



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2017

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



## I. Call Meeting to Order

President Schmidt called the meeting to order at 5:04 pm.

## II. Roll Call

Present: John Schmidt, Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, Dudley Edmondson, Tjaard Breeuwer, Dennis Isernhagen, Tiersa Wodash, Dean Vogtman, Michael Schraepfer, Kristin Bergerson

Absent: Britt Rohrbaugh, Em Westerlund (City Council Liaison), Art Johnston (ISD 709 Liaison), Alanna Oswald (ISD 709 School Board Liaison Alternate), Frank Jewell (St. Louis County Board Liaison)

## III. Approval of August 9 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of the August 9, 2017 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Breeuwer. Unanimously approved.

Schmidt: Indicated he would like to discuss questions and concerns that were brought forward at last month's meeting regarding why an executive session was requested, noting that it was later recalled after being overruled by the City Attorney. Clarified his motivations for this meeting by recalling his statement from the August meeting:

*"I encourage questions and dialogue amongst Commission members. I know that the act of sitting up here can sometimes feel uncomfortable and be a little bit intimidating. Please remember we are a citizens Commission, composed of volunteers. We are not politicians, gifted orators, or contracted employees. Each of us was consciously chosen because of our unique backgrounds and skillsets. We need everyone's input and perspectives as we gather information and make recommendations as a team. In that spirit, I'm going to call a thirty-minute executive session immediately following our September meeting. At that time members of the public and staff will be asked to leave. We will use that time to better get to know each other."*

Schmidt: Stated that although the meeting request was later overruled, he did not think the public or City staff would want to sit through a session where the Commissioners were getting to know one another. Indicated that in hindsight he was wrong by not vetting this meeting through the Parks Manager prior to its announcement. Apologized to the public, City staff, and Commissioners for not clearing the meeting ahead of time. Expressed his commitment to an open, trusting, and positive public process, including the importance of building trust as an attribute to strong teamwork. Established that his motivation for calling the special meeting was to get to know one another, without conducting any City business. Requested Commissioners spend time building relationships with one another, City staff, and the public.

Schmidt: Recited the third guiding principle of the Duluth Parks and Recreation Master Plan:

- Build Partnerships
  - Empower Volunteers- Through intentional, consistent effort to recruit, coordinate and

recognize their efforts, volunteers should be utilized for park and trail maintenance, vigilance, and upkeep.

- Partner with others – Continue to build effective partnerships with Duluth Schools, Colleges, Universities, and neighboring communities that foster system goals. The School District's Long Range Facilities Plan presents the opportunity to forge effective school-City partnerships for fields, buildings, facilities, and programs. Reach out to businesses for expanded sponsorships and partnerships.
- Share Information – Enhance access to information and increase communications with groups, schools, businesses, and residents.
- Collaborate on promotion – Expand promotion of Duluth parks for tourism, quality of life and economic development.

Schmidt: Recited two quotes from Richard Louv's book, *The Last Child in the Woods*.

#### **IV. Presentations**

- A. Hartley Nature Center Expansion, Tom O'Rourke, Executive Director, Hartley Nature Center (informational)

O'Rourke: Thanked Commissioners and indicated he will give a brief update on the recent celebration of the Legacy Grant for Hartley Park, which addressed many of the Phase I priorities in the Council approved Master Plan from 2014. Indicated a celebratory press conference was held on August 30<sup>th</sup>, which noted the many partnerships that helped make the project possible, while providing information about elements in the most recent Legacy Grant funding request. Noted the current request is pending and will be decided upon in early 2018. Highlighted the following accomplishments from Phase I and the recently completed Legacy Grant:

- Parking lot improvements
  - Main trailhead access points at the Nature Center, Woodhaven, North Road and Fairmont Street
- Completion of accessible trail improvements on Old Hartley Road
  - Brought trail level up
  - Resurfaced trail
- Buckthorn removal along Old Hartley Road and other park locations
- Pine stand thinning efforts
  - Not related to storm blow down
- Trail improvements
  - Completion of the Duluth Traverse segment through Hartley scheduled for completion by winter 2017-18.
  - Ski trail re-routes
- Pollinator meadows planted

