



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes of November 14, 2018

City Hall – Council Chambers
411 W 1st St



I. Call Meeting to Order

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

II. Roll Call

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

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

III. Approval of September 12th Minutes

Commissioner Isernhagen motioned for approval of the September 12th meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Vogtman. Unanimously approved.

IV. Presentations

A. Senior Program Update (Informational) – Theresa Mellinger, Senior Program Coordinator

William Roche: Introduced the Senior Program Coordinator, Theresa Mellinger. Provided an overview of the presentation. Highlighted what the Senior Program has to offer to the community including the health and wellbeing benefits.

Theresa Mellinger: Shared an overview of the Senior Holiday Parties held at three different centers including Morgan Park, Evergreen, and Portman vs. one big party at the DECC. Indicated Morgan Park had an attendance of 98 people at last year's party, Evergreen hosted 114, and Portman had 93, which totaled to 305 seniors in 2017. Stated attendance was much lower when the parties were hosted at the DECC.

Theresa Mellinger: Reflected on the Senior Appreciation Day event. Indicated the purpose of this event was to recognize the seniors who had provided volunteer service to the program over the course of a year. Stated 129 attended for the Senior Appreciation Day this year. Shared this event involves our partners including Walgreens and AEOA.

Theresa Mellinger: Highlighted the All City Senior Picnic, which was an event that was brought back for the first time in over ten years. Stated 197 tickets were sold and 189 seniors showed up to attend. Indicated the food was catered from BB Meat Wagon and AEOA contributed to the burger fixings. Stated seniors enjoyed playing outdoor games including shoe kick, ladder golf, face painting, and hula-hoop contests. Stated Mayor Larson played a round of disc golf with the seniors. Mentioned transportation was provided for those who needed assistance getting to the picnic.

Theresa Mellinger: Reflected on the 100 Year Old Birthday Party, which the City honors those who are



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over 100 years old. Indicated the largest birthday party honored 13 birthday guests who received a certificate signed by the mayor.

Theresa Mellinger: Listed the partners for the Parks and Recreation Senior Program including RSVP, AEOA, Age Well, Walgreens, St. Croix Hospice, and Monarch Estates.

Theresa Mellinger: Highlighted the ongoing events including bingo, card games, dominos, defensive driving classes, mahjong, dining, exercise and weight loss programs, crafts, and men's coffee that meets on a regular basis.

Theresa Mellinger: Mentioned the goal to attract younger seniors to attend various senior programming events.

William Roche: Thanked Theresa Mellinger for providing the Senior Program highlights to the Parks Commission. Mentioned that many activities would not happen if it was not for Theresa's involvement. Opened the floor for questions from the Parks Commission.

Joyce: Thanked Theresa for the work done.

Schmidt: Thanked Theresa Mellinger for her involvement. Mentioned the sense of community feeling while attending these events. Indicated the awesome opportunity to bring senior awareness.

Isernhagen: Encouraged Parks Commissioners to get involved with the upcoming Senior Holiday Parties.

Torch: Thanked Theresa Mellinger for the presentation and updates on the growing Senior Program.

B. Zoo Master Plan (Informational) – Erik Simonson, Lake Superior Zoological Society CEO

William Roche: Introduced the Lake Superior Zoo CEO, Erik Simonson. Indicated Erik would be providing a presentation on the Zoo Master Plan and its future.

Erik Simonson: Stated he has held the role as the Zoo CEO for 14 months. Provided an overview on the history of the zoo regarding the concept plan creation.

Simonson: Reflected on the flood in 2012, indicated a plugged culvert at the base of Grand Avenue caused flooding to the zoo from Kingsbury Creek. Stated this was not anyone's fault. Indicated 14 animals were killed from the storm. Mentioned the passion held by the West Duluth Community about the Zoo. Indicated during March 2016, City Council approved the Lake Superior Zoo/Fairmount Park concept plan, reducing the footprint by 50%. Indicated the cost estimates for total revitalization was \$15 million dollars. Stated during May 2016 the last animal was transferred from the exhibit known as Northern Territories. Indicated the west side of Kingsbury Creek has been closed off due to lack of animals being present in the exhibit. Mentioned that on June 2016, City Council approved a 10-year management plan between the society and the City of Duluth. Reflected that in 2009 the City of Duluth left the zoo business and was transferred to the Lake Superior Zoological Society. Stated during



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the fall of 2016, the Lake Superior Zoological Society received a 5 year Association of Zoo's and Aquariums Accreditation. Indicated that 10% of zoos and aquariums are accredited in the nation.

