



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of June 13, 2018

City Hall – Council Chambers
411 W 1st St



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Torch called the meeting to order at 5:01 pm.

II. Roll Call

Present: Erik Torch, Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer, Dennis Isernhagen, Britt Rohrbaugh, Kristin Bergerson, John Schmidt, Dudley Edmondson, Dean Vogtman, Jill Joyce, Em Westerlund (City Council Liaison)

Not present: David Kirby (ISD 709 School Board Liaison), Frank Jewell (St. Louis County Board Liaison)

Torch: Welcomed Jill Joyce to the Parks Commission. Requested Joyce to give an introduction.

Joyce: Mentioned her background and her being happy to be here.

Torch: Thanked Joyce for the introduction.

III. Approval of May 9 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Torch motioned for approval of the May 9, 2018 meeting minutes; second by Second Rohbaugh. Unanimously approved.

Torch: Opened the floor for discussion on the May 9th meeting minutes. No discussion.

IV. Presentations

A. Lincoln Park Update (Informational) – Lisa Loukkala, Senior Parks Planner

Luokkala: Mentioned her role as the Project Coordinator with the Lincoln Park restoration project, Phase I. Stated she will be reflecting on the history, and the future of the project. Stated the purpose of a mini-master plan, a high concept plan of what individuals want to see in their parks and recommended changes.

Loukkala: Indicated in the summer of 2016, funding was secured by the US Bank Places to Play grant. Mentioned the partnership of Ecolibrium 3. Highlighted the additional funding provided by the Community Block grant. Stated \$550,000 was allocated from the City's half and half tourism tax. Stated a combination of \$85,000 was gifted from Essentia, St. Lukes, Maurices, and Minnesota Power.

Loukkala: Mentioned this playground will be the most accessible surfaced playground offered in the City of Duluth. Stated a modest restoration will occur for the bathroom. Indicated additional improvements would include, lighting, sidewalks and a reconfigured parking lot located where the existing playground resides.



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Loukkala: Stated during the summer of 2017, Duluth Parks and Recreation was a recipient for an additional \$750,000. Mentioned the selections are extremely competitive, and shared the honor of being selected. Stated during the winter of 2017, reassessment of the elements was once again looked at due to additional funding. Mentioned the additional elements included the failing upper terrace wall, additional work on the WPA pavilion, and creek and road assessments were given a closer look with the additional funds.

Loukkala: Indicated there will be an unveiling/public meeting of Lincoln Park on June 28th. Stated the new concept of the park will be announced. Mentioned there will be programming opportunities within Lincoln Park. Stated \$1.5 million dollars has been secured for Lincoln Park, gave thanks to the anonymous \$100 donation that was sent through the mail.

Loukkala: Stated the Lincoln Park Children and Family Collaborative will receive \$40,000 towards programming, once the project is complete. Mentioned the different types of programming events that can occur. Mentioned funding is secured through the Super Bowl Legacy Fund.

Loukkala: Indicated a meeting was held with donors for the Lincoln Park restoration projects. Re-stated the public meeting to be held on June 28th, in Lincoln Park. Stated when money is received from federal grants, a 106 review is required. Stated this review will entail archeological and historical analysis of Lincoln Park. Indicated this report will be reported to the state and adjusted based on findings.

Loukkala: Stated during the fall of 2018, demolition of the upper terrace building will commence. Indicated this was detailed in the 2011 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Mentioned the renovations of the WPA building will provide bathrooms as well as an area for programming. Stated the upper terrace building is currently vacant.

Loukkala: Stated construction will begin during the summer of 2019. Opened the floor for questions.

Torch: Congratulated Lisa and the City for the additional funding. Opened the floor for questions.

Schmidt: Thanked Lisa for the presentation. Questioned if weather events were included in the planning process.

Loukkala: Stated Miller Creek FEMA restoration, that occurred last year, was designed to withstand large rain events. Stated the layout of the creek is designed to spread the water. Mentioned the work with Tom Beery on a resiliency matrix. Stated a check list is followed to incorporate climate resiliency in project planning.

Schmidt: Thanked Lisa for her work. Questioned if further creek restoration could be completed with the additional funds that were received.

Loukkala: Confirmed the additional funds could go towards further creek restoration.



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Schmidt: Recalled hearing a demand for safety in the park during the public meetings that were held. Questioned if there would be extra safety efforts.

Loukkala: Stated safety is the priority when it comes to design. Indicated the WPA pavilion would contain a security system, including door sensors and cameras. Mentioned the design purposed at the end of the month would address current safety concerns.

