



# PARKS and RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2016

**Council Chambers**  
**City Hall – 411 West First Street**



## I. Call to Order

President Ed Hall called the meeting to order at 5:13 pm.

## II. Roll Call

PRESENT: Michael Schraepfer, Ed Hall, Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, Jodi Tervo Roberts, Joel Sipress, Tjaard Breeuwer

NOT PRESENT: Jon Welles, Tom Albright, Frank Jewell, John Schmidt, Art Johnston, Tiersa Wodash.

## III. Approval of Previous Meetings' Minutes

Commissioner Tervo Roberts motioned for approval of July 13, 2016 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Torch. Unanimously approved.

## IV. Presentations

A. Skyline Parkway Update – Dale Sellner and Cheryl Skaffe, Park Maintenance (informational)

Mr. Sellner, Buildings and Grounds Supervisor, City of Duluth, Maintenance Operations Division and Ms. Skaffe, Volunteer Coordinator, City of Duluth, Parks and Recreation Division provided an update on Parks volunteer efforts to cleanup Skyline Parkway.

Skaffe: Indicated they are looking for volunteers to help cleanup sections of the Skyline, and emphasized the need for continual efforts to protect the Skyline and its beauty.

- A story about volunteer Lee Francisco and his self-report of picking a full grocery bag of garbage every other day was shared to highlight the need for this work.
- Hundreds of volunteer hours dedicated to Skyline cleanup this summer.
- The 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary, held at Chester Park hosted about 60 volunteers who collected 100 pounds of garbage.

Tervo Roberts: Questioned what work is necessary to prevent people from treating Skyline like a garbage can.

Skaffe: Explained how it comes down to people's mentality and how they connect to the City's public spaces.

Hall: Expressed that more public exposure is important to help deter the problem, and noted articles about the work and his hopes for continued publicity on egregious issues findings. Questioned what was being done for enforcement.

Skaffe: Emphasized that it's hard to track litterers unless you have proof, however they're hoping tracking efforts will show improvements, like reducing garbage from 800 pounds to 600 pounds.

Sellner: Explained that it's difficult to track litterers unless you catch them in the act.

Hall: Suggested dedicating a webpage that highlights volunteer efforts and shows an egregious

activity of the month.

Sipress: Questioned how much of the issue is illegal dumping versus littering.

Skaftte: Responded that volume-wise the dumping is large-scale items like microwaves, however number wise the trash is fast food wrappers and beer cans left at scenic stop points along Skyline. It was further explained that more people litter versus making large dumps like a living room set. Expressed the need for continual dialogue with the Community in order to shift mentality of what's okay and what's not okay.

Sipress: Referred to a conversation from a year ago about the difference between littering and dumping and how littering may be individuals with limited transportation options.

Skaftte: Shared that city interns looked at cities with and without municipal garbage, noting it's much harder for Duluth to enforce garbage.

Sipress: Requested the information from the interns be shared.

Torch: Thanked Mr. Sellner and Ms. Skaftte for sharing information and volunteer story.

Skaftte: Thanked those in attendance for listening.

Hall: Expressed concern that the issue was not just Skyline and questioned if there were any times it has been linked back to the actual person with evidence found on site.

Skaftte: Responded that people can claim they didn't do it.

Sellner: Shared with group that Skyline Parkway needed maintenance attention, particularly in regards to view sheds from formal overlooks as they have obstructed the views for private citizens due to tree growth on public land. The following project highlights were shared:

- Created a task force with the Parks Commission and Urban Forest Commission
- Procedure review of formal overlooks and privately owned view sheds completed
- Contractor (SAS) hired to help with project, breaking the work into manageable sections
- Focus put on 500 block of West Skyline to develop pilot program and restore views while considering storm water, wildlife and privacy of people below by planting fruit trees, etc.
- Subcontractor hired to develop plans and identify which trees to cut down, however two days after completion July 21<sup>st</sup> storm happened and contractor put on different projects

Mr. Sellner further explained that using standard BMPs is a good model to use going forward for the four to five other areas along the Skyline as quote, "We don't have to go around the block to get across the street anymore." SAS was complimented on their identification of property boundaries above and below Skyline, which identified more State land and potential hurdles.

Breeuwer: Questioned if it was Tax Forfeit land.