Simonson: Stated in 2017 the first project being the Bear Country Exhibit, which replaced Polar Shores that was ruined with the flood. Stated the actual cost of the project being \$4.8 million dollars, when it was previously estimated at \$2.5 million dollars. Indicated the cost difference was outside of budget. Shared when he was first on boarded the first thing to do was create a sustainable operations budget.

Simonson: Stated the 2016 concept plan from a zoo perspective was drastically underestimated from a cost perspective. Indicated the society would need to fundraise for \$25-28 million dollars. Reflected on the AZA accreditation. Stated the current plan doesn't allow for growth, and the need to provide the proper space for animal health and welfare.

Simonson: Indicated the plan that was created did not allow for growth. Stated animals exhibits are different today, which focus on animal health and welfare. Stated the shrinking plan was intended to provide a larger amount of smaller animals.

Simonson: Mentioned during September 2018, he went back to the architect who created the original plans a few years ago. Mentioned the conversation had with the architect to make the Bear Country exhibit affordable. Shared that conversations held included scaling back and other alternatives.

Simonson: Displayed attendance for the past five years at the Lake Superior Zoo, indicated the need to bring the numbers up from before the flood. Stated the total tourism rate in the Duluth area being 6 million visitors annually. Stated attendance at the zoo prior to the flood had 140-160k visitors annually. Mentioned the goal is to attract more tourists to the zoo. Indicated 70% of the attendance from the zoo comes from outside the Duluth area. Displayed the 2016 Concept Plan Map.

Simonson: Shared the comfort felt with the original \$15 million dollar project to fund for the bear exhibit is much higher than what it would actually cost. Highlighted that currently, \$4 million dollars has been raised from the St. Louis River Corridor half and half funds, as well as private dollars. Indicated the zoo was successful in securing state bonding dollars. Indicated the capital campaign held raised a few hundred thousand dollars. Reflected on the old puma exhibit and bear den (from the 1930's) and the plan to be revitalized with potentially black bears. Indicated the cost to complete the Forest Discovery Zone would be \$500k to rehab the holding building and adjacent exhibits. Stated \$250k would be used to expand the current snow leopard and lynx exhibit. Stated the old polar bear and seal exhibit would be reconfigured to potentially have a brown bear exhibit that could hold cubs, the total amount being \$3 million dollars.

Simonson: Mentioned the desire to bring back the river otter exhibit, stated this is ambitious for only having \$4 million dollars. Displayed flood plain overlay for the Lake Superior Zoo Master Plan. Stated the reconstruction where the underpass where Kingsbury Creek goes under Grand Avenue was greatly expanded, which should prevent any similar damage like what was done in the 2012 flood. Stated the corner of the old elephant house being barely within the flood plane. Stated



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conversations have happened where any potential flooding issues could be resolved with a berm. Indicated the building is structurally sound.

Simonson: Stated the goal to revitalize already existing exhibits. Indicated the hope to be able to provide a behind the scenes tour for visitors to increase the annual attendance. Shared the goal to expand educational opportunities, which would focus on conservation. Stated the Lake Superior Zoological Society is 100% committed to work with the City of Duluth.

Simonson: Opened the floor for questions.

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

Schmidt: Questioned the expectations from the Parks Commission. Indicated the Parks Commission held a vote in 2016 on accepting the zoo concept plan. Questioned if the Parks Commission would follow the same path of voting prior to City Council.

Jim Filby Williams: Suggested the Parks Commission to focus on the park and trail connection. Mentioned the area being Fairmount Park. Indicated the zoological society would take the lead in developing and presenting their vision for the City to respond to. Mentioned the City took the lead in developing the 2016 plan, but will now take a step back from the plan development process.

