



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of September 12, 2018

City Hall – Council Chambers
411 W 1st St



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Torch called the meeting to order at 5:00 pm.

II. Roll Call

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

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

III. Approval of August 8th Minutes

Commissioner Breeuwer motioned for approval of the July 11th meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Schmidt. Unanimously approved.

IV. Presentations

Torch: Indicated a change with the agenda. Stated Gunnar Johnson, City Attorney, will be presenting first, followed by William Stovern, Park Ranger.

Roche: Stated last month the Parks Commission reviewed a draft protocol for communication to City Council. Indicated Gunnar Johnson will be providing his legal opinion and the process moving forward.

Gunnar Johnson (City Attorney): Thanked the Parks Commission for all the work put into being a commissioner. Stated he has reviewed the city code that Parks Commission is charged with, including the bylaws and policies. Indicated the Parks Commission acts as a body from a set a rules from City Council. Mentioned the executive board is to provide communication to City Council. Stated the City Council receives several pieces from over 30 different boards and commissions. Reflected on the Spirit Landing outcome – stated he was made aware of the concern from the Parks Commission that their voice wasn't heard due to City Council making quick decisions. Stated the Parks Commission acts as an advisory board. Indicated there are times where City Council does not follow the same ideas as other commissions.

Torch: Thanked Gunnar Johnson for the presentation. Indicated the Parks Commission understands the role to act as a body and not individuals. Stated he understands when topics are fast tracked to meet certain deadlines, such as funding deadlines. Indicated the Parks Commission is aware of their advisory role. Stated the frustration from many commissioners was the amount of time spent deliberating. Stated the goal is to provide information to City Council for their consideration when various decisions are being made.

Gunnar Johnson (City Attorney): Stated there is a reason for how City Council is setup. Shared an



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appreciation for how close the Parks Commission works with City Staff. Reflected on the Spirit Landing vote, and how Parks Commission had a different view than the City Council. Stated City Council moved forward knowing that the Parks Commission didn't agree with the vote. Highlighted the Parks Commission has accomplished a lot, and encouraged Parks Commissioners to reflect on the hard work that has been put into being a Parks Commissioner. Mentioned the Parks Commission can speak to the City Council as individuals. Stated the willingness to work with the Parks Commission to develop an alternative. Encouraged the Parks Commissioners to do what is right.

Torch: Questioned if the draft Parks Commission to City Council protocol is unworkable.

Gunnar Johnson: Indicated the document needs some tweaking to move forward. Encouraged the Parks Commission to contact Will if they would like to make changes to work with the City Attorney's Office.

Erik Torch: Indicated the committee will work with Will to modify the draft. Opened the floor for questions.

Schmidt: Thanked Torch for giving his input. Mentioned he disagrees that City Council is aware of all matters when making decisions. Shared the understanding of being an advisory board. Stated there is no interest to have more power. Highlighted it would be helpful to fully understand the term advisory from a legal perspective.

Gunnar Johnson (City Attorney): Indicated City Council is flooded with information – stated the Parks Commission is part of the flood. Mentioned City Council has agenda items bi-weekly that contain 60-80 items per meeting. Advised the Parks Commission to find a way to package the information that would be brought forward to City Council. Highlighted the potential to use the information in the monthly staff report or the Parks Commission agenda. Indicated there is room for the Parks Commissioners to provide a better communication process to City Council.

Schmidt: Thanked Gunnar Johnson.

Gunnar Johnson (City Attorney): Thanked the Parks Commission for the opportunity to present.

Erik Torch: Thanked Gunnar Johnson.

Roche: Thanked Gunnar Johnson for providing the valuable information.

Schmidt: Questioned if there would be an Action Item.

Roche: Indicated there would not be an Action Item. Encouraged the protocol committee to setup a meeting with a City Attorney.

Torch: Thanked Roche.

A. Park Ranger Program (Informational) – William Stovern, Park Ranger



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Roche: Introduced Park Ranger, William Stovern.