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Sellner: Confirmed that they didn't have a break-out, however the seven overlooks on the list are city owned land, which are: Bardon Peak, Sam's Forest (power line), 40<sup>th</sup> Ave W. Enger Tower, 10<sup>th</sup> West, 10<sup>th</sup> East, and Hawk Ridge. The hope is to get these cleared yet in 2016, noting that Enger Tower is about half complete. Further explained that in the past, tree removal resulted in regrowth being the area was not treated. Hawk Ridge is okay, but the group has asked for increased tree removal and 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. West may need a fresh treatment despite being cleared a few years ago by volunteers.

Wodash: Requested an explanation of "treatment".

Sellner: Clarified they use a Round-Up dabber, utilizing IPM best practices and a very conservative approach with herbicides. Much like park maintenance, a task force will get together again to develop a process for 2017, which focuses on informal overlooks, tree species and the timing for additional treatments.

Sipress: Thanked Sellner for his work and requested clarification on the 500 block project and whether it would be completed in two days and if they would return after completion.

Sellner: Confirmed their completion and return.

Hall: Congratulated Sellner and group for doing what they said they would do, referring to December 2016 council minutes.

## V. Commission Committees

- A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA  
Chair – Michael Schraepfer – Jon Welles, Ed Hall, John Schmidt, [Dale Sellner]
- B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: August 18, 2016 at 12 pm in the Parks & Recreation Conference Room.  
Chair – Ed Hall – John Schmidt, Amanda Crosby, [Lindsay Dean]
- C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA  
Chair – Tjaard Breeuwer – Jodi Tervo Roberts, Tiersa Wodash, Art Johnston, [Judy Gibbs]
- D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: TBA  
Chair – Jon Welles – Jodi Tervo Roberts, Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, [Pamela Page]

## VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

## VII. New Business

- A. Update on Storm Damages

Sellner: Explained that after the storm crews were sent out to formal parks and trails to take inventory, noting that there may still be some storm debris, however most has been dealt with. Emphasized the great collaboration with trail partners like COGGS and SHTA, while informing that Hartley Park remains closed. The trails have been dealt with and City crews have worked on Lester and Hawk Ridge to reduce hazards and open those trails. Assured group that Hartley Park is of concern, however

hundreds of trees still remain down and crews have focused on residential debris and parks where residents hold park permits for events. Full restoration and appearance still a work in progress.

Breeuwer: Questioned whether ski trails would be ready for the season with all the trails down and explained their hopes to get contractor bids that allow for tree removal.

Wodash: Questioned what is done will the wood from downed trees.

Sellner: Explained that portions are put in a wood chipper and the pile is stored at 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave. West. Emphasized the increased size of the chip pile after this storm and explained most would be used at the Morningside Pit or the former dog facility on Rice Lake Rd.

Wodash: Questioned if there was any news on selling the downed trees for firewood.

Sellner: Confirmed that it's not economical but that Minnesota Power is going to pay a certain amount per ton for burning at Hibbard.

Breeuwer: Questioned if there is an increased fire hazard in the parks, like the BWCA.

Sellner: Explained that the City has more deciduous trees which aren't as combustible as conifers, however confirmed a fire danger response is in process.

Hall: Questioned if the City had to re-designate funding to address this issue.

Sellner: Confirmed that yes because of the storm, work is being deferred and added to next year's costs.

Sipress: Explained there will be more information on this after the special council meeting August 11, 2016, where impacts will be covered out of unallocated city reserves.

Schraepfer: Questioned how storm damage is paid for.

Sipress: Assured that good financials in recent years allows the use of surplus for unanticipated costs, and explained that a modest amount would be taken from the general fund reserve to pay for storm damages.

Slade: Spoke briefly on the storm damages at Hartley Park and explained that the trails are beginning to open in stages. Further expressed the unique relationship with Hartley Nature Center and the group's eagerness to get their programming back up and running. Explained that programming did begin a week after the storm, however most trailheads are still closed. Contractor bids were opened to take care of down trees.

Torch: Questioned if the storm will set back legacy grant work.

Slade: Explained the \$600,000 grant is on track to be expended in time despite the storm and the fact that additional work is needed for tree removal.

Breeuwer: Questioned the status of SHTA east of Hartley.