Schmidt: Indicated the City set land and financial boundaries, stated the finances did not come through for the plan. Questioned if City Administration will be holding on the current concept of Fairmount Park, or if Administration would be willing to explore different options.

Jim Filby Williams: Stated City Council would like to restore the 19-acre footprint in order to provide the opportunity to succeed. Stated that Administration has an interest in the long-term success of the zoo. Indicated the trust with the zoo to steward the process to keep it alive. Reflected on the struggle of the zoo the last several years. Indicated the level of urgency to give partners of the society to give what is needed to succeed.

Schmidt: Questioned if Simonson looked into a maintenance plan. Indicated he is a believer in the zoo and its mission, but mentioned a concern for maintenance burdens.

Simonson: Indicated the increased costs would be for the upkeep of animals and personnel, which is built in the business model of increasing attendance. Indicated there would not be any operation changes, as the footprint is not increasing. Stated maintenance is already being performed at the areas he is wishing to revitalize.

Vogtman: Questioned the next steps going forward. Questioned if there would be a new Master Plan for the zoo and Fairmount Park. Questioned if there would be a public process to provide input. Questioned what the timelines would be.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated the society received state funds, and the urgency to get the new appealing exhibits open in order to drive attendance. Indicated the City wants to move forward



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without substantial delay. Stated the need for the society to proceed with revitalizing the already existing exhibits that are available. Highlights the new concept plans would go to the Parks Commission for review, but the process must move forward. Stated the wish for Erik to present again on the future plans.

Simonson: Stated information would be shared to the Parks Commission. Indicated the reluctance to provide visuals, as he is hesitant to spend money until the society is for sure going down the path.

Isernhagen: Questioned the process of the Capital Campaign.

Simonson: Indicated it was known in 2016 for the need to have a Capital Campaign for the zoo if they wanted to be successful. Indicated it has been difficult to get started with turnover in leadership. Stated the Capital Campaign was launched in April 2018, and a couple of hundred thousand dollars have been raised. Mentioned the brakes were put on the campaign in order to finalize plan details before going to far with fundraising. Stated it was difficult to have conversations with potential donors without defining what exactly would be done to revitalize the zoo.

Breeuwer: Stated that no one on the commission are zoo experts. Indicated that the Parks Commission would be interested in seeing the financial plan to make the zoo sustainable. Mentioned the request to look at the trail access plan to sit down with the City and the Parks Commission. Questioned if this limits the community as far as providing feedback from a design perspective.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated he was speaking from an Administration perspective, not City Council. Stated Administration's support to go back to the original footprint and to accommodate a satisfactory trail connection. Stated residents are disconnected from the river, and this would provide the opportunity for the residents to have access. Indicated this has become a possibility with MNDOT by having a trail installed under their bridge. Indicated the MNDNR has plans to restore the mouth of Kingsbury Bay next year. Stated the City would not provide additional funding for Phase 1 of the original half and half allocation. Mentioned the City's concern with the cost estimates and indicated the City hired to mock bid out the Bear Country exhibit to get actual local bid prices. Indicated this is done frequently because often engineer and architects often have estimates that are low. Indicated the mock bids will verify the facts and provide ease to the City when decisions are made.

Breeuwer: Questioned if this project would be following current hydrology policies.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated the current awareness of hydrology needs. Stated in the past flood plains were not looked into as much as they are now.

Breeuwer: Questioned if the topic of security was looked at.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated security concerns will be taken into consideration.

Schmidt: Questioned if the zoo goes under the 50 foot buffer for setback requirements made by the MNDNR. Questioned if there are other similar regulations to be followed.



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Jim Filby Williams: Indicated the current layout was made prior to the setback laws.

Schmidt: Questioned how the existing elephant house in the flood plain would be addressed.

Simonson: Indicated the area would be looked at by engineers. Stated only the corner of the building is within the flood zone, and the concern can be eliminated by the construction of a berm.

Schmidt: Questioned if the basement within the floodplain would pose a potential problem.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated a berm would be the design remedy to prevent water from over topping.