Schmidt: Recalled a story where someone could only view the park by riding in a car from the bottom to the top, using the roadway. Indicated the different slopes in the park. Mentioned the City is committed to provide universal access points within our parks.

Luokkala: Stated accessibility has been the fore front of the design process. Mentioned this park will have the most accessible playground throughout the city. Stated the opportunity to make the southern segment of the park a highly accessible portion of the park. Stated trail grade issues will be addressed.

Schmidt: Questioned if there are ash trees within the park.

Loukkala: Confirmed there are. Indicated the partnership with Stream Corps and Community Action Duluth and their involvement with plantings within the park.

Schmidt: Questioned if there is current access to bathrooms within the park.

Loukkala: Indicated there is not current access, the porta potties were burned down.

Schmidt: Thanked Loukkala.

Joyce: Questioned where the additional \$750,000 came from.

Loukkala: Stated this came from The National Park Service – The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program. Stated program looks at municipalities throughout the country.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions from the public.

Westerlund: Mentioned the illegal dumping concern within the park. Questioned what will be done to address this.

Loukkala: Stated the design of the park is hoping to address safety concerns, including vandalism and illegal dumping. Stated the design will only be able to do so much, and enforcement is a separate issue from the design process.

Westerlund: Thanked Community Action Duluth and Stream Corps for their restoration efforts.

Torch: Opened the floor for further questions. Thanked Luokkala for the presentation.



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B. Memorial Park Memorial Update – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Roche: Stated the WWI Memorial project overview. Mentioned the public and stakeholder meetings and the survey distribution process. Indicated the budget being \$50,000, \$9,000 was used for professional consulting fees.

Roche: Recapped and displayed the 3 different concepts. Stated 350 people participated with the second survey. Stated the top two choices were separated by a single vote. Indicated concept C had the lowest amount of votes, and concept B had the most.

Roche: Stated the consultants indicated concept B would require the least amount of maintenance as well as being the most cost effective.

Roche: Mentioned a community member would like to have this project delayed in order to try and relocate and further assess. Stated the location of the site was identified in a previous master plan. Indicated the urgency to complete this project before the 100-year anniversary of the Armistice Day.

Roche: Reflected on the survey. Reflected on the request to include more vegetation. Mentioned there is potential to include trees for a backdrop behind the memorial. Indicated if the memorial was reversed, it would be facing the parking lot.

Roche: Stated an oversight with not having the agenda out in time, therefore a vote will not occur on the memorial design concept. Indicated this will be addressed during the July meeting.

Roche: Opened the opportunity for Parks Commissioners to ask questions.

Edmondson: Questioned if there will be an opportunity for citizens to provide funding for this project.

Roche: Stated in the future there will be the opportunity to add more infrastructure. Mentioned the addition of flag poles is surprisingly costly due to lighting.

Vogtman: Questioned how many names would be included on the memorial.

Roche: Stated this memorial would honor all 167 Duluthian's lost during the war. Mentioned the unnamed dead will still be recognized on the memorial.

Vogtman: Questioned if any veteran organizations were involved with this process.

Roche: Indicated several veteran organizations were invited to the stakeholder meetings, however, attendance was low. Stated hard copies of the survey were distributed along with providing an online version.

Vogtman: Stated it would be good to consider including a bench with this design to accommodate accessibility needs.



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Roche: Stated the potential to have benches included if funding is provided.

Schmidt: Questioned what the timeline would be for this project.

Roche: Stated installation would be completed by Veterans Day of this year.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions.

Mike Casey (public): Thanked Will for the distribution of the survey, expressed gratitude for the project. Mentioned the memorial in Gary was fully funded by the community, and recommended the city contact the organization involved with this project. Encouraged to have the community clubs involved with future projects. Requested the memorial to contain stone rather than concrete. Requested to have the project not rushed to be completed.

V. Commission Committees

- a. Administrative (E-board) – meeting date: Tuesday, June 19th at noon at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room: Chair – Erik Torch – Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer [William Roche]
- b. Golf Committee – meeting date: June 28, at noon at the Parks and Recreation Conference Room: Chair – Erik Torch, Dennis Isernhagen

Torch: Stated the Golf Committee met last week with a video conference with a consultant. Requested Roche to provide more information on this meeting.

Roche: Indicated Jim Filby Williams attended the meeting as he addressed other matters. Stated questions needed to be clarified before moving forward with a consultant. Stated the reclassification of Lester and part of Enger was originally in the comprehensive plan. Stated this was a new realization, requested to take both out, this did not occur before going to City Council. Apologized for causing alarm, and not reviewing the reclassifications on the map.