Slade: Informed that the best information is on SHTA's website.

Breeuwer: Suggested that people be directed to other trails while Hartley is closed.

- B. [2016 Western Trails Plan](#) & [Wayfinding/Signage Plan](#) – Andrew Slade and Judy Gibbs, City of Duluth, Parks & Recreation Department

Slade: Shared with the group that the draft of the trails plan was posted on the website on August 5, 2016 for public comment and the official title is St. Louis River Corridor Trails Plan. Explained the extensive stakeholder review that took place in July where excellent feedback was received and shared with the consultant who posted results on the Parks & Recreation website for public comment. The public comment period is open until August 19, which will then be shared with the Parks Commission at the September meeting.

Torch: Requested information about regionally significant trail status.

Slade: Explained that formal designation by the Greater Minnesota Regional Parks and Trails Commission (GMRPTC) is one of the only ways to get legacy funding through the Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment. Further explained that Hartley Park is almost designated as regionally significant and that excellent feedback was received from the Commission. The Lakewalk will be considered for trail application in the future, however for the SLRC designation specific trails for regional designation, trails like Western Waterfront are up for consideration.

Torch: Questioned the county tax forfeit land.

Dean: Confirmed that she would look into it.

Torch: Questioned the Duluth Traverse.

Slade: Explained there is a DT system and a DT spine trail. The spine is a 40 mile trail that goes the length of the City, whereas the trail system includes additional "nodes", such as Mission Creek, Brewer Park, Harley Park, etc., which creates more miles. The Master Plan will be the whole system, including Ely Peak area.

Torch: Questioned if the document is clear on how sensitive Magney Snively is and if equestrian trails are more of a hardening than ski trails.

Slade: Explained they are just now seeing final numbers and details of equestrian trails in Magney Snively ski loop and working with both equestrian and ski trail groups to develop the trail, focusing on DWP in order to bypass the Magney Snively area.

Wodash: Questioned the water trail maps and requested confirmation if the symbols in white are existing and yellow are proposed.

Slade: Confirmed the symbol colors and explained refinements to be made like adding red or "beginner" to the legend.

Breeuwer: Mentioned the campsites on the water trails and the lack of them within City limits, especially the Superior Hiking Trail.

Slade: Confirmed there are two commercial campgrounds plus the Indian Point campground, however a possibility of more campsites on the Wisconsin side in the future.

Breeuwer: Questioned the speed limit on DWP.

Slade: Confirmed 10mph speed limit for snowmobiles on DWP being on a trial basis and explained that being it's a multiuse trail, keeping all users at a similar pace is important.

Tervo-Roberts: Expressed the importance of campgrounds close to water access.

Slade: Explained that water trail details cannot be confirmed at this time but would be considered.

Hall: Questioned what can be done to increase access to underserved groups, and asked if the pages that break out principles could talk about broader access.

Slade: Shared the group's involvement with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and their offer to review the plan.

Crosby: Questioned if there would be a new proposal to make the whole Western Waterfront Trail universally accessible.

Slade: Confirmed yes, however explained there are more details to come as a contract will go before City Council on Monday. Explained that although it won't get done this year, major steps are being made to find the right grade, firm up the trails and look at access points. In terms of equity, the programming that various groups are working on, like Northland Paddle Alliance, is actively focusing on this issue.

Breeuwer: Expressed that along with strengthening accessibility language in the document, ski trails are high fee areas and the Western Waterfront Trail could provide a free cross country ski area.

Slade: Explained as of now, WWFT is shown as a multiuse trail on the winter use map, however the potential for a cross country ski trail is there, it's just not shown on the ski trail map.

Breeuwer: Agreed that it probably shouldn't be on the ski trail map, but suggested another denotation for it.

Hall: Initiated conversation about behavior on the trails and ordinances and rules, questioning if there was a way to cross reference the existing standards and behaviors for people who use the trails.

Slade: Confirmed the Wayfinding Plan will be presented at the same time as the SLRC Trails Plan and in a few cases there are ordinances that dictate trail use.

Hall: Questioned where the 15% increase to maintenance funding on the "measuring progress" page came from.

Dean: Confirmed the increase was from the 2011 Plan.

