



# PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of August 13, 2014

Central Hillside Center  
12 E 4<sup>th</sup> St



## 1. CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner Hall called the meeting to order at 5:05 pm.

## 2. ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Commissioners Albright, Braun, Crosby, Dodge, Schmidt, Hall, Holak, Schraepfer, Torch, Viken

NOT PRESENT: Commissioner Wells

## 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of July 9 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Schmidt; approved.

## 4. PRESENTATIONS

### A. Arson, Vandalism, and Trashing of Our Park System – Dale Sellner and Cheryl Skafte

- 1) Mr. Sellner shared an overview of the impact of damage to our parks. Mr. Sellner pointed out reacting to damage to parks is a daily occurrence for Parks staff, and those efforts naturally take away time from the proactive efforts staff would like to do. Approximately 25 work hours per week throughout the season are lost due to park damage. By Mr. Sellner's conservative estimates, that equals \$40,000 in labor costs. Mr. Sellner noted in addition to labor costs, the City is burdened annually with \$12,000 for graffiti removal and \$13-17,000 in extra hauling fees due to illegal dumping.
- 2) Ms. Cheryl Skafte, Volunteer Coordinator for the City of Duluth, shared an overview of the efforts and impact of volunteers responding to trash in our parks and green spaces. She noted that over 5,000 pounds of garbage were removed from City Parks and Trails by volunteers in 2014.
- 3) QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:
  - a) Commissioner Hall asked about the recent arson of the pavilion in Lincoln Park. Mr. Sellner estimated the cost of repairs to the Lincoln Park pavilion roof between \$25-50,000. There are additional costs absorbed by businesses, such as the burning of portable toilets.
  - b) Commissioner Albright noted that on a recent trip to Magney Snively, he saw the trail map cut down from its posts and trash, including furniture and appliances, dumped in the parking lot.
- 4) SUPPORT:

Commissioner Hall made a motion to accept a resolution (attached) that both celebrates those volunteers improving our parks, while also condemning the acts of destruction taking place within our parks. Commissioner Albright seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### B. Citywide Cross-Country Ski Trail System Master Plan – Gary Larson

- 1) Mr. Larson provided a brief summary of the proposed Master Plan. He highlighted that the largest need heard from the community is more frequent grooming, though quality of grooming is up. Mr. Larson also emphasized Spirit Mountain would be an ideal site for developing an event center capable of hosting large cross-country ski events.
  - a) Commissioner Hall noted both City staff and the cross-country ski club are in support of the proposed Master Plan.
- 2) QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS:
  - a) Commissioner Torch commended Mr. Larson for his work and noted that the plan is missing a section on prioritizing the recommendations. Mr. Torch recommended improved grooming be accomplished on existing trails before adding additional trails or facilities.
  - b) Commissioner Hall asked if the Cross-Country Ski Master Plan was in line with Mini-Master Plans actively being developed for parks such as Hartley and Chester. Mr. Larson noted he has worked with leadership at Spirit Mountain Authority to ensure the plan is in line with their plans.
  - c) Commissioner Torch asked if there are opportunities to decrease the number of intersections

between ski trails and snowmobiles at Lester-Amity. Mr. Larson responded it is an issue that has gone back and forth with skiers and snowmobilers alternately voicing frustrations. Mr. Larson stated the Master Plan didn't make recommendations for significant changes because it is such a delicate issue.

d) Commissioner Viken asked if it was appropriate to include budgeting within the Master Plan. Ms. Kathy Bergen responded that budgeting is usually not included within a mini-master plan because funding costs change over time and funding opportunities can come up at unexpected times. Commissioner Viken supported developing a business plan after the Master Plan is passed.

e) Commissioner Schmidt asked if separate mini-master plans have been developed or will be developed for mountain biking, hiking, etc.

- Commissioner Hall responded that the Commission and City Council passed a Trails Master Plan, of which this is a part.

3) SUPPORT:

Commissioner Viken made a motion to support the Cross-Country Ski Master Plan. Commissioner Torch seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

C. Ordinance Amending Section 35-6 of the Duluth City Code

1) Commissioner Albright stated the City Council was planning to consider the trail damage ordinance at their next meeting. He noted the Trails Committee reviewed the proposed ordinance and submitted comments to staff of the Parks Division and City Attorney's Office.

2) Ms. Judy Gibbs shared that the ordinance would improve the ability of the City to respond if someone is caught damaging City trails, but a goal of the ordinance is also to improve education about appropriate trail use.

3) COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

a) Commissioner Viken asked if the feedback of the Trails Committee was incorporated, noting Trails Committee members hadn't received a response regarding comments and there was a lack of change from earlier versions of the ordinance. Ms. Judy Gibbs shared feedback had been considered and the Attorney's Office staff felt current language adequately addressed concerns. Mr. Viken expressed concerns that what constitutes damage is not defined. Ms. Gibbs responded part of the goal of the ordinance is to improve education around the issue of trail damage.

b) Commissioner Viken suggested he would prefer tabling the issue until a response to comments from the Trails Committee was received in writing. Commissioner Albright stated if the Attorney's Office and Parks Division reviewed Committee comments and shared the opinion that amendment of the ordinance wasn't necessary, a written response wasn't necessary and would delay the ordinance's implementation. Ms. Gibbs reiterated that comments had been reviewed by the Attorney's Office and stated she would get written confirmation and a copy of other relevant trails ordinances to Commissioners.

4) SUPPORT:

Commissioner Albright made a motion to accept the resolution of support for the Ordinance Amending Section 35-6 of the Duluth City Code, 1959, Related to Recreational Trails and Paths (attached). Commissioner Braun seconded. The motion passed 9-1, Commissioner Viken voted against.

## 5. COMMISSION COMMITTEES

A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA

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

B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: Friday, August 22 at noon at Parks Office

Chair – Ed Hall – Eric Viken, Tom Albright, [Kathy Bergen]

C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA  
Chair – Tom Albright - Eric Viken, Andy Holak, [Judy Gibbs], [Art Johnston]

D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: TBA  
Chair - Jon Welles – Andy Holak, Erik Torch [Pamela Page]

\$16,000 is now available for the grant program, with a \$2,000 maximum per application. The application deadline is August 22. The committee will bring recommended awards to Parks Commission on September 10.

### 6. COMMISSIONER & LIAISON REPORTS

Commissioner Schraepfer noted that at a previous Park Point Small Area Plan meeting, a citizen requested information about daily usage. Following the meeting, he connected with a staff member at the YMCA who noted they keep a count of usage of the beach house at the end of Park Point.

### 7. NEW BUSINESS

A. New appointments to the Parks Commission approved at the July 14 City Council meeting: John Schmidt (District 3) and Tiersa Dodge (District 4)

B. An orientation for Parks Commissioners will take place on August 29th from 11 am to 1 pm.

C. Representative from the Parks Commission for the Lincoln Park Small Area Study Advisory Committee – Tiersa Dodge

D. Master Planning Process for the Zoo and Fairmont Park began June 27 – Tom Albright

E. St. Louis River Corridor Visioning Process - 3 concepts:

- 1) Tourism Activity Nodes: Indian Point Campground, Zoo, and Spirit Mountain
- 2) Grand Ave regional parks: Wade/Wheeler, Fairmont/Zoo, Memorial, Gary New Duluth, and Chambers Grove
- 3) Connectivity: trails, bikeways, water access

F. Wade/Wheeler Mini-Master Plan RFP – Tiersa Dodge

- 1) The RFP has not been issued yet

### 8. OLD BUSINESS

A. Updates: Chester Mini-Master Plan and Revisions to Lower Chester Mini-Master Plan – John Schmidt

- 1) Ms. Bergen noted the Chester Mini-Master Plan will likely, be brought forward in September, however Lower Chester will be later in the fall.

B. Updates: Morgan Park Mini-Master Plan – Tom Albright

- 1) Plan for a vote at the September 10 Parks Commission meeting.

C. RFP for Golf Courses

- 1) RFPs are due on August 22. A group of about a half dozen interested parties recently toured the facilities and RFPs are expected from at least some of them.

D. Wade Stadium renovations to begin August 19 – Tiersa Dodge

- 1) A ground-breaking might be taking place the week of August 25 or September 1

- E. Observation Dog Park – John Schmidt
  - 1) Clean-up of the area has begun by volunteers
- F. Park Point Small Area Plan – Mike Schraepfer and John Schmidt – no report
- G. Revisions to Memorial Mini-Master Plan – Tom Albright – no report
- H. Timeframe for plans for new alignment for the Cross City Trail – Judy Gibbs – no report

## 9. DIVISION MANAGER'S REPORT

Implementation of Hartley Mini-Master Plan – applying for DNR Parks Legacy Grant – due September 26. Copies of the Parks and Recreation “Good News” newsletter were distributed.

## 10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Albright made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Schraepfer seconded, unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

## 11. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held 5 pm, Wednesday, September 10, at Central Hillside Center.

### MOTIONS

1. Commissioner Hall made a motion to accept the attached resolution that both celebrates those volunteers improving our parks, while also condemning the acts of destruction taking place within our parks. Commissioner Albright seconded; unanimous.
2. Commissioner Viken made a motion to support the Cross-Country Ski Master Plan. Commissioner Torch seconded; unanimous.
3. Commissioner Albright made a motion to accept the attached resolution of support for the Ordinance Amending Section 35-6 of the Duluth City Code, 1959, Related to Recreational Trails and Paths. Commissioner Braun seconded. The motion passed 9-1, Commissioner Viken voting against.