



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes of April 30, 2014**  
**Central Hillside Center - 12 E Fourth St**



- I. Call Meeting to Order
- II. Roll Call: Present - Holak, Welles, Braun, Viken, Hall, Albright, Beasey Latto, Schraepfer
- III. Approval of March 12, 2014 minutes (Beasey motion, Welles second, approved unanimously)
- IV. Presentations
  - A. Canadian National Railroad – acquisition of selected park properties and easements for other park properties – CN representatives (action requested).
    - a. *Commissioner Hall gave an introductory comment in which he noted that the City Council passed a resolution of intent to enter an agreement with CN during their April 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.*
    - b. *Patrick Waldron, government relations for CN Railroad, began the presentation by providing a brief overview of the CN Company and its network of rail, which has heavy presence in the region and Duluth.*
    - c. *Mr. Waldron described the project as 4.5 miles of double track being added in Gary New Duluth along existing lines. The line would also be straightened to eliminate a curve near the base of the hill. The project would represent approximately 30 million dollars of investment to be paid entirely by CN. In order to complete the project a variety of property acquisitions need to take place including city, county, private and state land.*
    - d. *Specifically CN representatives sought approval of the Parks Commission to acquire plots of land for both permanent use and temporary construction use.*
    - e. *Two railroad bridges would be replaced to accommodate double track instead of the current single track. Two new bridges would also be built, one for the Munger Trail where it intersects with the CN rail and the other at the Mission Creek Trail Overpass. All construction costs of both the rail and trail bridges will be covered by CN.*
    - f. *Commissioner Hall asked how long trail bridges would be down before replaced. Mr. Waldron stated that he didn't have a specific answer but that his company typically replaces bridges over the period of a couple days and they will strive to minimize impact by making the replacement during non-peak use periods such as mid-week.*
    - g. *City Staff Kathy Bergen shared that City staff have been reviewing the plan for almost one full year. She expressed that impact is very minimal while providing new trail bridges and maintaining City ownership over the majority of land parcels.*
    - h. *Commissioner Viken commented that currently snowmobilers use the Mission Creek Bridge and Munger Trail. He asked if the bridges would maintain their ability to accommodate snowmobilers. Mr. Waldon confirmed that current use would not be restricted with future developments.*
    - i. *Commissioner Holak asked if land being acquired by the CN would be available for possible trail development. Mr. Waldron stated that his company is active in Rails To Trails and might, depending on their needs, be willing to sell land back. He further stated that trails on CN property would be restricted by regulations on proximity etc.*
    - j. *Commissioner Hall brought forward a draft resolution in support of the sale. Mr. Hall noted that his resolution was based on similar language used in the City Council resolution. Mr. Hall also noted that the exhibits to identify the specific land parcels*

*are currently blank, pending City Attorney confirmation of exact parcels. Ms. Bergen noted that the City Council resolution covers all City property and not just park property. Mr. Viken made a motion to adopt the resolution as prepared by Mr. Hall. Mr. Braun seconded. Commissioners present unanimously approved with no abstentions.*

V. Commission Committees

A. Parks and Facilities

Chair - Joel Braun – Jon Welles, Ed Hall, Michael Schraepfer, [Dale Sellner]

*No report*

B. Administrative (E-Board)

Chair – Jon Welles – Eric Viken, Ed Hall, [Kathy Bergen]

*No report*

C. Trails and Bikeways

Chair – Andy Holak - Eric Viken, Tom Albright, [Judy Gibbs], [Art Johnston]

*No report*

D. Recreation Programming – youth and adult

Chair - Erica Erickson – Susan Beasy Latto, Andy Holak, Jon Welles [Pamela Page]

*No report*

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

- A. Commissioner Albright noted that Parks and Recreation has received a grant in partnership with the Duluth Fire Fighters, and that they are looking for community organizations to train on new CPR techniques.
- B. Commissioner Viken noted appreciation and compliments he had heard regarding the annual meeting in April.
- C. Commissioner Braun asked about fencing at the 40<sup>th</sup> and Jay Street. Ms. Bergen said that she had also asked about the same issue today and that she was told that if fencing is not already up it will be soon.
- D. Commissioner Holak shared that he will be meeting with Mark Bigelbech, a Twin Cities developer, about the potential to build an indoor recreational field through an inflatable dome or similar light structure.

VII. New Business

- A. Regular Committee Meetings - There was a short discussion on the merits of holding regular committee meetings in addition to the full Commission meetings. Commissioner Hall noted that it would require support of City staff to send out public notices, etc. Ms. Bergen noted that committee meetings need to abide by public meeting laws, but that it could be easily managed if regular meetings are scheduled. It is expected that City staff and committee chairs will coordinate to arrange initial meetings.
- B. Special meeting needed end of May to approve Parks Fund Grants (May 28?) There will be a meeting on the 15<sup>th</sup> of May to make a recommendation for Park Fund Grants. It was agreed that we would hold a special meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup>, with a location pending.
- C. Appointments to Commissions – Ms. Bergen did not have an update to share.
- D. Cross City Trail – Ms. Gibbs noted that the Cross City Trail will be built as far as 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue West. Challenges have come up near the Interstate 35/Irving Park area. The Irving Park neighborhood was concerned with the plan that was being developed. An alternate plan is being considered that would bring the trail along 6<sup>th</sup> Street and then connecting up with the DWP trail. Both of these options will be considered and shared with public for feedback *over the coming year.*
- E. Lakewalk gap – *The issue has come up at the City Council. Ms. Bergen shared that*

*solutions lack both funding and consensus.*

VIII. Old Business

- A. Trail Damage Ordinance – Ms. Gibbs met with Councilor Larson and a City Attorney to discuss the ordinance. The hope is that the ordinance will protect natural surface trails from disproportionate damage to trails during poor weather by better educating public. Commissioner Hall requested that the Trails and Bikeways Committee review the ordinance before the full Commission considers it.
- B. Grants from Pull Tab income – No update.
- C. Chester Mini-Master Plan – Ms. Bergen reiterated that hopefully we will vote on the plan at the June Commission meeting.
- D. Dog Parks – Ms. Bergen is working to arrange a meeting with previous dog park stakeholders to discuss a dog park at Observation Park.

IX. Division Manager's Report

- A. Kathy Bergen - updates on Mini-Master Plans: Gary New Duluth, Morgan Park, sport fields, dog park locations, Lower Chester, Jay St Park,
  - a. *Ms. Bergen shared that the City's Department of Public Administration, under which Parks is housed, is experiencing some budget shortfalls due to higher than expected weather related costs.*
- B. Judy Gibbs, Trails Coordinator – updates on Mini-Master Plans: Cross Country Ski Trails, Hartley, Western Duluth Trails, ATV Trails, DWP Roundhouse Area
  - a. *Ms. Gibbs shared that she will be meeting to discuss the roundhouse site and potential for a soccer field. City staff has also been meeting regularly with ATV stakeholders to discuss potential trail developments. The May 14<sup>th</sup> meeting will feature a presentation on Hartley that will not be a final plan, but rather an overview of the issues and different uses that are being considered. Ms Bergen reminded the Commission that the Parks Division is still publishing The Good News and encouraged Commissioners to sign up through the City website to receive the emails.*

X. Speakers/Public Comment

XI. Adjournment

- A. Commissioner Albright made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Braun; approved unanimously. Meeting was adjourned at 6:53.

XII. Next meeting - May 14 at 5 pm at Central Hillside Center

**E-Board Meetings**  
12 noon - City Hall

May 23

June 20

July 17

TBD

August 22

September 19

October 24

November 21

December 19