William Stovern (Park Ranger): Thanked the Parks Commission for allowing the presentation of the Park Ranger Program. Highlighted the mission of the Park Ranger Program as followed:
“To be visible, available and approachable to visitors, residents, and businesses of Duluth.”

William Stovern (Park Ranger): Highlighted the command structure being as followed:

- Supervising Ranger
- 2 Lead Rangers
- 12 Park Rangers

William Stovern: (Park Ranger) Stated the Park Rangers act as ambassadors, and have provided great information to visitors in Duluth. Stated he is a retired police officer with Duluth Police Department. Mentioned the Lead Rangers were two returning students. Highlighted that all students were criminology students.

William Stovern: (Park Ranger): Reflected on the daily duties for the Supervising Ranger. Stated the work entailed scheduling, training, maintaining fleet and equipment, assigning tasks to the rangers. Indicated the two Lead Rangers provided assistance with the Supervising Ranger duties as needed.

William Stovern (Park Ranger): Reflected on the daily duties for the Park Rangers as followed:

- Check on the Rip Tide Risk and sending resources the Park Point to provide information to beach users.
- Picking up and transporting abandoned animals.
- Picked up found property and abandoned bicycles.
- Patrolling parks and public restrooms – reporting garbage and damage to Park Maintenance.
- Patrolling beaches for fires, parties and drinking.
- Picking up used needles.
- Checking parks daily: Rose Garden, Leif Erikson Park, Lakewalk, Sister Cities Park, Lake Place Park, Bayfront, Enger Park, Park Point.
- Checking public bathrooms in the parks.
- Patrolling trailheads and parking lots.
- Check welfare of homeless in the parks.
- Patrolling during special events.
- Provide information to visitors.

William Stovern (Park Ranger): Stated Park Rangers cannot write tickets, but they provide education. Indicated Park Rangers work in teams of two for safety reasons. Reflected on the equipment used – Duluth Police Department radios, cell phones, rubber gloves, sharps, animal leashes. Stated Shift Reports are completed each day by the Park Rangers. Highlighted the great relationship had with Parks and Recreation.

William Stovern (Park Ranger): Stated Park Rangers checked special events for needles. Indicated



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extra patrol requests could be made by citizen to call in for concerns. Reflected on a list of success stories, including the recovery of a stolen vehicle. Stated Park Rangers were asked to bolo for a suicide female. Indicated Park Rangers patrolled and located the female, Duluth Police Department brought her to protective custody. Stated each Park Ranger carries gloves and sharp containers in the vehicles. Highlighted that Park Rangers made their first “recovered stolen” by reporting a vehicle that had its windows broken. Mentioned Park Rangers also assisted with reporting a stolen bike from the DECC parking lot – the bike was returned to the property owner.

Torch: Thanked Park Ranger, William Stovern. Opened the floor for questions.

Vogtman: Questioned if the containers in the Parks were from a previous grant.

Roche: Indicated the grant was for a Parks Fund Grant that was not approved. Stated continued work is being done with the county and Health and Safety to address these concerns.

Schmidt: Thanked William Stovern for the presentation. Reflected on a story of a dedicated Park Ranger who stood at the end of his property when a famous guest was along Park Point. Questioned if there is a protocol to address concerns and updates to the Parks and Recreation Department.

William Stovern (Park Ranger): Indicated communication with the Parks and Recreation Department has been good. Stated there are monthly meetings with Park Ranger staff and Park Maintenance staff.

Schmidt: Thanked William Stovern.

Chad Nogorski (Duluth Police Department): Stated he oversees the Park Rangers from an administrative side. Stated there are 3 seasonal positions that will likely turn to 5 by next year. Thanked Cheryl Skafte for the work put into to grow and improve the Park Ranger program. Indicated there are meetings every 3 months to discuss what is going well with Will Roche. Stated an educational campaign will take place to discuss dog laws for the City. Indicated that after warnings have been written, citations will start to take place for chronic offenders.