Mike Casey (citizen): Introduced himself as Chair of the newly named Friends of Western Duluth Parks and Trails, sharing their group did submit feedback, however the Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad is not mentioned as currently operating as an excursion train. Also expressed the lack of mention of the 1979 plan. Explained their group is trying to work with the City, however challenges exist like keeping up with the meetings and making sure everyone is heard. Extended invitation to all to ride the train.

Hall: Assured that comments would be carefully considered and the plan will reflect changes based on the public comment period. Extended appreciation for Casey's comments.

Slade: Expressed the helpfulness of specific feedback of where the train should be mentioned as changes will be made to the plan after the final public comment period is closed. The final draft will be posted on the website in advance of the Parks Commission meeting.

## **VIII. Old Business**

### A. Update on Grants

Slade: Explained the group is on track with grant applications.

- Coastal program is funding storm water improvements at GND and interpretive trail at Chambers Grove
- Coastal program is funding Lafayette exterior restrooms and Western Waterfront trail
- There is a pending application to NPS for Lincoln Park for \$750,000.
- Clean Water Fund grant submitted Monday August 8<sup>th</sup> for Western Corridor Parks: Norton, Piedmont, and Wade Stadium
- Received money from DNR for Clyde Connector to connect multiuse trails
- Grant received for Steward Creek Bridge restoration

Hall: Expressed Parks Commissions willingness to assist in writing letters of support for future grant applications.

### B. Update on [St. Louis River Corridor](#) & [Neighborhood Park Plans](#)

- Lisa Luokkala is working with Irving Community club to implement the MMP and there is FEMA funding for this park. An application for a CDBG grant will be submitted this year. Once funding is pulled together, Irving will see a new playground in a new location as well as improved access and lighting.
- An internal kickoff Monday August 15<sup>th</sup> for the Natural Area, with a stakeholder meetings in August.

## **IX. Division Manager's Report**

### Operational Update – Lindsay Dean

- Rec1 Software is on the cusp of roll-out. Internal meetings have started to implement the new system. Changes to reservations and permits to be expected.

Hall: Questioned where the group is at with the Visit Duluth study of sports facilities.

Dean: Confirmed presentation date of Thursday August 18, when Visit Duluth's consultants will present update at Canal Park Lodge.

Hall: Requested members of Parks Commission receive information about the meeting.

### Grassy Point – Ed Hall

- Discussed Grassy Point Park and telling people when closed and when re-opened.

Hall: Questioned the plan for the Pavilion at Lincoln Park.

Dean: Explained the NPS grant would cover complete renovation, however other options such as the

Parks Fund or tourism tax are being explored as back-ups.

## X. Public Comments

Denette Lynch: Announced the new dog park opening and notified group of Grand Opening later in August and that a name proposal has been submitted but not confirmed. Thanked the following for their support:

- City of Duluth for garbage service, cement pads and benches
- Parks Fund for \$4,000 grant
- Volunteers for 1300 hours of service

Explained the park is un-mowed and they will monitor this to see how it works.

Dwight Morrison: As the co-chair of Wheels on Trails, confirmed review of the St. Louis River Corridor Trails Plan, but found something that was missing. Questioned who is going to make this city the premier trail city with the SLRC. The following points and facts were mentioned:

- 50% tourists from Minneapolis and 30% locals as user groups
- 76 million born between 1946-65, which constitutes the baby boomers and 25% of the population

Expressed that a definition for universal trail was missing from the report and how it's not just about accessibility but enjoyment. Further expressed that ADA has influence but is a standard not a law, and that design should emphasize enjoyable natural experiences without risk of falling in the St. Louis River. Shared story of the 2008 accident at a place on the trail and said that although the area will be fixed to 8.33%, the risk of falling is still there.

Dean: Expressed the group is looking forward to working with new Human Rights Officer Carl Crawford.

Bill Lynch: Expressed that dumping garbage is like poaching and the Turn In Poachers (TIP) program should be used as an example. Suggested the city offer a bounty for people to turn in those who dump.

Hall: Shared that hotlines for people to report trash or vandalism in the parks used to exist.

Dean: Explained that although a hotline may not exist, people are highly encouraged to [submit comments](#) to the Parks and Recreation website.

## XI. Adjournment:

Meeting adjourned. Moved by Tervo Roberts. Second by Wodash.

## XII. Next meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 14, 2016 at 5pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall.