the City and other groups. Stated that they keep their membership fees low to make membership accessible and affordable.

Demmer questioned if the trails they focus on are natural surface. Schomberg stated that they primarily focus on natural surface trails.

Demmer questioned if they have thought about interfacing with transportation planning when looking at neighborhood connections. DUFTA representatives stated that they have been in conversations with folks about trails being a part of the transportation structure. Stated that they are connected to advocacy on safe routes to schools.

Lovejoy questioned if they have had discussions with dog walkers. DUFTA representatives stated that they have spoken with dog walkers. Stated one concern is the safety of their pet and another concern is off leash dogs and user conflict. Stated that a proposed solution is an off leash dog trail. Stated that there was an ordinance passed designating areas as off leash areas but that it has not been implemented.

Lovejoy questioned what connections they have established with other organizations that focus on diversity and inclusion. DUFTA representatives stated that the Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance has been



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doing some work in that area. Stated that they are looking at steps to take in making progress in the community.

V. Commissioner Committees

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Thursday, February 1 at noon, Portman Community Center
Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Kala Pedersen [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

VII. New Business

A. 2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Schedule (Action Requested)

Commissioner Beehler motioned to approve the 2024 Parks and Recreation Commission Schedule. Commissioner Lovejoy second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.

B. E-Board 2024 (For Future Action)

VIII. Old Business

A. Naming, Co-Naming, or Renaming a City of Duluth Park, Trail or Park Asset (Informational) Jessica Peterson

Lovejoy questioned if the task force would join a Commission meeting to have a discussion on naming when it comes up. Manager Peterson stated that they could attend a Commission meeting if it was requested by the Commission, the task force, or Manager recommendation. Stated that the task force is convened on a case by case basis.

Demmer questioned if the task force and administration would be deferent to Parks and Recreation Commission regarding naming in park spaces. Manager Peterson stated that the hope is that they would do so. Stated that Parks Department requested the Lincoln Park pavilion naming decision pass through the Commission. Stated that consult to Attorney's office would be needed to determine if there are legal requirements associated with Commission lead on naming recommendations. Stated that the Commission makes recommendations to Council, which are non-binding, Council decisions are directive to staff. It is possible that a Commission recommendation could be received and amended by Task Force, Council, or Mayor.

Demmer stated that there is precedent for Council deferring to recommendations made by the Commission. Questioned if this would be the case with naming as well. Manager Peterson stated that is how this process is structured. Stated that a challenge in creating a parks-specific process is that it cannot overstep administrative policy that places administration at a higher decision making level. Manager Peterson stated that neither she nor the Commission can direct the task force nor administration.

Demmer questioned if the process of naming could be changed without input from the Parks Commission if there is not a motion made to approve the process. Manager Peterson responded that a way to address that concern would be to put a motion on the floor requesting periodic updates on the status of this process and how the Commission would continue to be informed. Demmer requested clarification on updates vs. the scope of the by-laws for park naming. Manager Peterson suggested that the Commission revisit the bylaws in 2024 related to park naming for suggestions on revising those for more clarity on park naming. Stated it is unusual for a Commission to weigh in on a staff process, but that it is usual for Commission get a name recommendation. Stated that foregoing a motion on the process document does not replace the need for names to be brought to the Parks and Recreation Commission.



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Demmer asked if there were changes to the naming process document, would the Commission be involved? Manager Peterson stated the internal process document could change, but what would not change is that the naming recommendation still passes through the Commission.

IX. Division Report

Manager Peterson added an item to the division report from the Monday, December 11 City Council meeting, where a resolution was passed adding funding and scope to the Enger Park irrigation project, expanding the scope to a full 27 holes of irrigation work at Enger in 2024.

X. Public Comment

Art Johnston spoke on buckthorn, graffiti, and trail etiquette. Commissioner Demmer suggested that the citizen share the buckthorn comments with the Natural Resources Commission.

XI. Adjournment

Prior to adjournment Commissioner Pedersen extended appreciation to President Crosby for her service to community and on the Commission. President Crosby thanked Commissioners and shared about her experience serving on the Commission and on E-board. Commissioner Demmer expressed his gratitude to President Crosby and Commissioner Breeuwer for their leadership.

Meeting adjourned at 6:22 pm.

XII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 14 at 5:00 p.m., Harrison Community Center.