Schmidt: Questioned where Park Rangers patrol.

Chad Nagorski (Duluth Police Department): Indicated Park Rangers are spread out on a rotation, based on an east/west district. Indicated there will be training for rangers to use bikes for the Lakewalk. Indicated many of the staff are only 67 day employees, indicated the more trainings there are, the less time they spend in the field. Thanked Parks and Recreation for the great collaborative with the Police Department.

Roche: Mentioned the sincere appreciation for Chad Nagorski and William Stovern. Reflected on the relationship between Park Maintenance and the Park Rangers. Thanked Duluth Police Department and the Park Ranger program.



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- B. Western Waterfront Trail Planning – Fall/Winter Process for Planning Mud Lake Segment (Informational) – Diane Desotelle, Natural Resources Coordinator and Lisa Luukkala, Senior Parks Planner

Luukkala: Introduced herself as the Senior Parks Planner for Duluth Parks and Recreation. Indicated the work done with Natural Resources Coordinator, Diane Desotelle for the future of Mud Lake and the ecosystem benefits it provides. Stated Diane will present the process of the study for Mud Lake.

Torch: Congratulated Diane Desotelle on her transition from Provisional Natural Resources Coordinator to a permanent role with the City of Duluth.

Desotelle: Thanked Torch. Indicated there was a desire from stakeholders to hold a scientific analysis in order to come up with a future design for Mud Lake. Indicated the close partnership with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Environmental Protection Agency in order to provide metrics for design options for the causeway. Stated the analysis will include an environmental, economic, and social perspective for the design.

Desotelle: Indicated there will be two projects that will address aquatic habitat metrics as well as human service metrics. Thanked the Great Lakes Initiative for the funding of this study. Stated the Army Corps of Engineers will be collecting chemical and physical of the soils and sediments that make up the causeway. Indicated the study will take place in October. Stated the sampling will take up to 3 weeks to collect.

Desotelle: Shared the City will hire a contractor to develop an analysis of the findings from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Indicated 4 different designs will be developed for the causeway including

- Leave the causeway as is for rail use.
- Retain the rail, with a southern and northern opening for water flow – this will include bridge like structures.
- Only foot traffic, with a southern and northern opening for water flow.
- Eliminate the causeway for increased water flow and restore aquatic habitat.

Desotelle: Stated the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Natural Resources will perform the habitat analysis, while the Environmental Protection Agency will provide an analysis for the human service component. Indicated the analysis performed will help to make a final decision for the causeway. Opened the floor for questions.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions.

Breeuwer: Thanked Desotelle for the study. Requested the information to be compiled into a form. Indicated he would like to see what is a realistic plan for the entire estuary.

Desotelle: Questioned if he would like to see terrestrial or within the estuary itself.

Breeuwer: Indicated that both would be helpful.



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Desotelle: Indicated we are aware of soil contamination issues towards Lake Superior, categorized as areas for concern. Stated the river will always have some sort of level of contamination – including mercury, which is hard to maintain due to its complexity.

Breeuwer: Stated he would like to see areas that are slated to have work performed to be listed based on priority for the causeway.

Desotelle: Thanked Breeuwer, indicated more information will be provided as progress is made.

Schmidt: Agreed with Breeuwer. Highlighted we are lucky to have a Natural Resources Coordinator. Expressed gratitude for including the social aspects for the study. Stated he would like to know the thoughts of West Duluth community.

Vogtman: Questioned when the analysis would be available.

Desotelle: Indicated the analysis would concur January or February.

Vogtman: Questioned who is providing the analysis.

Desotelle: Indicated the sampling will be performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Vogtman: Questioned if the Department of Natural Resources will be involved.

Desotelle: Indicated the Department of Natural Resources will be involved.

Torch: Thanked Desotelle. Opened the floor for public comment. No comment.