O'Rourke: Indicated the Legacy Grant provided a wonderful opportunity for the park and required a lot of work from City staff and stakeholders, including COGGS, The Superior Hiking Trail Association, The Duluth Cross Country Ski Trail Association, Wheels on Trails, The Izaak Walton League, and Hartley Nature Center. Explained the work was temporarily disruptive to park use and programming at



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Hartley Nature Center, however in the long-run, these improvements will help the user experience in the park. Indicated the pending Legacy Grant was submitted in July and includes the following:

- \$250,000 for wayfinding
  - Implements the City-wide wayfinding initiative
  - Updating maps, kiosks, and directional signage
  - Priority for Hartley as many people get turned around on the trails
  - Unified signage and wayfinding system
- \$500,000 for Hartley Nature Center building expansion
  - Internal feasibility study conducted over the last year which focused on expansion of the building to accommodate program growth
  - Hartley's mission is to inspire lifelong connections with nature through education, play, and exploration
  - Primary means of mission delivery is through the Hartley Nature preschool program, summer camps, and school field trip visits

O'Rourke: Explained they are fortunate to be bursting at the seams programmatically, noting that when the building was first constructed in 2003, the goal was to have 18,000 hours of contact programming for kids. Informed that last year Hartley Nature Center hit close to 50,000 contact hours. Indicated they hope to expand their program space so they can continue their mission by expanding their services. Highlighted what the expansion would include:

- Adding two additional classrooms to the Nature Center building
- Adding an additional restroom, gathering office, and storage areas

O'Rourke: Indicated the preschool currently utilizes the Nature Center, lean-to shelter, and yurt for programming. Stated they are in the middle of constructing a 20' x 30' timber-frame pavilion to serve growing programming needs. Explained that building expansion would secure their programming future. Confirmed the projected cost of this expansion is \$2 million, therefore the Legacy Grant would fund a quarter of the project, with the remainder funded by Hartley Nature Center's capital campaign. Explained that the Hartley Board of Directors has been doing a lot of work to prepare organizationally for the challenge of this capital campaign and the projects feasibility. Predicted they should have a good sense of whether or not they will receive this grant in late December, with final notification in early 2018. Indicated that if the Legacy Grant is not secured, they would need to scale the project back. Explained that Hartley Nature Center was founded by two different groups, one being passionate about protecting, preserving, and restoring Hartley Park, and the other passionate about environmental and educational opportunities. Indicated that holding allegiance to the park and a desire to improve it while educating others fits their ultimate goal to have a full-time stewardship position housed at Hartley Nature Center. Explained this position would work closely with City staff to take on stewardship efforts in the park. Advised that this year's budget is \$670,000, with roughly half coming from preschool, camps, and fieldtrips fees, with the remainder coming from gifts, contributions, grants, and fundraising events. Continued by stating their goal to raise \$1.5 million is ambitious, as they still have to raise money yearly for their own operating budget while remaining a sustainable organization now and into the future.

Wodash: Questioned where funding outside of fundraising efforts would come from.



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O'Rourke: Indicated half of their operating budget comes from Nature Center memberships, individual contributions, corporate sponsorships, grants from area foundations, and fundraising events.

Torch: Thanked Mr. O'Rourke for the update and requested more information on how the preschool has grown, specifically if they offer full-time options yet. Further requested information on the outreach efforts they utilize for their nature-based programming approach.

O'Rourke: Confirmed they are in their fourth year of preschool operation with six different class sessions. Indicated they have half and full day options; however, they do not have any kids who come every day of the week. Highlighted the following numbers:

- 92 kids served this last year
- 28 kids on the waiting list who did not get into programming

O'Rourke: Informed there is more programming demand than they can accommodate with their current space. Explained that the fieldtrip programming continues to grow, once operating out of four classrooms, however, now is down to two to accommodate the growth of the preschool program. Confirmed that through fundraising efforts last year, they offered a buy one, get one free program this school year for programming, therefore if schools book a site visit at their facility, they will get a free field trip to Hartley Nature Center, which includes the bus and program fees. Indicated they will offer 3,000 free field trips this school year, partnering with region school districts. Explained that because their preschool does not currently serve a hugely diverse audience, they've been doing nature play outreach at more traditional area preschools and area headstarts through funding from a Northland Foundation grant. Stressed their goal in spreading the importance about nature play throughout the community, outside of just programming at Hartley Nature Center.

