



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of May 9, 2018

City Hall – Council Chambers  
411 W 1<sup>st</sup> St



## I. Call Meeting to Order

President Torch called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

## II. Roll Call

Present: Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer, Dennis Isernhagen, Britt Rohrbaugh, Kristin Bergerson, John Schmidt

Not present: Dudley Edmondson, Dean Vogtman, Em Westerlund (City Council Liaison), David Kirby (ISD 709 School Board Liaison), Frank Jewell (St. Louis County Board Liaison)

## III. Approval of March 14<sup>th</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of the March 14<sup>th</sup> and April 11<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Isernhagen. Unanimously approved.

## IV. Presentations

- A. Duluth Natural Areas Program (Informational) – Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator

Roche: Introduced Diane Desotelle, City of Duluth Natural Resources Coordinator. Presented overview of the Duluth Natural Areas Program (DNAP) and the role Parks Commissioners will have with this program in the future. Mentioned the program is a work in progress, updates with the current ordinance need to take place.

Desotelle: Stated the purpose of the Natural Resources Coordinator position is to sustain and improve the City's public lands. Mentioned the goals of the work being done to assess the lands both ecologically and environmentally. Mentioned this position would also nominate future areas that fall within the guidelines of the DNAP. Mentioned the history with the involvement with protecting and preserving Duluth's natural areas. Stated the economic and health benefits of our natural areas.

Desotelle: Mentioned the DNAP was adopted back in 2002 by city ordinance. Stated the purpose and benefits the DNAP program would provide. Mentioned City Council would need to formally approve DNAP nominations, but this is only complete once the real estate transactions are final and if the management plan is approved. Mentioned the different levels of land protection the DNAP would hold. Mentioned the differences between land being designated as a park vs. land adopted by the DNAP. Stated Magney Snively is the only area currently under the DNAP.

Desotelle: Stated Hartley is currently in the process of being nominated under the DNAP. Mentioned the timeline and public involvement of the process of this project.

Torch: Thanked Desotelle for the presentation. Opened the floor for questions from the commission.



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Schmidt: Questioned if nominations were coming from stakeholder groups or within the city government.

Desotelle: Stated it was internal with most lands being city owned or tax-fortified. Mentioned as the program gets more outreach, adjacent landowners may be interested with the DNAP.

Schmidt: Questioned if there would be future involvement with stakeholder groups.

Desotelle: Stated that feedback is needed by stakeholder groups. Mentioned the importance of knowing the science of a natural area and preserving our natural heritage.

Torch: Questioned what the difference between park designation and a DNAP designation.

Desotelle: Stated parks have been designated by ordinance, therefore it takes a supermajority vote to de-designate the park land. Mentioned the different types of land use that occur on park land. Stated that DNAP is for natural preservation and protection of lands.

Torch: Mentioned the limited trails at Magney Snively. Questioned how the management plan support or conflict with the mini master plan at Hartley.

Desotelle: Stated there would be a balance in management with Hartley due to the type of use it receives.

Roche: Mentioned there is no intention to not follow the mini-master plan. Mentioned The DNAP would be much harder to amend than a mini master plan.

Torch: Questioned who would develop the Hartley management plan.

Desotelle: Stated Hartley would partner with the City of Duluth to develop the management plan.

Torch: Questioned if the county has been engaged with the tax forfeit land along the St. Louis River.

Desotelle: Confirmed there will be engagement with the county the St. Louis River area, however, the process is still at beginning phases.

Torch: Encouraged to reach out to the county.

Breeuwer: Requested to have other types of land designations to be defined.

Roche: Stated this refers to zoning rather than a designation. Mentioned having a parks designation would be the most impactful because it requires a super majority to alter.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions. No questions asked. Welcomed Diane Desotelle to the City.



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B. Memorial Park Memorial Update (Informational) – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Roche: Mentioned Memorial Park has held a WWI Memorial for over 90 years. Stated the current condition of the memorial. Stated the budget of the redesign of the WWI Memorial being \$41,000. Mentioned the need for a new master plan for the park.

