



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Meeting of March 12, 2014



The meeting was called to order at 5:00 PM in the Stowe Elementary School, 715 101st Ave W.

Members Present: all

The minutes for the meeting of February 12, 2014, were approved on motion of support by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Beasy Latto, unanimous.

PRESENTATIONS:

Revitalization Plans for Gary New Duluth –

Mark Boben, Gary New Duluth Development Alliance (action requested)

- a) Chair Hall gave a short summary of background documents received by the Commission, in advance of the presentation, including endorsements from the Mayor's office and Gary New Duluth Community Club.
- b) Mr. Boben opened by sharing a brief introductory history of the park, including previous planning by the city in 2012, and plans discussed by the community club for redevelopment. He emphasized that current planning and management is being pushed by the Gary New Duluth (GND) community, not the city. He then provided an overview of the current status of the park. While the park building is in good structural shape many of the other park features are in need of update, including parking, ball fields, the skate park, and the amenities within the building. Mr. Boben's presentation then highlighted the social and economic benefits of quality parks.
- c) Moving the discussion to the future redevelopment of the park, Mr. Boben highlighted the differences between previous consultant recommendations and new plans. Chief among the differences is the desire to maintain the community center building rather than tear it down as previously recommended by consultants for the Parks and Recreation department. Other potential new activities and/or uses identified by the community included community gardening, a dog park, and senior-youth mentoring. Mr. Boben highlighted that an inviting skateboard park would be unique in the area and would respond to strong interest and need from skateboarders. Finally, Mr. Boben presented how the development could be completed in 5 phases. Total cost has been estimated at \$1.9 million dollars.
- d) Questions from Commissioners were then taken:
 - Commissioner Braun asked for clarity on the timeline. Mr. Boben suggested that it would be roughly three years.
 - Commissioner Hall asked for clarity on park boundaries and city/school property. Mr. Boben explained that the area planned for the skate-park is City property that would have to be designated as City park
 - Commissioner Braun asked if there was any conversation with neighboring houses. Mr. Boben shared that he spoke with immediate neighbors, distributed flyers, and heard responses that neighbors were very supportive and were interested in engaging.
 - Commissioner Schraepfer asked how the \$1.9 million could be trimmed down, if need be. Mr. Boben shared that he does not currently have good estimates for individual phases of development but support of City administration has helped solidify additional private support.
 - A community member asked if private funds would be matched by the City. Mr. Boben suggested that a restored tourism tax could possibly be used, and that the Mayor has indicated a desire to use that money to invest in western parks
 - Community member Ted Pavolvich offered his support based on his own experiences. He shared what recreational opportunities meant to him growing up in the area and contrasted that information with what he sees as lack of opportunities available to youth now.

- Commissioner Hall asked about the School District's interest in utilizing the park and the School District's potential commitment to help fund programming and maintenance. Mr. Boben shared that he has been in contact with the District but he has not begun discussions of maintenance and operations.
- Commissioner Erickson asked about access for individuals with disabilities. Mr. Boben reemphasized the desire to remodel bathrooms. Luke Sydow stated he foresaw all elements as being accessible.
- Councilor Fosle shared his strong support for the project.
- Commissioner Braun asked if the quality of the park was going to overshadow the building and if the potential was there to expand or improve the building. Mr. Boben shared the current building has a maximum capacity of 150 people and would, in his opinion, be sufficient.
- Commissioner Schraepfer asked about funding for phase one. Mr. Boben said he doesn't have a good estimate but a major issue is to improve the waterline. Labor for improvement of the waterline has been offered, similar with HVAC work; funding would need to be raised for equipment.
- Kathy Bergen shared that the previous (2009) decision to close the building and reduce park staffing was based on citywide budget cuts prior to the passage of the 2011 Parks Referendum.
- Resolution (attached) was brought forward by Commissioner Albright, seconded by Commissioner Viken and passed unanimously.

Commission Committees:

Commissioner Hall noted that Commissioner Welles has joined the Recreational Programming Committee.

- a) Parks and Facilities - No update
 - (1) Chair - Joel Braun – Jon Welles, Ed Hall, Michael Schraepfer, [Dale Sellner]
- b) Administrative (E-Board) - No update
 - (1) Chair – Ed Hall – Eric Viken, Tom Albright, [Kathy Bergen]
- c) Trails and Bikeways - No update
 - (1) Chair – Andy Holak - Eric Viken, Tom Albright, [Judy Gibbs], [Art Johnston]
- d) Recreation Programming – youth and adult
 - (1) Chair - Erica Erickson – Susan Beasy Latto, Andy Holak, Jon Welles [Pamela Page]
 - Commissioner Welles shared an interest in reengaging with pull-tab funds

Commissioner and Liaison Reports:

- a) Commissioner Albright presented Commissioner Beasy Latto with a plaque of appreciation for six years of service to the Commission

New Business:

Special Meeting on April 30 for presentation on Hartley Mini-Master Plan-

- a) Commissioner Hall noted there will be a 6 PM public meeting at Hartley, March 27th, to discuss the Mini-Master Plan.
- b) Commissioners decided to push back the time of the April 30th meeting from 5 to 5:30. A location is to be determined.