Wodash: Questioned if any of the current programming offers scholarship opportunities.

O'Rourke: Confirmed they have preschool, summer camp, and field trip scholarship funds, which equates to roughly \$25,000 in scholarship support last year. Explained that although this isn't a great business model financially, they feel strongly that subsidized fees are important for schools to ensure participation and accessibility.

Breeuwer: Questioned how they determined how much more capacity they would need to serve growing programming.

O'Rourke: Confirmed this was largely driven by staff strategic planning sessions, where they talked through all of their program areas to determine a wish list in terms of programming they could offer with additional space. Explained they looked at the limitations they had in the current building and what type of space would accommodate expansion of current program offerings. Reported that they submitted an application on behalf of Harley Park to be considered in the Duluth Natural Areas Program, noting Magney Snively is currently the only Duluth park in the program. Explained that the City of Duluth would have to formally move the application forward as they are the land owners of Hartley Park. Highlighted what the designation would do:

- Ground future restoration efforts – all designation applications require an ecological



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management plan

- Bolster the City and Hartley Nature Center's grant seeking efforts
- Bolster fundraising efforts

Schmidt: Thanked Mr. O'Rourke and the Hartley staff for the countless stakeholder hours they committed to the Hartley Master Plan and apologized for any interruptions to their programming as a result of it. Continued by thanking Hartley Nature Center for their commitment in serving underserved populations. Questioned if there was a new staff lead on Natural Areas Program designation, as Andrew Slade is no longer with the City.

Skaftte: Indicated she would look into this and get back to the Commission with more information.

Schmidt: Requested from Mr. O'Rourke any feedback for the Commission, so they can help support Hartley's efforts.

O'Rourke: Thanked the Parks Commission and the City for their partnership and encouraged Commissioners to reach out with any questions regarding the expansion.

Schmidt: Questioned if the expansion would take place on the current Nature Center's footprint.

O'Rourke: Confirmed yes and indicated their premises are on four leased acres.

- B. Completed 2017 Construction Projects – Lisa Luukkala, Project Coordinator, City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division (informational)

Luukkala: Indicated she will provide an update on Parks and Recreation construction projects for 2017, which was originally presented to the Commission by Erik Birkeland a few months back. Noted the staff members from Parks, Park Maintenance, and Facilities Management that worked together on the construction list. Continued by going through each project, noting any changes and updates:

- Quarry Park Disc Golf
  - Construction Phase – anticipate project completion in October
  - 9-hole disc course – 70% complete, volunteer day build on September 16-17
    - Labor donated by the Lake Superior Disc Golf Community
  - Trail improvements by the ice climbers on the western side of the quarry
    - True North AmeriCorps and Duluth Climbers Coalition
  - Hiking trail on east side of quarry complete
    - Surly Gives a Damn Volunteer Day & 312 Engineering Company, National Guard of Duluth
- Irving Park Phase I
  - Pre-bid Phase
  - Phase I Archeological Review complete
  - Work scope includes: ADA access to park, site lighting, new relocated playground, gathering area near garage/concession, landscaping, porta-potty screen
  - Project postponed until 2018 construction season
    - Awaiting HUD/CDBG funding (\$50,000)