Roche: Stated the stakeholder involvement with the planning process. Mentioned the public process timeline including two public meetings and a survey. Stated that on May 18<sup>th</sup> voting will begin based on concepts. Stated voting would end June 13<sup>th</sup> would have Parks Commission approval. Shared the location for the new memorial. Stated the area was defined in a previous master plan for the placement of the new memorial.

Roche: Shared the results from the survey. Mentioned the majority of individuals want to honor all 167 Duluthian's who lost their lives during WWI. Stated the use of native materials would like to be recognized, however, it should not sacrifice the design budget wise. Mentioned the community and stakeholders would like to see trees memorialized. Stated the importance of flags, mentioned the research of alternatives for properly lighting the flags. Stated the addition of flags can be implemented at a later time.

Roche: Shared a design created by a member of the public, mentioned that it doesn't serve the need because of lack of space in recognizing all 167 soldiers lost. Mentioned the potential of having a wall to provide solitude.

Torch: Opened the floor for commissioners to ask questions. No questions were asked.

C. Grand Avenue Nordic Center – 2018 Project (Informational) – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Roche: Stated the purpose of the Grand Avenue Nordic Trails project. Stated the timeline of the project and mentioned the cost of the project being \$3.2 million dollars. Stated the connector trail would not be part of Phase 1. The following indicates the breakdown for funding.

	Phase I 2018	Phase II 2019 (tentative)	Phase III 2020 (tentative)	Totals
<b>City</b>	\$1,000,000	\$250,000		\$1,250,000
<b>Private</b>	\$750,000	\$150,000		\$900,000
<b>Federal</b>	\$150,000	\$150,000		\$300,000
<b>State</b>		\$200,000	\$550,000	\$750,000
<b>Totals</b>	\$1,900,000	\$750,000	\$550,000	\$3,200,000

Roche: Stated community concerns regarding the placement of the trails and the buffer. Stated the public process involved input regarding the buffer as well as the Grand Avenue North Nordic Ski Trail



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placement. Mentioned the concerns from residents related to trail placement. Mentioned the Environmental Assessment regarding noise and light pollution. Stated the hours of operation for trail maintenance activities and the type of equipment that will be used. Mentioned the groomer will have a “white noise” rather than beeping-this allows to better locate where the sound is coming from. Mentioned the hours that the lights will be used. Stated there will be zero light trespass for the adjacent homes.

Roche: Mentioned rescinding the buffer and changing the area as P-1 (Park Zone). Stated the Mayor will be creating a resolution that will protect the neighbors from future development near their homes. Stated the timeframe of the project.

- May 14: All necessary resolutions go to council
- May: Pending successful passing of resolutions, constructions contract is executed
- May: Wetland credits filed
- June: Preliminary clearing begins
- August: General construction begins
- November: Phase 1 completion

Isernhagen: Commended Duluth Cross Country (DXC) for their fundraising efforts. Questioned the plan for long term maintenance.

Roche: Stated maintenance operations will fall under Spirit Mountain. Mentioned a partnership with DXC in providing help with low end maintenance.

Schmidt: Questioned if there was a potential shortage in the estimate.

Roche: Stated the base bid was affordable.

Schmidt: Questioned if there is a plan to continue communication with the neighbors if they have concerns in the future.

Roche: Stated we have responsibility to our community and neighbors. Mentioned meeting with Spirit Mountains Director.

Schmidt: Stated the model of DXC’s involvement as being incredible.

Crosby: Questioned if there would be a cost to ski on the trails.

Roche: Confirmed there would be a cost to ski on the trails.

Torch: Welcomed Chad Salmela and congratulated DXC for their successful fundraising efforts.

Chad Salmela (public): Stated DXC will continue with fundraising efforts. Mentioned the snowmaking window will be a ten-day process. Mentioned the grooming will occur once a day, and will pass the homes in a short amount of time. Stated the DXC is committed to the programming at Spirit Mountain; creating opportunities for kids of all ages and to be healthy. Mentioned Spirit Mountain



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provides amenities for trails that no other trails in Duluth provide.

Torch: Thanked Chad Salmela and opened the floor for questions from the commissioners.

