



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of April 17, 2019
Parks & Recreation Annual Meeting

Spirit Mountain – Grand Avenue Chalet
8551 Grand Avenue



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Welcome/Opening Remarks

President Crosby welcomed the Parks and Recreation Commission, Parks and Recreation staff, and guests to the 2019 Parks and Recreation Annual Meeting. Reflected on the theme of the night being, “Program Your Park – Reimagining Duluth Recreation.”

III. Recognition of Outgoing Parks and Recreation Commissioners

President Crosby introduced each Parks and Recreation Commissioner. Recognized the two retiring commissioners, Dean Vogtman and John Schmidt. Both Vogtman and Schmidt served from September 2016-March 2019. John Schmidt served as the President during the 2017 year, as well as the At-Large seat. Dean Vogtman served his time as the District 5 seat.

IV. Welcome New Parks and Recreation Commissioners

Crosby welcomed our two new commissioners, Jenny Peterson for the At Large seat and David Demmer who holds the Land Management seat.

V. Keynote Speaker – Mayor Emily Larson

Mayor Emily Larson reflected on the importance of park space, and the many individuals who hold passion towards our greenspace. Thanked the Parks and Recreation Commission for their dedication, as well as the City Council Liaison, Em Westerlund. Highlighted a recent article from the New York Times, which reflects that individuals look for homes related to climate events. Stated the Imagine Duluth 2035 Plan highlights the importance of green space. Thanked the partner organizations for extending the City's ability to provide social connections to those in the community. Indicated it is the City's task to ensure opportunities are available. Shared the importance of the Women Hike Duluth Program, which provides information on where to park, meet, as well as the opportunity to share friendships. Shared the deep connection people have towards Duluth, even from those who do not live in the area.

VI. Introduction of the Parks and Recreation Manager

Crosby introduced the new Parks and Recreation Manager, Jessica Peterson. Jessica Peterson introduced the Parks and Recreation Staff. Shared her excitement to be part of the team, and thanked Park Maintenance for working closely with Parks and Recreation, and for being a valuable asset.



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VII. Recognition of Volunteers

Volunteer Coordinator, Cheryl Skafte highlighted the importance of the City's volunteer program. Introduced Dick Gould, a routine volunteer for Park Point. Dick shared that he refills the mutt mitt bags for dog waste, and the importance of keeping Lake Superior clean.

VIII. Public Comment

Mel Heinrich (public): Questioned if there would be accessibility updates to the community centers.

Mayor Emily Larson: Stated Ron is referring to the referendum, shared a facilities plan will be given for the future of the community centers. Indicated she will provide more information to Mel regarding the facilities plan.

Dwight Morris (public): Stated 10-20% of our population has disabilities. Indicated he would like to see more accessible opportunities provided.

President Crosby: Indicated that new designs are now including accessible components. Reflected on the importance of providing accessible options.

Jean (public): Reflected on the Memorial, Irving, and Riverside community centers being torn, and Merritt next to be removed. Questioned what amenities are available for kids in the area.

Mayor Emily Larson: Indicated that there is a potential opportunity to partner with an organization to provide community center space.

Mike (public): Stated he appreciated Dwight Morris's comments regarding accessibility. Shared the appreciation had with the Duluth Poop Fairy Campaign.

Mel Heinrich (public) Requested an update on Lincoln Park. Questioned if Parks and Recreation has looked into foundations as potential sources of funding for other park upgrades around the City.

Lisa Luukkala: Indicated the permitting process for Lincoln Park is currently taking place. Stated the Mini Master Plan for Lincoln Park was completed in 2016, but additional funding sources were awarded, which allowed for more amenities to take place. Stated the goal is to have the project out to bid this year.

Rose (public): Questioned why Keene Creek Park is listed as pending funding.

Brian Roristrom (public): Indicated he represents the Duluth Area Pickleball. Shared pickleball has grown in popularity. Mentioned he is looking forward to having more conversations with the Parks



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and Recreation Division to look at providing more court opportunities for this activity.

Mike Casey (public): Thanked John Schmidt for volunteering his time as a Parks Commissioner. Reflected on the long meetings had that John Schmidt lead. Shared the Council Chamber is not an open space for public comment for commission meetings. Stated he would like to see building rentals go back to how it used to be and that it has been difficult to find space. Shared the financial challenge to obtain a space.

Public: Requested information for the future of Duluth Heights Community Club.

Lisa Luukkala: Stated a Master Plan for our entire park system will occur 2020. Stated the Duluth Heights Community Center is currently closed until further assessment.

Commissioner Breeuwer: Encouraged the public to sign up for the Parks and Recreation email subscription list. Encouraged everyone to connect with the Parks Commission and attend the Parks and Recreation Commission Meetings.

James Crosby (public): Stated Parks and Recreation should look into providing meeting information on various platforms.

Denette Lynch (public): Shared the email subscription provides the agenda for the Parks and Recreation Commission Meetings. Stated the agendas provide beneficial information on what will be discussed.

Mike Casey (public): Requested an update on the Cross City Trail in regards of the segment two portion.

Lisa Luukkala: Shared the Cross City Trail will continue to Irving Park as well as connecting to the Grassy Point Trail. Stated Parks and Recreation staff are waiting on one more land owner to finalize the agreement. Indicated that once the agreement is finalized, it will go to City Council. Shared a public informational meeting will be taking place in the future.

Mike Casey (public): Indicated that he represents the Friends of West Duluth Parks and Trails and they have been active with working on the Cross City Trail project.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

XIV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 8th, 2019 at the City Hall in Room 303.