- Lincoln Park Phase I
  - Design Phase
  - Public celebration with Super Bowl Legacy Fund held on June 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Work scope includes: site lighting, new kiosk and entry sign, reopening of restrooms, new relocated playground with accessible components, accessible pathway and playground area, landscaping
  - Project postponed until 2018
    - Awaiting HUD/CDBG funding and adding scope to project after announcement of \$750,000 National Park Service grant
- Harrison Park Phase I
  - Pre-Construction Phase
  - City Council passed resolution to proceed this week
  - Work scope includes: removal of tennis court, circulation sidewalk, removal of blacktop fencing, patio off back of building, site lighting
  - Work to commence in mid- September
- Morgan Park Community Center
  - Construction Phase
  - Work scope includes: all new windows and doors
  - Installation will begin in early October
- DWP Roundhouse Restoration
  - Post-Construction Monitoring Phase
  - Project completed as of June 30
  - Invasive removal and native planting, reforestation with shrubs and trees
  - Capping of contaminated soils
  - Work completed in partnership with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the U.S. Forest Service and Community Action Duluth's Stream Corps
- Miller Creek FEMA Restoration
  - Construction Phase
  - Anticipate completion of stream bed work is mid-September
  - Work scope includes: stabilization and restoration to the stream bank to increase resiliency to address future large rain events
    - Currently a mix of natural shoreline and manmade channels
  - Park currently closed during construction
  - Additional stormwater/public sanitation completing a complimentary project on west side of park
- Chambers Grove Park Restoration
  - Construction Phase
  - Park reopened this summer
  - Final signage and wayfinding installation will take place in near future
  - Working in partnership with the Fond du Lac Band on Archeological Review of the area
    - Work halted during this process
  - Work scope included: new and relocated bathroom facility, new parking lot and reconfiguration, new playground, restoration to the picnic shelter, landscaping, bike racks, boat rack, bike repair station, signage and wayfinding
- Duluth Traverse Trail



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- Construction Phase
- Connector at Lincoln Park Middle School
  - Built by COGGS and Lincoln Park Middle School students
  - Ribbon-cutting 9/14/17 at 12pm
- Additional connector in Mission Creek completed on June 30
- Improved western terminus connection to Chambers Park
- Capped and armored wet spots along the entire spine of the trail
- Restoration of the Lollygagger trail
- Rice Lake Road to Partridge Street is complete
- Marshal School segment is underway
  - Anticipate completion first week of October
  - Will connect to Central Entrance
- Cross City Trail – River Route 2017/2018
  - Design Phase
  - Current focus is property work: trail easements and land acquisitions in process
  - This project will be two years 2017/2018
  - Coordination with the MPCA/DNR/EPA at Eerie Pier Ponds around their clean-up and remediation of this site
- DWP Clyde Connector Trail & Stewart Creek Bridge
  - Pre-Construction Phase
  - Restoration and rehabilitation of existing trail
  - Construction set to commence in September
  - Connect Skyline to Smithville neighborhood for snowmobiles, equestrians, mountain bikers and hikers
  - Re-decking and new railings to Stewart Creek Bridge
    - Late September 2017 construction
    - Phase I of DWP restoration
- Ely's Peak Equestrian Loop
  - Construction Phase
  - Pre-Construction Public Meeting held August 15
  - Reconstruction of 3 miles of trail
  - Hardening surface of existing Ely's Peak Nordic ski loop within Magney-Snively Natural Area to make sustainable for equestrian use
  - Schedule to complete on October 1st
- Western Waterfront Restoration
  - Construction Phase II
  - Native plantings of trees and shrubs
  - Additional invasive spraying and removal
  - CAD's StreamCorps and Wetland Habitat Restorations Inc. are currently planting
  - Project fully complete in June of 2018
- Superior Hiking Trail Hiking Loops
  - Construction and Design Phase
  - Brewer Park – complete 2016
  - Spirit Mountain – complete 2017
  - Ely's Peak – in design phase for 2018 construction