Chad Salmela (public): Mentioned the potential to be an elite skiing area. Mentioned Gary Larson is involved with the design of the trail. Mentioned it will not be a homologated race course. Stated the similarities with the Hartley trail system. Mentioned the likelihood of heavy use, but trails will be wide to also include a skate lane. Mentioned the ease of use when navigating the trails.

Chad: Thanked the City for their support, stated his excitement with the project.

- D. 2018 Spring Grant Awards (action requested) – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Roche: Summarized the recommended approval of the Grant Selection Committee for the Spring 2017 Parks Fund Grants as follows

- Chester Bowl Improvement Club – Purchase of ski and snowboard equipment – \$3,000
- Hartley Nature Center – Purchase of benches and critter proof trash receptacle – \$5,000
- Riverside Community Club – Purchase of benches, grills and picnic tables - \$5,000
- Local Initiatives Support Corporations – Support for Movies in the Park 2018 - \$5,000
- Autism Society of Minnesota – Northland Adventure Social Skills classes - \$1,000
- Wheels on Trails – Four outdoor events at Duluth Parks - \$5,000
- Congdon Park Recreation Association – Installation of player box - \$5,000
- Duluth Area Horse Trail Alliance – Purchase/install two mounting blocks on Ely's Peak horse trail - \$1,000
- Courage Kenny Foundation – Boardwalk repairs and hooyer lift purchase - \$5,000
- Duluth Cross-Country Ski Club – Lester-Amity Chalet Improvements - \$5,000
- Neighbors of Lower Chester Park – Playground purchase - \$5,000
- Woodland Amateur Hockey Association – Construction of enclosed penalty boxes - \$5,000

David Johnson (public): Thanked the group for selection for the Lester Amity Chalet. Stated an appreciation for the City for being a partner over the years. Mentioned the process to bring the chalet back to life for Nordic skiing. Mentioned the upgraded amenities for the chalet. Stated the high use of the building for permit rentals.

Schmidt: Motioned to approve the grants as selected.

**Motion/Second:** Isernhagen to approve the \$50,000 for Spring 2018 grant funding as recommended by the Selection Committee. Unanimously approved.

Schmidt: Encouraged commissioners to visit the Lester Amity chalet.

Breeuwer: Thanked the groups for all the volunteer efforts.

## V. Commission Committees



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- A. Administrative (E-board) – meeting date: Thursday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> at noon at the Parks office  
Chair – Erik Torch – Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer [William Roche]
- B. Golf Committee – meeting date: May 1, Chair – Erik Torch, Dennis Isernhagen

Roche: Stated the search to onboard a consultant is in the making for potential solutions and to review the information at hand for golf opportunities.

### VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Schmidt: Questioned the progress on the commercial use permit on park land. Requested a review on the policy and updates.

Roche: Stated we are moving forward with a commercial use permit. Mentioned the history of the development of the commercial use permit, but it was not the right tool. Mentioned the withdraw of the permit presented, more discussion needs to take place. Mentioned the previous invites made to stakeholders to provide input in developing the commercial use permit.

Schmidt: Mentioned the comments made during the Annual Meeting regarding dog issues. Suggested putting this item on the Parks Commission agenda.

Roche: Stated the current engagement with the dog issues. Mentioned the efforts being made to confirm designated off leash dog trails. Stated research is being done, and suggested a public campaign for pet owners.

Schmidt: Stated the commission could offer help with this campaign.

Roche: Mentioned he was stated the research being done, and the work that will be done in the future.

Schmidt: Mentioned the lack of bathroom facilities along Park Point. Suggested to partner with others to help our visitors with bathroom access. Suggested having our partners, such as the Army Corps of Engineers to be involved.

Roche: Stated the importance of having our partners involved. Requested Schoonover to make a note.

Crosby: Requested an example for a commercial use permit on park land.

Roche: Mentioned commercial use on a park land would include designating a space for an activity such as yoga. Mentioned that we are completing research, a draft is being created.

### IX. New Business

Torch: Mentioned updates on the discussion for the communication process between Parks



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Commission and the City Council. Stated the plans to create a committee involving a couple of Parks Commissioners, Em Westerlund, and a City Councilor.