City Council Ordinance by Councilor Larson regarding trail damage-

- a) Kathy Bergen shared that Councilor Larson's ordinance is not yet complete and welcomed feedback to Judy Gibbs. Judy shared the goal of the ordinance is to give equal weight to education and enforcement. It was recommended that Ms. Gibbs and Councilor Larson connect with the Trails and Bikeway committee for initial feedback.

Old Business:

Plans for Annual Meeting-

- a) Kathy Bergen updated the Commission on the agenda that has been developed by the E-Board. Commissioner Welles requested that the list of potential partners that will be invited to table be shared with the Commission.

Task Force to work on possibility of domed stadium at the DWP Roundhouse site-

- a) Kathy shared a meeting was held and concerns were raised about the feasibility to fit a domed stadium within the space confinements of the site.

Chester Mini-Master-

- a) It's expected that the Commission will consider final approval at the May 14th meeting

Dog Park proposed at Russell Square-

- a) There will be a public meeting March 20, 2014, with Parks and Community Development, held at Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, 6 PM. It's anticipated on April 9th the Commission will hold a meeting focusing solely on dog parks at Portman Community Center.

Dog Park proposed at Observation-

- a) A meeting at 6 PM on April 16, 2014, at Washington Center, was tentatively scheduled.

Division Manager's Report:

Updated list of Commissioners' Terms of Office-

- a) Kathy shared that we are still looking for 3rd and 4th district Commissioners as well as the education position currently held by Commissioner Beasy Latto. Additionally, Ericka is looking to fill her position from the Disabilities Commission. It was noted that a Commissioner is able to continue serving until a replacement is identified.

Update on Cross City Trail-

- a) There will be a public meeting at City Center West next Tuesday, the 18th of March, at 5:30 PM. Kathy Bergen shared that she does not anticipate that the issue will need to come back to the Commission for consideration.

Kathy Bergen - updates on Mini-Master Plans: Gary New Duluth, Morgan Park, sport fields, dog park locations, Washington Square-

- a) It was noted Amy Norris is retiring from the Parks Department. This Friday, the 14th of March, from 11:30-1:00 PM there will be a retirement party held in the Mayor's Reception Room.

Judy Gibbs, Trails Coordinator – updates on Mini-Master Plans: Cross Country Ski Trails, Hartley, Western Duluth Trails, ATV Trails, DWP Roundhouse Area-

- a) Judy Gibbs noted the Parks Department will stop grooming cross country trails as of April 1st.

Golf Courses-

- a) Kathy Bergen noted that a special meeting must be set up to discuss City golf courses, which will have their management/improvement contracts up for renewal before the 2015 season. It was agreed Commissioner Braun and the facilities subcommittee would take the lead in reviewing plans.

Adjournment:

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 PM on motion of Commissioner Braun, supported by Commissioner Schraepfer; unanimous.

Next meetings:

- Annual Meeting on Wednesday, April 2, 2014 at 6 pm Spirit Mountain's Grand Chalet, 8551 Grand Ave – **note changes in date, time, and location**
- Special Meeting on Wednesday, April 30 – time and location to be determined
- May 14 at 5 pm at Central Hillside Center

RESOLUTION OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
ENDORISING THE GARY NEW DULUTH COMMUNITY CENTER
AND RECREATION AREA PROJECT
MARCH 12, 2014

Resolved

That the Parks and Recreation Commission

Endorses the Gary New Duluth Community Center and Recreation Area Project, presented to the Commission by the Gary New Duluth Development Alliance on March 12, 2014, and

Encourages the Alliance to secure the support of the City of Duluth School District for assistance in either the construction and/or ongoing maintenance of those aspects of the Gary New Duluth Community Center and Recreation Area Project that might be used for future school related activities, and

Supports the commitment of some public funding for the implementation and/or on going maintenance of the Project by the City of Duluth, through the City Parks and Recreation and City Maintenance Operations Budgets, or other sources of city/state funding and outside grants as may become available, in the amount and for such purposes as the Mayor and the City Council may deem appropriate.

Resolution approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission at its March 12, 2014 meeting by a vote of 9-0, with all Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission voting in favor.