- Grand Avenue Nordic Center
  - Pre-Bid Phase
  - Construct state-of-the-art lighting and snowmaking on a 3.3 km trail and staging area
  - Project in partnership with Duluth Cross-County Ski Club
    - \$500,000 goal contribution
  - Completion to be determined
- All-Weather Trail at Spirit Mountain
  - Construction Phase
  - Approximately 2,400 ft. of a 1.8 miles' segment is currently complete
    - Wet conditions slowing down production
    - Hope to have 2/3 of new segment open to public early October
  - Part of the larger All-Weather Trail System
    - Total of 7 miles at Spirit Mountain
    - Mountain bike specific
- Lafayette Bathrooms
  - Construction Phase
  - Funding through NOAA Coastal grant
  - Construction of two gender neutral bathrooms
    - Completion in October 2017
- Chester Creek Pedestrian Bridge
  - Pre-Construction Phase
  - To commence on October 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Lower damn area
  - Public meeting September 27
- Chester Creek Restoration
  - Pre-Construction Phase
  - Led by the Southern St. Louis County Soil & Water Conservation District
  - Begins October 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Public meeting September 27
- Hartley Park – Parking, Interpretive Signage, Trails, & Pollinator Meadow
  - Post-Construction Phase
  - Work completed: pollinator meadows, parking, interpretive signs (7 installed, 2 additional to be installed), Old Hartley Road Trail improvements, Tunnel Trail has two culverts left to install and 200 ft. of trenching to complete
- Boardwalk Replacement – Park Point
  - Pre-Construction Phase
  - Boardwalk and viewing deck replacement on 12<sup>th</sup> Street parking lot
    - Project to commence in October
- Park Point Beach House
  - Phase: Complete
  - New windows and siding on the lake side of building
- Lakewalk – Water Street Segment
  - Construction Phase
  - Retaining wall complete
  - Relocating utilities and curb demolition for pedestrian ramps this week





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- o Completion scheduled for end of September

Isernhagen: Congratulated Ms. Luukkala on a fine job keeping an extensive list of projects together. Questioned whether a long term maintenance plan was in place for the trail system.

Luukkala: Indicated that last year they hired a Trails Lead Worker within Park Maintenance, whom has expertise in trail maintenance, along with a team of seasonal hires for trail maintenance. Confirmed the Duluth Traverse is almost exclusively maintained by COGGS trail crews and volunteers. Indicated they do have a trail maintenance plan as part of the Duluth Traverse Mini-Master Plan, which covers in detail the ongoing maintenance for the trail facility. Explained the Superior Hiking Trail is managed and maintained by the Superior Hiking Trail Association, with some donations or in-kind support from the City. Further explained that the Lakewalk and Cross City Trail are the two paved trail systems which are the City's maintenance responsibility, noting the Lakewalk Master Plan will address its extensive infrastructure and its long term life span.

Isernhagen: Stressed the importance of continued trail maintenance as there has been significant investment made in trail construction within the City.

Wodash: Questioned what potential changes will come with the changes in scope at Lincoln Park.

Luukkala: Explained that they originally scoped the project with a \$650,000 budget, whereas now they have an additional \$750,000 to work with. Confirmed the scope has not been determined as they are currently doing some internal inventory of the remaining needs of the park, including aging infrastructure.

Wodash: Questioned if the Lincoln Park Master Plan would be revisited.

Luukkala: Confirmed that it would most likely not be revisited as all improvements should fall within the defined Master Plan, noting that priorities within the plan may be changed with a larger project budget. Explained that when Master Plans are done, Pre-Design is where additional studies are done to determine true costs and project needs. Indicated they conducted a study of the stone pavilion and found opportunities for improvements, noting that components of Phase I will still remain and be completed in conjunction with Phase II in 2018.

Crosby: Explained that she works with different advocacy groups and Persons with Disabilities for Change would like to see an accessible swing incorporated into one of the corridor parks. Questioned if this could be considered, noting it is the type that someone is wheeled into versus lifted into.

Luukkala: Indicated that this project is set to be the premier accessible playground in Duluth, including a rubber matting surface and thoughtfully selected playground equipment. Explained they are working on a design that aims to meet many accessibility needs.

Crosby: Indicated the trails at Quarry Park are looking really great and are much safer.



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Luukkala: Confirmed there is a planned ADA loop at the base of the Quarry, with hopes to accomplish this at the end of the year.

Torch: Thanked Ms. Luukkala and Parks staff for all their hard work.

Schmidt: Echoed Mr. Torch's comments and noted the great job staff is doing being without a Parks Manager.

Mike Casey(public): Indicated that the presentation demonstrates all the hard work staff are doing. Requested the presentation documents and projects be updated on the Parks website.