Edmondson: Questioned if anything in the plan would bring more tourism in the area, reflected on the high attendance of Canal Park.

Jim Filby Williams: Stated Visit Duluth performed studies on visitors of what they do when they visit Duluth. Indicated the high use of trails and mountain biking. Highlighted the Grand Avenue Nordic Center will also generate a tourism interest. Stated a tourist highlight that was addressed in the study was the extension of the Western Waterfront Trail.

Vogtman: Stated the Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad also being a tourist attraction. Questioned if there is any historic grant money that would qualify for the elephant house.

Simonson: Stated the society has looked into applying for grants, mentioned state bonding dollars were allocated towards the zoo.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated the most likely funding opportunity would come from Legacy Arts and Culture pot. Stated the City was recently awarded \$500,000 for the Irvin.

Schmidt: Questioned if this would be an Action Item.

Jim Filby Williams: Stated a concept plan would be brought back to the Parks Commission for the review and approval on a conceptual level of the exhibits and the trail. Indicated the zoo nor Fairmont Park have been approved by both the Parks Commission and City Council. Mentioned this doesn't fit into our conventional process.

Schmidt: Reflected on the Spirit Landing scenario that occurred early this year. Stated he would like to have the information spelled out by City Administration on what is to be expected for the Parks Commission in a timely fashion.

Jim Filby Williams: Confirmed this would be done.

Torch: Congratulated the zoo on finishing the financial year in the black. Reflected on the notable achievement. Questioned the breakdown and the process of the Polar Shores exhibit.



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Simonson: Indicated a million dollars would be spent on the west side of the creek. Indicated the remainder of the funds would be spent on the Polar Shores exhibit.

Torch: Indicated he would like to have an update from Simonson and the opportunity for the public to be updated as planning occurs.

Schmidt: Reflected on being involved with the process that talked about providing educational opportunities. Indicated he supports the potential educational experiences for students and groups. Mentioned he would like to see opportunities for lower income families.

Simonson: Stated the education department and programs are consistently and constantly full. Indicated the 2018 partnership with 2 significant donors was built that allowed members of the Boys and Girls Club as well as the Valley Youth Center free admission to the zoo for a year. Stated it is in their mission to provide opportunities for youth.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated the reason why the Parks Commission and City staff was so heavily involved was because prior zoo administrations has repeatedly come up with plans that had high estimates. Stated the reason why Administration doesn't feel the need to intervene with Erik Simonson's lead.

Torch: Opened the floor for public comment.

Bill Lynch (public): Thanked Senator Simonson for creating a plan that fits his needs. Indicated he used to be a zoo member and mentioned the desire to become a member again with the excitement of the new plans. Indicated that if there were not zoo's many animals would be extinct. Shared a story for a recent PBS story that tigers are up in numbers because of zoo's. Indicated the importance of having zoo's.

Mike Casey (public): Stated his representation for Friends of the West Duluth Parks and Trails indicated the support for the Zoological Society. Thanked Simonson for his leadership for a difficult and complex issue. Indicated that Mini Master Plans are meant to be flexible. Stated the Friends of the West Duluth Parks and Trails are looking forward to being involved with the trail alignment at the zoo. Indicated there is critical need for all parties involved, questioned which parties are involved. Reflected on the organization of Friends of the West Duluth Parks and Trails and their involvement with the Cross City Trail. Shared the worry of not having the Cross City Trail if the spur to the Fairmont is completed . Stated the funding for the Cross City Trail should stick with the main route. Mentioned the Parks Commission asked great questions as City Council did not ask any questions. Stated the hope to have the zoo get it's fair share of the half and half tax.

C. Lakewalk Update (Informational) – Lisa Luukkala, Senior Parks Planner

Lisa Luukkala: Indicated that just over a year ago, the Property and Facilities Management Team wrapped up an assets inventory review of the Lakewalk corridor. Stated she was preparing an RFP for the Lakewalk Mini Master Plan. Indicated that a couple of days prior to posting, the October Storm Surge occurred and caused extensive damage to the Lakewalk. Stated the



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postponement of the plan until further shoreline assessment could be completed. Shared the key elements for repair. Shared just over a month ago, shoreline repairs that were made were damaged by another storm. Indicated the City is currently seeking funds – and the City was notified that FEMA considers the City eligible for disaster relief.

