



PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2015

Central Hillside Center
12 E 4th St



1. Call to Order

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

2. Roll Call

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

NOT PRESENT: Commissioner Hall

3. Approval of Minutes

Commissioner Braun made a motion to approve the December meeting minutes. Commissioner Schraepfer seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Presentations

A. HANSI JOHNSON

1. Mr. Johnson, a Minnesota Land Trust employee, is working with the City of Duluth via an agreement approved by City Council. He provided an overview of his history and his work with the City. Mr. Johnson has previously worked for the International Mountain Bike Association. He is now helping coordinate and develop recreational planning in Duluth for select outdoor recreational activities.
2. Mr. Johnson shared four main focuses for his work
 - a) Create an inventory of overall outdoor recreation resources and generate a report.
 - b) Develop overall messaging of Duluth as an active outdoor City.
 - c) Generate outdoor tourism promotional content - working with local organizations, such as Visit Duluth, as well as national media, such as outdoor magazines.
 - d) Develop the "Duluth Model" for public-private partnerships to support trail development and outdoor recreation.
3. Commissioner Questions:
 - a) Commissioner Torch:
 - 1) How long is your engagement with the City? Three years total, six months into it.
 - 2) What do you see beyond the assessment? Developing pilot projects to implement the recommendations based on initial studies.
 - 3) Bright spots? The St Louis River Corridor's potential for active outdoor recreation.
 - b) Commissioner Viken: Are you working on paved trails?
 - 1) That's not on his list of focus activities and user groups.
 - c) Commissioner Albright:
 - 1) How long until the inventory is completed? That's the goal for this first year.
 - 2) Are just the user groups sharing input at this point? So far, the report is being generated by consultation with user groups, no public meetings yet.
 - d) Commissioner Viken: If the public has information or reports for consideration, how should they convey that?
 - 1) Connect with Jim Filby Williams

- e) Commissioner Schmidt: Neighborhood hikers often share frustrations of being overlooked. How are they being included?
 - 1) Including hikers can be a challenge because SHTA is a statewide organization that is focused on the entire trail and there is not a "Duluth Hiking Trail" or "Duluth Trail Running Club". There will be a public process they can join.
 - 4. Citizen Questions:
 - a) Jim Sharrow asked if water-based activities would be included.
 - 1) Paddlers are on the list of groups he is working with but sailing is not on the City's list
 - b) Mike Casey asked if he would work by neighborhood groups or just user groups.
 - 1) At this point just user groups are involved.
 - c) Denette Lynch questioned how previous studies and reports are being utilized.
 - 1) Some of the recent resources are being used but there are older documents that aren't relevant any more.
 - 5. Liaison Questions:
 - a) Councilor Sipress highlighted the challenge and importance of including citizens who don't identify themselves as members of a "user group" but use resources.
- B. DULUTH BOAT CLUB: Presentation by Jim Sharrow
- 1. Mr. Sharrow is the president of the Duluth Superior Sailing Association (DSSA).
 - a) The Duluth Boat Club collaborates with water-based clubs. Mr. Sharrow clarified that they are not the Duluth Rowing Club. The Duluth Boat Club is a 501(c)3 nonprofit that supports boating access and programming. They currently lease a site at 13th Street South and St. Louis Avenue for potential future development.
 - 2. The Duluth Yacht Club wants to finance development of the 13th Street South location.
 - a) Development would start with a 2,000 square foot building that could be expanded to about 4,500 square feet in phase two.
 - 3. There is also interest in developing the site at the end of Park Point on the bay side near the boat launch. The plan would create storage for dragon boats, increase the number of spots for docking DSSA sailboats, and improve facilities.
 - 4. Commissioner questions regarding 13th Street South.
 - a) Commissioner Viken asked why there isn't a boat launch.
 - 1) There are other community boat launches in this area. This site would serve a different purpose.
 - b) Commissioner Welles: Where is the nearest boat launch?
 - 1) Rice's Point and the end of Park Point.
 - c) Commissioner Schmidt asked if they had conversations with the Park Point Community Club yet.
 - 1) They are meeting with them tomorrow night. The plan was just developed this week.
 - d) Commissioner Schmidt wanted to know if there are concerns about the amount of pavement close to the water.
 - 1) The drawing shows a fully built site. They anticipate that a small portion of the plan will be built in the near future. It will meet all stormwater requirements no matter how much is built first. Plan includes rain gardens or other features to mitigate.