Tom Burns (public): Indicated he is here on behalf of the League of Women's Voters and thanked the staff for their hard work, requesting the presentation document be available on the webpage. Explained that he is a member of the Friends of the Lakewalk group and noted the difficulty in maintaining an asphalt trail.

Luukkala: Thanked Mr. Burns for his comments and the Friends of the Lakewalk for their help with the Lakewalk, including fundraising and annual surveys of the Lakewalk.

Tom Burns (public): Explained that in emergencies when they contact the City to remove a threatening object they are responsive, noting the importance of maintaining the communication and relationship.

## C. Update on 2017 Grant Requests Submitted for Capital Projects- Cheryl Skaffe, Provisional Assistant Manager, City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division (informational)

Skaffe: Provided updates on received 2017 grant requests submitted for capital projects, noting that it will echo many of the projects Ms. Luukkala shared, and totals \$2,479,507:

- US Forest Service – funds will support Western Waterfront Trail habitat restoration
  - \$200,000 received
- National Park Service – funds will support implementation of the Lincoln Park Master Plan and fully implement restoration
  - \$746,456 received
- Community Development Block Grants – funds will support renewal/restoration of Irving Park and Lincoln Park
  - Irving received \$50,000
  - Lincoln Park received \$40,000
- US Forest Service Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – two grants received
  - \$175,000 for stormwater mitigation
  - \$100,000 for EAB mitigation
- DNR Coastal Program – Western Waterfront Wayfinding
  - \$89,084 received
- DNR Coastal Program – Chambers Grove Park Interpretive Trail
  - \$100,000 received
- Federal Recreation Trail Program – Phase II of the repurposing of the DWP railroad bed



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- Will eventually connect Spirit Mountain Recreation Area to Mission Creek Park and the Munger Trail
- \$150,000 received
- Federal Recreation Trail Program – New 5.4 km cross-country ski trail with snowmaking and lighting
  - Provides neighborhood skiing opportunities for western Duluth with connection to 20 miles of existing ski trails
  - \$150,000 received
- EPA Natural Areas Program – Planning for public ownership, ecological restoration, conservation, management, and permanent protection of up to 1,300 acres of coastal wetlands and shoreline
  - Along 10 miles of the St. Louis River Estuary
  - \$220,000 received
- EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative – Eliminate or control invasive species in up to 100 acres of private and 200 public acres in the St. Louis River Estuary
  - Phragmites, Buckthorn, Honeysuckle, Garlic Mustard, Japanese Knotweed, Wild Parsnip
  - \$458,967 received

Luukkala: Noted that most of these grants require a quarter to half match of the total project contribution, with much of this leveraged by the half and half tourism tax funds assigned to the St. Louis River Corridor Initiative.

Breeuwer: Questioned if the ski grant is for Spirit Mountain.

Skaftte: Confirmed yes.

Vogtman: Requested Ms. Luukkala to speak more to what the City is doing to promote all the wonderful things it has going on in terms of trails and parks, and questioned if there was any promotional or marketing initiative in the works.

Luukkala: Confirmed they have an updated trails map and use social media and other means, noting their heavy reliance on community partners to spread the word. Indicated they have a contract with the Minnesota Land Trust to better tell the story of Duluth as an outdoor town, as well as contributions to Visit Duluth to promote their outdoor recreation program.

Skaftte: Indicated the new trail maps are available at the Parks and Recreation office as well as local business partners. Informed Commission they will have a table at the Lester River Rendezvous and Chester Bowl Fall Fest. Welcomed any volunteers.

Breeuwer: Spoke to the importance of the National Water Trail Designation and how it would put Duluth on the map as one of maybe twenty in the country with designation.

Luukkala: Indicated they've received nomination for designation, however they don't have formal signature yet. Explained they have sought designation in many different outdoor realms, such as mountain biking and ski facilities.