V. Commission Committees

- A. Administrative (E-board) – meeting date: Thursday, September 27th at noon at the Parks Office
Chair – Erik Torch – Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer [William Roche]
- B. Golf Committee – meeting date: September 20 at noon at the Parks office, Chair – Erik Torch,
Dennis Isernhagen

Roche: Indicated Zenith completed the golf survey.

Torch: Questioned if we would see the results during the next Parks Commission Meeting.

Roche: Stated conversation would have to be made with Administration.

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Joyce: Stated there are piles of removed invasive species in Lincoln Park. Expressed a concern of fire hazard.



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Roche: Thanked Joyce for the comment. Indicated he would touch base with Community Action Duluth.

Joyce: Stated the concern for the growing homeless population in Duluth Parks. Indicated this topic should be on record during Parks Commission Meetings.

Roche: Indicated Parks and Recreation is aware of the homeless concerns. Indicated the partnership with the Homeless Coalition and Duluth Police Department. Stated meetings occur on a regular basis with our partners.

Joyce: Thanked Roche.

IX. New Business

X. Old Business

- A. Commission Communication Process to City Council (Action Item) – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Torch: Indicated more work needed to be done with the Parks Commission to City Council communication protocol.

XI. Division Report

Roche: Stated the excitement for the growing recreational programming Parks and Recreation will be providing for the 2019 year. Indicated Alicia Watts the Assistant Manager will be starting on Monday. Indicated this fall will be the final round for the Parks Fund Grant Program. Indicated the funds used for this program will be allocated to address capital and maintenance needs.

Torch: Questioned if the Parks Fund was budgeted 100,000 per year.

Roche: Confirmed. Indicated the primary focus is capital renewal such as playgrounds and bridges within our parks.

Torch: Congratulated Jessica Schoonover for transitioning from the Provisional Administrative Clerical Specialist to a permanent position.

Torch: Opened the floor for questions from the Parks Commission.

Isernhagen: Questioned the progress of the Lakewalk Mini Master Plan. Indicated the lack of signage related to bikes on the Lakewalk.

Roche: Indicated the October storm delayed the process for developing a master plan for the Lakewalk. Indicated there is pressure to move forward in order to qualify for certain funds for the



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Lakewalk. Stated the Lakewalk needs to have our full attention due to the complexity and popularity to this project. Mentioned the master planning process may occur in beginning of 2019.

Isernhagen: Thanked Roche.

Schmidt: Questioned if there is an opportunity to have trial studies on the Lakewalk. Stated these could help with the master planning process.

Roche: Indicated the City is currently looking into this.

Schmidt: Thanked Roche.

Isernhagen: Indicated the Friends of the Lakewalk have done 3 different studies. Mentioned the safety concern when bikes do not announce themselves when approaching another group.

Edmondson: Indicated that announcing himself has been known as a standard while on a bike. Stated that a speed limit would not be good for the Lakewalk. Mentioned he has educated others when they do not indicate that they are passing.

Roche: Agreed with Edmondson that having speed limit is not a good idea for the Lakewalk.

XII. Public Comment

John Ramos (public): Reflected on the outcome of the Spirit Landing decision. Indicated he has recordings from ten years ago related to the water access. Stated there was expectation from Administration for the Parks Commission to approve the vote for Spirit Landing. Suggested to have Administration notify the Parks Commission if a decision was set, making meetings shorter.

Mike Casey (public): Indicated the City uses the term, "partners" frequently. Requested to know who are the partners are. Questioned if the Western Waterfront Trail would come in conjunction with the causeway study. Encouraged the Parks Commissioners to ride the train, indicated it could be the last year to have the train. Stated he believes the study will mostly focus on the natural resources aspects, and less on the social aspects. Indicated there is a survey being distributed now, stated results show the majority of people would never hike or paddle the area. Stated he supports John Ramos.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:26 pm. Moved by Commissioner Crosby. Second by Commissioner Breeuwer.

XIV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday October 10, 2018 at City Hall – Room 303.