Lisa Luukkala: Displayed the detour map. Stated the public wants to have a Lakewalk Mini Master Plan

1. Address time sensitive infrastructure.
2. Seek necessary assistance.
3. Identify opportunities for redesign that build resiliency without compromising access.
4. Develop scope of study for the Lakewalk Mini Master Plan.
5. Work with Image Canal Park and the Essentia Campus expansion.

Luukkala: Shared the internal team with consist of City Engineering, Property and Facilities Management, Park Maintenance, Community Planning, Business Development, and Parks and Recreation. Displayed the current trail closure being Endion to Leif Erickson. Shared Phase II will follow a spring timeline. Displayed the new boardwalk expanding from a 6ft to 8ft path and a paved path expanding to 12'. Shared this would allow emergency vehicles into the area. Showed the concrete wall would protect the trail corridor in the event of other large-scale events. Stated in early 2019, will be solicitation proposals for a consultant. Indicated this would be a yearlong planning process that would include reviewing ADA access, rules and regulations, vegetation management, defining short term and long-term needs, building connection, signage and wayfinding, user conflicts and congestion, development of adjacent projects to the Lakewalk, commercial use, and public water access points.

Luukkala: Indicated other departments have done amazing work to engage the community such as Imagine Canal Park. Stated the information gathered from the pop-up parks being valuable to potentially redesign public spaces. Mentioned the webpage with the Lakewalk will provide updates on the progress of the Lakewalk. Stated information would also be provided in the Division Report. Thanked everyone for their patience – indicated the time taken on a federal level. Stated there are 15 phases in this process, and we are currently in phase 2.

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

Edmondson: Questioned if the area will be elevated. Questioned if the boulder would be wider.

Luukkala: Indicated the area would be re-armored and reassessed.

Torch: Stated when the Lakewalk was first placed, engineering was not taken into consideration.

Luukkala: Agreed with Torch. Indicated technology has gotten better over time.

Vogtman: Reflected on the media attention with the past storms. Indicated it is critical to get this



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done correctly as our tourism depends on it. Questioned if the City has reached out to other communities in the country who have dealt with a similar circumstance.

Luukkala: Indicated that when proposals were submitted after the first storm surge in 2017, there has been conversation with other marine based armored engineering.

Vogtman: Thanked Luukkala.

Isernhagen: Thanked Luukkala. Encouraged to engage with the Friends of the Lakewalk. Indicated the importance of addressing the signage.

Luukkala: Thanked Isernhagen. Indicated that Parks and Recreation has been attending their Annual Meeting.

Schmidt: Indicated if this was an Action Item, to have special attention paid to protect the Lakewalk by not setting ourselves up for failure with another storm surge event. Indicated he would like the City to view the commercial use on the Lakewalk.

Luukkala: Stated a commercial use study that was performed in 2015, indicated it will be revisited in the recommendations for the master planning process.

Schmidt: Questioned if dogs and people are on the list.

Luukkala: Indicated it can be added.

Jim Filby Williams: Stated the priority of Mayor Larson to have climate adaptation involved in the planning. Indicated we will be participating in an International Great Lakes Study that will bring scientific expertise. Mentioned the intent to reinvest in the Lakewalk and shoreline in a way that is resilient.

Schmidt: Encouraged that public education measures should be taken. Indicated the skeptics of the future of the Lakewalk to be sustainable.

Jim Filby Williams: Agreed with Schmidt.

Torch: Indicated there should be an opportunity on interpretation of climate resiliency education.

Torch: Opened the floor for public comment.

Bill Lynch (public): Indicated St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands built an airport on the ocean. Indicated it has survived several Class 5 hurricanes. Encouraged the City to get in contact with St. Thomas.

Torch: Thanked Bill Lynch (public).