5. Liaison Questions Regarding 13th Street:
 - a) Councilor Sipress questioned what's happening in phase one.
 - 1) Construction of the building,
 - 2) Improvements of the grounds around the building, and
 - 3) One main access.
6. Commissioner questions regarding end of Park Point site:
 - a) Commissioner Torch: Does this plan fit within the Park Point small area plan?
 - 1) Ms. Bergen noted that the plan fits within the small area plan for Park Point, which is a broad view. The site is a "Tier One" site which is intended to have bathrooms, pavilions, more structures, etc.
 - b) Commissioner Holak asked for clarity on the issue of loss of public access. What's the need for the new turnaround?
 - 1) Turnaround already exists but it's not paved.
 - c) Commissioner Viken noted that the Commission will not be actually approving the plan, but rather is being asked to voice support for continuing planning.
 - d) Commissioner Dodge asked if all of the land was park land.
 - 1) Ms. Bergen stated all of the land is park land and it will remain park land. The organization will pay for all improvements and continue to lease the property.
7. Citizens questions regarding end of Park Point site.
 - a) Bill Lynch: Shared concerns that public access would be reduced at the Park Point site
 - 1) Jim Sharrow noted that some public docks will remain.

Commissioner Albright made a motion to table the Duluth Boat Club Proposal. Commissioner Torch seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

C. CROSS CITY TRAIL:

1. Matt Bolf from SEH shared an update that federal regulations tied to the Cross City Trail require that any impact on public park land has to be approved. Grant funding the City has acquired needs to be spent during 2015. Because of uncertainty over the route between Carlton Avenue and 63rd Avenue West, phases 3 and 4 will be constructed first.
2. The Cross City Trail has been completed through to Carlton Avenue.
3. Phase 3 runs from the Zoo to Spirit Mountain. Phase 4 runs from 63rd Avenue West to the Zoo.
4. The trail would be a bituminous paved surface.
5. Commissioner Questions:
 - a) Commissioner Albright asked about connections to the Munger Trail at the Zoo.
 - 1) This phase will just create a spur to the Zoo parking lot. Later phases will connect the trail under Grand Avenue.
 - b) Commissioner Viken asked about any displaced users?
 - 1) Ms. Bergen shared that the snowmobile trail would be moved slightly but this would not displace their use.

c) Commissioner Viken asked if the Spirit Mountain leadership or Board had weighed in on the development.

- 1) Mr. Bolf responded that all representatives from Spirit Mountain shared a desire to keep the trail as close to the Lower Chalet as possible.

Commissioner Torch made a motion to support the use of section 4(f) property by the Zoo for the Cross City Trail. Commissioner Albright seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Torch made a motion to support the use of section 4(f) property by Spirit Mountain for the Cross City Trail. Commissioner Holak seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-1 with Commissioner Viken voting against.

5. New Business

- A. Ms. Bergen noted that two Commissioners are leaving after serving two full terms (Braun and Viken) and three Commissioners (Welles, Crosby, Schraepfer) have terms that expire but are eligible to serve another term.

6. Old Business

A. NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

1. Commissioner Braun shared that there is a slate of candidates that have been nominated: Commissioner Hall as president, Commissioner Welles as vice president, and Commissioner Torch as secretary.
2. Commissioner Albright made a motion to accept this slate of candidates. Commissioner Braun seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

7. Public Comments

- A. Councilor Sipress shared an update on the Lakewalk Task Force that is studying options for the gap in the trail between 19th and 25th Avenues East.
 1. There will be a Committee of the Whole meeting of the City Council on January 26th at which the plan will be presented. Commissioners are invited.
- B. Citizen Bill Lynch shared frustrations that a potential dog park for Brighton Beach was not considered with the master plan but a Lakewalk extension is going through.
 1. Ms. Bergen asked to speak with Mr. Lynch at a later date to share a full overview.
- C. Denette Lynch asked that the community and especially members of the River Corridor Coalition be included in planning. They have been exploring potential trail routes and development of loops, and have been completing an inventory of parks to determine the need for amenities, such as benches and wayfinding signs.

8. Adjournment:

Commissioner Albright made a motion to adjourn, Commissioner Welles seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm.

9. Next meeting

The next meeting will be held 5 pm, Wednesday, February 11, 2015, at Central Hillside Center.

MOTIONS

1. Commissioner Albright made a motion to table the Duluth Boat Club Proposal. Commissioner Torch seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
2. Commissioner Torch made a motion to support the use of section 4(f) property by the Zoo for the Cross City Trail. Commissioner Albright seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
3. Commissioner Torch made a motion to support the use of section 4(f) property by Spirit Mountain for the Cross City Trail. Commissioner Holak seconded the motion. Motion passed 9-1 with Commissioner Viken voting against.
4. Commissioner Albright made a motion to accept this slate of candidates- Commissioner Hall as president, Commissioner Welles as vice president, and Commissioner Torch as secretary. Commissioner Braun seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.