



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**Meeting Minutes February 14, 2024**  
**Harrison Community Center**



**I. Call Meeting to Order**

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

**II. Roll Call**

Present: Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Tjaard Breeuwer, Dave Cizmas, Terrance Lovejoy, Josie LaPorte, Ashley Grimm – St. Louis County Commissioner

Not Present: Sarah Beehler, Hailey Sigafus, Azrin Awal – City Council Liaison, Stephanie Williams – ISD 709 School Board Liaison

**III. Approval of the December 13 Meeting Minutes**

**Commissioner Pedersen motioned to approve the December 13 meeting minutes. Commissioner Demmer second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.**

**IV. Old Business**

**Commissioner Breeuwer motioned to amend the order of the agenda. Commissioner Cizmas second. Unanimously approved.**

A. E-Board Election (Action Requested)

Crosby nominated Demmer as President and Pedersen as Vice President.

**Crosby motioned to approve Demmer as President and Pedersen as Vice President. Lovejoy second.**

Demmer questioned how things would change if the secretary seat remains vacant. Crosby stated that the E-Board could operate as normal, with Vice President taking roll call. Stated that E-Board meetings can continue even if only one officer is in attendance, as no decisions are being made.

**Motion to approve nominated officers. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.**

**V. Presentations**

A. Duluth Friends of Tennis (Informational) Meghan Kimber and Willie Paul

Lovejoy questioned if seasons are ever stretched out due to weather. Kimber stated that the regular clubhouse hours are concrete Memorial Day and Labor Day, however high school seasons run outside of those months.

Lovejoy questioned if tennis rackets and equipment is provided or if people have to bring their own. Paul stated that there are extra rackets and balls available at the clubhouse for people to use if they ask. Stated that they have pickleball supplies available as well.

Demmer questioned if the programming is a regional draw, or if there is a lack of courts in the area. Paul stated that it is a mixture of both. Stated that there are tennis courts in other communities, but Longview is at a higher facility standard than other courts. Stated that the quality of coaching is a draw as well. Stated that they have coaching available for beginner up to advanced levels of tennis. Stated that having 6 courts can host a lot of matches at once.



## PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes February 14, 2024

#### Harrison Community Center



Demmer questioned if there are indoor tennis courts in Duluth. Kimber stated that there is one, Duluth Indoor Sports Center, but the facility will likely move away from tennis.

Demmer questioned if there are outdoor lights at the facility. Paul stated that there are not currently, but there used to be, when the facility was a combination hockey/tennis facility.

LaPorte questioned how they track facility use. Kimber stated that registration for programming is primarily how they track numbers. Stated that they track membership and permanent court time as well. Stated that they do not track every single person. Stated that teams bring a number of people to the courts.

LaPorte questioned how people find out about Longview. Kimber stated that they have a website and FB page, but otherwise word is spread by word of mouth.

LaPorte questioned if there are other groups who are committed to continuing the legacy of Longview. Paul stated that the board members are dedicated to the continuing work. Stated that they are thinking about how to bring more people on board.

Lovejoy questioned what the parking looks like. Kimber stated that parking is an issue as there is no parking lot. Stated that you can park on 4<sup>th</sup> St, as well as into the neighborhoods.

LaPorte questioned if the Holy Rosary lot is ever used. Kimber stated that it is possible that the lot is used, especially during tournaments.

#### B. 2024 Capital Budget (Informational) Jessica Peterson, Manager

Breeuwer questioned how far along are we in the Facility Condition Index inventory and database. Manager Peterson stated that each year the inventory continues to be populated. Stated that there are two concurrent strategies: one populating the backlog of old facilities; the other populating new or renewed facilities into the system.

Demmer questioned why the metric of 0.6 is the metric used by the City of Duluth, when 0.6 is higher than industry standard. Manager Peterson stated that we simply do not have enough money to reach a higher standard. Stated that it would be self-defeating to reach for a higher standard than is possible.

Demmer questioned if the dollar amount in last year's referendum would have gotten the park system to the 0.6 metric and stabilize there. Manager Peterson stated that the referendum would have begun the process, but it was only one of the necessary tools to improve the facility and maintenance quality of the park system.

Demmer questioned if the general public can see this information. Manager Peterson stated that all Council and Commission presentations are made publicly available.

LaPorte questioned what the City looks at when comparing to other comparable Minnesota cities. Manager Peterson stated that the most common comparison is the metro area, which is not a fair comparison due to geography and population. Stated that one of the challenges is that Duluth Parks are funded by property taxes, and property values in Duluth are much lower than in the metro area.

#### C. Spirit Valley Community Center (Informational) Jessica Peterson, Manager

Lovejoy questioned if the community expressed a preference for the senior center staying with the wellness



## PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

### Meeting Minutes February 14, 2024

#### Harrison Community Center



center. Manager Peterson stated that the components of this facility are the product of community conversations as well as fitting into funding opportunities which have criteria for types of services offered by the facility. Stated that the details of the wellness center will continue to be worked out.

LaPorte questioned if childcare would be a part of this project. Manager Peterson stated that childcare has been a consideration for this project. Stated that this would require specific design elements which would not fit into the project as a whole. Stated that what is needed to make that possible may not be compatible with the rest of the facility and that it is not currently at this level of design integration. Stated that there may be sites in the future that could be considered. Councilor Kennedy stated that she is not giving up on the childcare option. County Commissioner Grimm stated that there is a childcare provider that is interested in this project.

LaPorte questioned if the YMCA, Essentia have been involved. Councilor Kennedy stated that both organizations are at the table of these conversations, along with many others.

LaPorte questioned if there are any cultural partners involved in this project. Meyer stated that so far there has not been, but they could become involved in the future. Manager Peterson stated that Health Equity Northland is involved as a health care provider for folks who are underrepresented. Stated that the facility will be a combination of tenants and routine users, which could include other groups than are currently listed as partner organizations. Stated that there will be ongoing conversations in a public format for the next few years as the design work continues, inviting more voices to the table.

Cizmas questioned if other facilities would be closed as a part of this process. Manager Peterson stated that the facility inventory is always being reassessed. Stated the first step is consolidating programming services from Evergreen and Washington Center. Stated that the other programs and services will be reviewed for community center use, operation, and so on to find ways to reinvest into the Spirit Valley Community Center.

Demmer questioned if there is a DTA spot nearby this location. Meyer stated that there has been some conversations about providing a transportation hub at this location as well.

Demmer questioned if active transportation has been considered. Meyer stated that there have not been conversations on this topic yet. Councilor Kennedy stated that there is a need for funding for transportation.

Demmer questioned what happens if the funding from the state falls through. Manager Peterson stated that at that point, the project scope and/or timeline would need to be reevaluated. Stated that there is no way to know for sure how things will turn out from this legislative session. Meyer stated that there is the potential for private sponsorships as well.

#### VI. Commissioner Committees

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Friday, March 8 at 1:30pm, Portman Community Center  
David Demmer, Kala Pedersen [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

#### VII. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Commissioner Pedersen shared that the Indoor Athletics Task Force meets next on February 28.

#### VIII. New Business

#### IX. Division Report



**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION**  
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Manager Peterson added an item to the division report regarding the selection committee for bands for the concert series in the summer.

**X. Public Comment**

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:13 pm.

**XII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 13 at 5:00 p.m., Harrison Community Center.