Mike Casey (public): Stated Bill has been around the world a couple of times. Questioned the public engagement of the Lakewalk, and the interest to be involved from the beginning. Indicated Friends



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of the Lakewalk is a great organization, but mentioned many are not part of the organization. Mentioned that it would be good to address the congestion concerns. Reflected on the bike lane protection that was installed by MNDOT near the construction by M and H.

D. 2018 Fall Grant Awards (Action Required) – William Roche, Parks and Recreation Manager

Roche: Stated this was the last Parks Fund Grant round. Indicated 30% of Parks and Recreation spending has been reduced. Stated the many needs that need to be addressed. Stated Parks and Recreation has lost 30-40% of its spending power due to increasing cost of benefits. Indicated we need to plan for the future, therefore, ending the Parks Fund Grant.

Roche: Stated the criteria that were weighed heavily – construction ready and serving the widest audience. Indicated it was a competitive grant round with a total of 9 applications and only \$15,000 to be awarded.

Roche: Listed the applicants who were awarded a Park Fund Grant, each awarded \$3K.

- COGGS: mountain bike skills park at Keene Creek Park
- Duluth Superior Sailing Association: new life jackets and boat motor for rescue boat.
- Gary New Duluth: rock material for skate park base.
- Superior Hiking Trail: trail restoration from Spirit Mountain chalet to campground.
- Woodland Hockey: improved lighting for ice rinks.

Schmidt: Questioned when the Duluth Traverse would be completed.

Torch: Indicated the skills park is part of the Master Plan.

Breeuwer: Stated the skills park is referring to mountain bike track.

Schmidt: Indicated he is not opposed to the skills park.

Roche: Indicated construction to the Keene Creek Park will occur next year with CDBG funds to spend. Stated half and half funds will also need to be expended, indicated the skills park is a component within the construction.

Action Item: Schmidt motioned to move. Second by Crosby. Call the motion to Vote. Unanimously approved.

V. Commission Committees

- A. Administrative (E-board) – meeting date: Monday, November 26th at noon at the Parks Office
Chair – Erik Torch – Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer [William Roche]
- B. Golf Committee – meeting date: November 15 at noon at the Parks office, Chair – Erik Torch, Dennis Isernhagen

Torch: Stated during the E-Board Meeting that voting for 2019 officers will be taking place in January.



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Indicated he will no longer be part of the Parks Commission for the 2019 year. Stated he has tasked Crosby to be in charge of the nominating committee.

Crosby: Encouraged the Commission to send recommendations via email.

Torch: Questioned if there would be a golf update. Indicated the final outcome has not yet been made – indicated there is a meeting tomorrow. Stated Jim Filby Williams is working with Administration to finalize. Stated the new CAO will be starting on Monday.

Roche: Stated a tremendous amount of work has been done by our consultants and staff to curate a report. Indicated more work needs to be done before sharing the research that was performed. Indicated the Golf Committee will be meeting tomorrow, and a new CAO will be starting in the near future.

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

Schmidt: Indicated Brooks Anderson has put together a peace walk that visits memorials around Duluth. Encouraged individuals to take the peace walk.

Torch: Stated there is a Great Outdoors Party held at Bent Paddle starting at 5:30pm. Encouraged the Commission to attend to provide support to the organizations involved.

IX. New Business

- A. Meet the New Assistant Manager (Informational) – Alicia Watts, Parks and Recreation Assistant Manager

Roche: Stated Alicia comes to Duluth from the Twin Cities with over 10 years of recreation and programming experience on the city and county level. Stated her work with Three River Parks District. Stated Alicia holds a Environmental Education Degree from Bemidji State University. Mentioned the joy that it has been to work with Alicia in the last month and the impression she has already made.

Watts: Stated her and her family are excited to be in Duluth. Indicated that she is impressed with the recreational opportunities and access.

Torch: Thanked and welcomed Alicia. Questioned what her favorite Duluth attraction has been.

Watts: Stated the kids are obsessed with the bridge. Stated her husband likes the fly-fishing and Alicia has loved all the trails.

Torch: Stated the transition with Will taking on a new position in Virginia. Expressed sadness of losing Will to New Port News. Stated the gratitude held with the work that was completed by Will.

