



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting of September 11, 2013



Chairman Welles called the meeting to order at 5:10 PM at the Duluth Heights Community Recreation Center, 33 W. Mulberry Street, Duluth.

Members Present: Joel Braun, Erica Erickson, Edwin Hall, Andy Holak, Susan Beasy Latto, Michael Schraepfer, Eric Viken and Jon Welles

Member(s) Absent: Thomas Albright (Excused)

Also Attending: Emily Larson, City Council Liaison, Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Representative, Kathy Bergen, Parks and Recreation Division Manager and Judy Gibbs, Parks and Recreation Trails Coordinator.

The minutes for the meetings of June 12, July 10 and August 14, 2013 were approved by a unanimous vote.

PRESENTATIONS:

Purchase of Park Property near South 71st Avenue West

Peter Senich appeared before the Commission to request Park Commission approval for his purchase of excess City Park land at the Hunter/Markells Grassy Point Addition to Duluth/ Block 39/010-2420-09160, which is adjacent to his property.

Mr. Senich stated the lot was on the side of a wooded hillside and not buildable. He said he had no plans to develop this property, and would maintain it for the Western Waterfront Trail, which runs through his adjoining property and the subject City Park Property. If the Parks Commission were to recommend approval, the purchase proposal would go to the City to negotiate an appropriate agreement for the sale then to the City Planning Commission and ultimately to the City Council for final approval.

After extensive discussion, and upon motion made by Commissioner Braun, second by Commissioner Hall and a vote of 7 to 0 (The Chairman not voting), the following Resolution was approved by the Parks Commission:

“Resolved: The Parks Commission recommends the sale of excess City Park Property, designated as Lot 010-2420-09160 in the Hunter/Markells Grassy Point Addition to Duluth Block 39, to Peter Senich, subject to the establishment of an easement for the Western Waterfront Trail through the property, at a price to be determined by City staff, with the proceeds of the sale being allocated to appropriate designated Park Funds for use in the improvement and maintenance of the Western Waterfront Trail.”

COMMISSION COMMITTEES:

Trails and Bikeways: Commissioner Viken and Judy Gibbs updated the Commission on the work being done on the Duluth Traverse and other City Park trails in the Piedmont, Lester, Hartley, Brewer Park and Mission creek areas of the city.

Recreation Programming – Youth and Adult:

The Recreation Programming Committee will review recommendations for **Parks Commission Grants for Community Programs and Facilities** funded through the pull-tab tax and bring a proposal for action to the Commission at a later meeting. There is approximately \$24,000 available for these grants.

“These grants are a cooperative effort between the City of Duluth and the Parks and Recreation Commission. They are awarded as starter funds to foster and promote recreation programs, encourage the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, refurbishing, maintenance and operation of public recreation facilities and community recreation programs in the City of Duluth” (Press release 8/1/11)

COMMISSIONER AND LIAISON REPORTS:

Commissioner Braun reported that past parking issues raised by residents in the Washington Square Park area seemed to have been successfully resolved.

Commissioner Holak asked what might be done to enhance the recreational use of Park Point fields, which could be a premier area for tournaments and other organized recreational activities.

Kathy Bergen reported that the City is conducting an inventory of all fields in the city and will be developing a Master Plan for the use of City Park and School recreational fields, which will be submitted to the Commission for its review and approval.

Commissioner Erickson indicated that individuals associated with People with Disabilities for Change had asked whether there was an available inventory of park equipment that could be used for children with disabilities, particularly those in wheelchairs. Kathy Bergen indicated she thought the Parks Maintenance Department had information related to these issues, and would look into ways to make this type of information available to the public.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Erickson, Kathy Bergen indicated that individuals could submit proposals for the acquisition of park equipment to be used by individuals with disabilities from the Parks Fund Community Grants.

NEW BUSINESS:

Electric Bikes on Trails

After discussion, it was decided that the Bikes and Trails Committee would look into the issue of the use of electric bikes on city trails, and report back to the Commission their findings and recommendations at a later date.

OLD BUSINESS:

Commission Committee Membership and Chairs:

Commissioner Schraepfer was appointed to the Parks and Facilities Committee.

Commissioner Holak was appointed to be Chair of the Trails and Bikeways Committee.

Commissioner Erickson was appointed to be Chair of the Recreation Programming - Youth and Adult Committee

Park Point Small Area Plan Committee:

Chairman Wells volunteered to serve as the Parks Commission Representative on the Park Point Small Area Plan Committee on an interim basis.

Mini-Master Plan for Irving Park:

There had been a presentation of proposals for the Irving Park Mini Master Plan at the August 14 meeting of the Commission. After extended discussion of new cost estimates for the two options (Plan A and Plan B) under consideration, upon motion by Commissioner Holak, and second by Commissioner Beasy Latto, the Commission unanimously voted to table this issue for consideration at a future meeting when more information would be available.

Purchase of Park Property near Natchez Street by the Opack family:

Kathy Bergen informed the Commission that the Parks Commission at its December 18, 2010 meeting had approved this sale. Copies of the minutes of that meeting were made available, and are included as an attachment to the minutes of the August meeting. No further action needed to be taken by the Commission with respect to this issue.

Update on Central High School Trail Easement.

Judy Gibbs updated the Commission on the status of a future trail easement through the old Central High School property. As there was no action that needed to be taken at this time, upon motion by Commissioner Beasy

Latto and second by Commissioner Holak, the Commission unanimously voted to table further consideration of this issue until a future meeting.

DIVISION MANAGER'S REPORT:

The September 2013 **Good News from Parks and Recreation** was distributed to the Commission.

Kathy Bergen discussed aspects of the 2014 budget, which was still under review by the City. The overall Parks Budget will total \$2.6 million, the same as last year. The specific breakdown of the budget will be submitted to members of the Commission when available and discussed at a future meeting of the Commission.

Kathy Bergen informed the Commission of a new State law that identified the specific recipients of funds from one half of the funds available in 2014 from the Minnesota Legacy Fund, with the other half available for competitive grant applications made to the State Legacy Fund. The overall criteria for approval of Minnesota Legacy Fund Grants requires that an application must involve parks and trails of regional significance, which are nature based. Grant applications to be submitted by the City of Duluth this year will be discussed at the next meeting of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT/SPEAKERS:

There were no additional public comments or speakers beyond those received during the discussion of the matters on the Agenda above.

ADJORNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 PM, on motion of Commissioner Braun, second by Commissioner Holak, and a unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Edwin K. Hall, Secretary