### X. Old Business

### XI. Division Manager's Report

Roche: Stated he would be available for questions regarding the Division Report.

Schmidt: Requested an update on the Lakewalk from the previous storm damage.

Roche: Mentioned we are applying for grant application for recovery. Mentioned the first damage assessment was difficult to review due to the amount of ice covering the damage. Stated it is difficult to assess what was regular erosion and what erosion was caused by the previous storms. Stated assessments are still being made to determine what repairs will be needed and what we will qualify for grants.

Torch: Congratulated Lisa Loukkala and Jim Shoberg on becoming Senior Parks Planners.

Roche: Stated the Mayor has forwarded a resolution to City Council for the appointments for the Parks Commission. Stated Jill Joyce – District 4, will formally have a resolution to City Council on May 29<sup>th</sup>. Stated pending approval from City Council, Jill will participate at the meeting in June. Stated the review for the Land Management Specialty is still in progress.

### XII. Public Comment

Bill Lynch (public): Mentioned his involvement with the Howling of Wolves group. Mentioned the surprise of lack of laws regarding traps or snares on city land. Mentioned that it is legal to put traps anywhere on public land unless it is posted as no trespassing. Stated he has talked with Animal Control, and the information was confirmed. Expressed concern with safety for pets and children. Requested the City to create a resolution that would ban snares and traps on city public land.

Torch: Thanked Bill Lynch for providing the information. Stated he would like to dive deeper to become fully informed on the issue. Requested Schoonover to include this for the next E-Board meeting.

Roche: Stated the City Attorney would need to review to find out if snare and trapping is a permissible activity.

Isernhagen: Thanked Bill Lynch for addressing the concern. Stated the annual deer hunt within the City is done by bow and arrow only.

Torch: Thanked Billy Lynch for bringing up the concern.

Denette Lynch (public): Stated an appreciation for the Division Report. Stated the 2008 resolution



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designated 3 off leash dog area along with the police training academy if it were fenced. Mentioned the 2016 Mini-Master Plan at Quarry Park would also be a designated off leash dog area. Requested an update for filling the vacant positions within Parks and Recreation. Questioned how the hoyer lift would be used in the Courage Kenny Foundation grant request. Questioned if the public would be involved with the Quarry Park trail construction meetings. Stated the parking lot at Quarry is receiving high use. Stated there has not been community input for the construction going on at Keene.

Roche: Stated the Education and Experience Review for the Assistant Manager position review has occurred. Stated 106 applications were received and interviews will be taking place in the next couple of weeks. Mentioned 14 applicants will be moving forward in the interview process. Wished Andy Holak, Trails Coordinator good luck with his next endeavor. Stated the Trails Coordinator onboarding process would not begin November or December due to the upcoming busy time of year.

Denette Lynch (public): Requested an update with the Administrative Information Specialist position.

Roche: Stated a reassessment and definition of the position is occurring. Stated Administrative Information Specialist position would not be going away.

Denette Lynch (public): Questioned the use of the hoyer lift.

Roche: Stated the hoyer lift would aide with accessibility into canoes and kayaks.

Denette Lynch (public): Mentioned the inaccuracy of information regarding Quarry Park being a designated off leash dog park.

Roche: Stated Quarry Park is not to be an off leash dog park.

Denette Lynch (public): Stated the information being false.

Roche: Stated this was the information he was given.

Denette Lynch (public): Questioned the public process of Keene Creek construction.

Roche: Requested Jessica Schoonover to make a note to contact Lisa Luokkala. Stated there is a timeline to spend CBGD money, mentioned the need to follow up with Luokkala.

Mike Casey (public): Requested having a link of the Division Report on the website. Requested updates on the Cross City Trail. Stated an appreciation to meet for the alignment of the Cross City Trail and the opportunity to make recommendations. Stated the importance of follow-ups with stakeholders giving input.

Torch: Invited the group to attend Duluth Parks Day on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Mentioned Morgan Park will be offering disc golf, Lester Park will have hiking activities, and Bayfront will have kite flying opportunities.





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### XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:59 pm. Moved by Commissioner Torch. Second by Commissioner Schmidt.

### XIV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday June 13, 2018 at City Hall – Council Chambers.