

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes

Meeting of March 13, 2013

Chairman Welles called the meeting to order at 5:06 PM in the Central Hillside Community Center.

Members Present: Thomas Beery, Joel Braun, Erica Erickson, Karen Erickson, Edwin Hall, Andy Holak, Susan Latto, Kristen Ridgewell, Barbara Stark, and Jon Welles

Member(s) Excused: Eric Viken

Also Attending: Frank Jewell, St. Louis County Liaison, Art Johnston, Duluth City School Board Liaison, Emily Larson, City Council Liaison, and Kathy Bergen, Parks and Recreation Division Manager.

The minutes for the meeting of February 13, 2013 were approved, with edits that had been suggested by Erik Viken , on motion of Erica Erickson, second by Susan Latto and a unanimous vote.

PRESENTATIONS:

Recognition of Outgoing Members: Chairman Welles thanked Karen Erickson, Kristen Ridgewell and Barbara Stark for their dedicated service as Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Kathy Bergen presented each of them with plaques, recognizing their outstanding service to the Commission and the City of Duluth: Karen Erickson having served two 6 year terms, Kristen Ridgewell six years and Barbara Stark 9 years as Commissionioners.

Update on the Status of the Duluth Traverse Project:

This agenda item was postponed until a future meeting.

COMMISSION COMMITTEES:

Parks and Facilities: Commissioner Braun reported that the committee planned to meet in the near future.

Administrative (E-Board): Chairman Welles reported the E- Board had met to discuss the agenda for the April 3, 2013 Annual Meeting.

Trails and Bikeways: Commissioner Beery indicated the committee had not met, but members of the committee were active with other organizations working on trails and bikeways issues.

Recreation Programming – Youth and Adult:

Commissioner Ridgewell reported that this committee would meet to discuss and recommend plans for announcing the availability of **Parks Commission Grants for Community Programs and Facilities** funded through the pull-tab tax. There is approximately \$20,000 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)

It was noted that these Community Programs and Facilities Grants are separate from, and in addition to, the **Parks Fund Neighborhood Grants Program**, which was established to provide funding for neighborhood-based parks enhancements and recreation services on Duluth’s parks, recreation, and trails system. (See Community Parks and Recreation Programs Guidelines.) There is currently \$86,000 available for Parks Fund Neighborhood Grants, with an April 1, 2013 deadline for submission of applications.

COMMISSIONER AND LIAISON REPORTS:

Commissioner Beery reported on the Park Point Small Area Management Plan meetings. A Public Meeting is scheduled for March 26 at the Lafayette Community Center. He also reported that an effort is underway to identify existing easements and access points to public park space and the water along Park Point. Frank Jewell indicated there was a long history, and related court cases in the late 1980's, which clarified many of these easements and should be helpful to these current efforts.

Commissioner Beery also reported that conversations are continuing with School Board Members regarding the interest in having easements for the Duluth Traverse trail over the old Central High School property, as well as possible future easements for the City of Duluth trails system over other School Board property. Frank Jewell indicated there also needs to be more ongoing communications with St Louis County officials regarding City of Duluth trails, such as the Duluth Traverse, that would pass over county and tax forfeited land.

Commissioner Ridgewell reported that plans are proceeding to designate a portion of the Keene Creek Park as an additional area for small off-leash dogs. The Dog Parks' Fund, and the Parks Fund Neighborhood Grants would be available sources of funds for these improvements.

Commissioner Erika Erickson reported that the Commission on Disability wanted to formally thank the Parks and Recreation Department for its work to make the City's parks more accessible.

NEW BUSINESS:

Resolution Requesting the Parks and Recreation Commission Review Possible Locations for Additional Dog Parks in Central and Eastern Duluth (City of Duluth Resolution 13-01011R, Sponsored by Councilman Dan Hartman, and approved by the City Council on March 11, 2013.)

Chairman Welles read the Resolution, the text of which was incorporated as part of the minutes of this meeting. Commissioners Braun and Latto indicated they had conversations with Councilor Hartman regarding the resolution, and his desire to have the Parks Commission review prior reports on these issues and make appropriate recommendations to the City Council.

Commissioners Braun, Latto and Welles were appointed to a Dog Parks Task Force to review these issues and report back to the Commission with recommendations for action.

Members of the public, Nicole Smith, Denette Lynch and David Ross, all spoke in favor of additional dog parks in the city. Each of them volunteered to serve on the Dog Parks Task Force.

OLD BUSINESS:

The Agenda for 2013 Annual Meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission was discussed and approved. The Annual meeting is set for 5 pm on April 3, 2013 at the City of Duluth Public Safety Building.

DIVISION MANAGER'S REPORT:

Kathy Bergen distributed the March 2013 Good News from Parks and Recreation, Discussion of the 2013 Budget and Proposed Capital Projects was deferred until the April 3 Annual Meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT/SPEAKERS:

Denette Lynch addressed the lack of communication she experienced regarding the availability of the Parks Fund Community Grants. Kathy Bergen and Commissioner Ridgewell responded to her concerns, and met with her regarding these issues after the meeting adjourned.

ADJORNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 PM on motion of Susan Latto, second by Karen Erickson and a unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,
Edwin K. Hall, Secretary