Torch: opened the floor for questions related to the Golf Committee.

Westerlund: Stated during the Council meeting, Gary Anderson requested a vote to table the approval of the comprehensive plan, despite that the language had already been changed. Mentioned the community awareness was not as thorough as they thought. Stated this topic was tabled for the next week to receive more feedback. Stated she anticipates the plan will be approved during the next meeting. Stated there needs to be more time for the community to review the document to address any questions or concerns. Stated the comprehensive plan has not yet been passed. Stated the amended language related to the golf courses will be included during the next meeting.



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VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Torch: Opened the floor for comments from the Parks Commissioners.

Schmidt: Stated he doesn't expect answers, but wanted to keep topics on the radar. Mentioned the dog waste issue, offered to help with where he could to brainstorm ideas. Mentioned the concern with the porta potties at the bridge that was brought up during the Annual Meeting. Referred to the email that was sent regarding the commercial use permits for bicycles. Stated he would like to see an update on the Emerald Ash Borer management progress.

Roche: Stated he needed to touch base with staff after being absent for a while. Indicated he would touch base with Schmidt once he receives updates.

Schmidt: Stated he understands these topics will be ongoing, mentioned he didn't want these topics to get lost.

Roche: Thanked Schmidt.

IX. New Business

X. Old Business

XI. Division Manager's Report

Torch: Opened the floor for questions related to the Division Manager's Report.

Isernhagen: Reflected the golf concern that occurred on Monday. Mentioned the uprising that occurred came from the golf community. Stated there was a surprise with the response from the amount of people that were not communicated with. Stated he hoped that if City Council addresses this during the next meeting, that someone from Community Planning could explain what all this entails. Stated the planning group at Lower Chester Park has not been contacted by the City regarding what was agreed to. Stated Schmidt and himself visited the rink, indicated that the wrong half may have been removed. Questioned if there is a timeline to implement the plan that Jim Shoberg spent a tremendous amount of time on.

Roche: Complimented all the of the staff that were involved in the Lower Chester Park planning. Indicated the next step is to develop a funding and design plan. Stated there is an internal meeting scheduled within the month. Mentioned design details will not be visited until later this year due to capacity issues. Stated he visited the hockey rink as well, indicated the correct portion has been removed. Stated the formal agreements going forward need to be discussed with the community partner groups involved with Lower Chester. Indicated this has not occurred because the internal scoping meeting has not happened with staff.

Isernhagen: Indicated it would be good to communicate the update with the community groups because of their heavy involvement.



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Roche: Thanked Isernhagen.

Schmidt: Stated that one thing that is missing in the City process, stated this is beyond Parks and Recreation. Indicated what is missing is the planning and community work, mentioning we leave out some humanity within the process. Indicated the conflict between user groups and stakeholders. Stated he would like the City to try and work through the process, acknowledged conflict will always occur, but would like to have something addressed.

Torch: Thanked Schmidt.

XII. Public Comment

Mike Casey (public): Stated he has asked for updates from Park Staff on the Cross City Trail and the Western Waterfront Trail. Indicated he has not received any notifications. Stated over a year ago he was involved in the process to discuss the river route along Oneota. Stated the group recommended a change in the route, and the staff would take a look at this recommendation. Indicated multiple requests to receive information have been sent, but he has heard nothing. Mentioned he would like to receive a response. Stated the Friends of West Duluth is probably the only organization involved with the process of the Cross City Trail. Requested information from the Parks Commissioner that represents his district. Thanked the Parks Commission.

Isernhagen: Questioned if a group has been formed to discuss the communication between Parks Commissioners and City Council.

Torch: Stated a committee has been formed, mentioned the hope to have Westerlund and Counselor Gary Anderson to attend. Mentioned an email chain has started to schedule a meeting.

Isernhagen: Stated the Lower Chester conflict created many hard feelings. Stated he supports Schmidt's recommendation to address a communication process with the community groups, as well as creating a process to address conflict.

Schmidt: Stated the relationship that Isernhagen has with Lower Chester is a good example to show the importance of maintaining and building relationships with our community groups.

Isernhagen: Stated the communication with community groups needs to be taken seriously, stated he has heard many similar comments. Stated conflict will happen, and the need to do a better job with conflict management.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:11 pm. Moved by Commissioner Torch. Second by Commissioner Breeuwer.

XIV. Next Meeting



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The next meeting will be Wednesday July 11, 2018 at City Hall – Council Chambers.