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### V. Commission Committees

A. Parks and Facilities – meeting date: TBA

Chair - Michael Schraepfer – John Schmidt, Dean Vogtman, Dennis Isernhagen [Dale Sellner]

B. Administrative (E-Board) – meeting date: Thursday, September 21 at noon in the Parks office

Chair – John Schmidt – Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby [Cheryl Skafte]

C. Trails and Bikeways – meeting date: TBA

Chair – Tjaard Breeuwer– Tiersa Wodash, Britt Rohrbaugh, Dudley Edmondson, Dean Vogtman, Art Johnston, Mike Casey, Eric Viken, Shawna Mullen [Andy Holak]

D. Recreation Programming (youth and adult) – meeting date: TBA

Chair - Erik Torch - Amanda Crosby, Dudley Edmondson, Kristin Bergerson [Pamela Page]

### VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Schmidt: Requested each Commissioner to state something they enjoyed outside in Duluth over the summer.

Schraepfer: Shared that he took his five nieces sailing on Lake Superior.

Bergerson: Shared that she took her almost 90-year-old parents on the Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad ride.

Crosby: Shared that she got into Lake Superior as many times as she could.

Breeuwer: Shared that he enjoyed swimming in the Lester River.

Isernhagen: Shared that he utilized the Lakewalk a lot more for bike riding.

Torch: Shared that he has been volunteering with the Duluth Composite Mountain Bike Team, which has started a development program for 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade kids.

Vogtman: Shared that he and his family enjoyed Chambers Grove Park, and commented on the great restoration work done.

Edmondson: Shared that he spent his summer building a garden room in his back yard with help from friends, so he could watch nature in his backyard.

Wodash: Shared that her ability to be out on the trails has been limited, however she enjoyed taking her new son on the trails.

Schmidt: Shared that he put on hundreds of miles on his bicycle on the streets of Duluth.

### VII. New Business

### VIII. Old Business



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### A. Parks staffing update – Cheryl Skafte, Provisional Assistant Manager, City of Duluth Parks and Recreation Division

Skaftte: Indicated that a new Recreation Specialist was hired. Stated that Nick Budnik has started with the department after moving to Duluth from Las Vegas. Explained Nick was a UMD graduate, and will lead the charge on sports and leagues. Informed Commission that a 13.5-hour Recreation Leader position is currently open to candidates and is posted on the City website. Explained that they will also begin the search for a part-time Project Technician to work with the Parks stewardship team. Noted William Roche's acceptance of the Parks Manager position and anticipated start date at the end of October or early November.

Schmidt: Questioned how long Ms. Skafte's provisional appointment lasts.

Skaftte: Confirmed her six-month provisional appointment lasts until the end of the year.

Schmidt: Thanked Ms. Skafte for her commitment.

## IX. Division Manager's Report

Skaftte: Informed Commissioners that she has a copy of the new trail map for them. Explained that Parks has basically two teams that work together, one being stewardship and the other being operations. Updated Commission on what is happening in the operations area:

- Have seen a tremendous growth in park permits issued
  - New online reservation system through Rec 1
  - Increased fees last year to be more competitive
  - 40% revenue growth this year
- Flag Football League began
  - Over 100 youth participants
  - Will run through October 12<sup>th</sup>
- Free Wednesday Night Skating at Heritage
- Four staff members will attend the Minnesota State Parks and Recreation Conference in early October
- Two upcoming public meetings
  - Mini Master Plan update and informational session at Lower Chester
    - September 14<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm
  - Chester Creek dam removal and stream restoration informational meeting
    - September 27<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:30pm
    - Grant Recreation Center

Schmidt: Stated to Commissioners that if there is a meeting in their district they cannot attend, feel free to call on Commissioner Edmondson or himself who are in at-large positions.

## X. Public Comment

John Ramos (public): Expressed appreciation for President Schmidt's commitment to transparency



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and noted that by cancelling his special meeting he avoided special attention in the Reader.

Mike Casey (public): Indicated that although it may not be a Parks issue, he rides his bike to Commission meetings sometimes and he doesn't know where to lock his bike up at City Hall and downtown. Questioned who he should contact for this.

Cheryl: Explained that for City Hall infrastructure it may be a Facilities question, however she will pass the request along and follow up with Mr. Casey.

## XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:33 pm. Moved by Commissioner Torch. Seconded.

## XII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday October 11, 2017 at 5pm in room 303 at City Hall.