Roche: Thanked Torch. Stated it was not his family's intention to be in Duluth for such a short time. Indicated that his wife also works in the same sector, making it difficult for her to find an opportunity in



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the area.

Torch: Thanked Will for everything done for the City.

Roche: Stated it has been a pleasure.

X. Old Business

XI. Division Report

Schmidt: Questioned the process of the division budget.

Roche: Stated a presentation on the Operations budget was given last night. Stated the Capital Budget presentation would be held on December 10th.

Schmidt: Questioned the progress with meeting the City Attorney on developing a communication protocol.

Roche: Stated he has not made progress with him leaving. Indicated it is a discussion that still needs to occur.

Torch: Stated he would touch base with Jim Filby Williams on the communication protocol.

Crosby: Questioned when the WWI Memorial would be installed.

Roche: Stated this would occur in 2019. Indicated the estimates were more than doubled than what was anticipated. Highlighted the need to value engineer the project. Stated this project will start again in spring or summer of next year.

Crosby: Shared that she has friends in New Port News.

Roche: Stated he would love to meet her friends.

Schmidt: Shared the need to have the Division Report occur even after Will's departure.

Roche: Shared he does not have a role in creating the Division Report. Stated dedicated staff know the importance of providing updates to the Parks Commission. Stated Jessica Schoonover takes the lead in making this report happen.

Schmidt: Indicated he is not surprised. Indicated that Will has left an impact and is hopeful that this will continue. Stated he knew Will had a vision on what Duluth Parks and Recreation should be.

Roche: Thanked Schmidt for the kind words. Indicated that many Parks and Recreation staff are new, but incredibly dedicated. Stated that you cannot teach compassion. Stated the community and City greatly need the Parks Commission. Indicated the need for the Parks Commission for the



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community.

Torch: Questioned transition plan process for a new manager.

Jim Filby Williams: Stated the Parks and Recreation Manager position has been posted for a couple of weeks now. Indicated we are proceeding with hiring without delay. Indicated that during this transition period, Alicia Watts will oversee all programming and administrative functions while Lisa Luokkala will serve as an Interim Assistant Manager for stewardship functions. Stated Alicia and Lisa will directly report to him. Stated he will dearly miss Will.

XII. Public Comment

Denette Lynch (public): Thanked the Parks Commission for asking for a WWI Memorial update and the Division Report. Thanked Jessica Schoonover for completing the Division Reports. Questioned how the smaller projects such as horse shoes and bocce can move forward at Wade and Wheeler while we wait for bigger funding for the ballfields.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated that some projects don't compete well with largely funded projects. Indicated the planning and design process of Wade and Wheeler will continue with the dollars we currently have on hand.

Denette Lynch (public): Questioned what the timeline would be.

Jim Filby Williams: Indicated the process of managing construction projects. Stated the scope is develop a project occurs first, followed by the creation of engineering documents. Indicated year two the bid goes out to construct the project. Indicated funds have been allocated towards Wade and Wheeler this year, and a bid would go out to "T" up the project in January 2020.

Denette Lynch (public): Questioned if horse shoes could be shifted in order to have the dog park rink at Merritt Park.

Jim Filby Williams: Thanked Denette Lynch for the question and he couldn't answer at this time. Indicated there are much fewer Parks and Recreation Staff compared to 2008. Stated there are also many more projects compared to 2008.

Denette Lynch (public): Indicated Duluth Dog Parks would provide all the funding, installation, and maintenance performed at the Merritt rink dog park.

Jim Filby Williams: Thanked Denette, encouraged her to discuss further at a different time.

Mike Casey (public): Provided an update from the last City Council Meeting. Indicated the Heritage Preservation Commission and the Planning Commission passed unanimously the Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad historic designation, moving forward to City Council. Indicated Joel Sipress tried to table it. Stated the vote was 7-1, with one City Councilor not present. Stated it was unfortunate that the City Council felt this was a "train thing" when it is the railroad right of way that was trying to be designated as historic. Encouraged everyone to look at the article in the Duluth News Tribune that



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describes the Lake Superior Mississippi Railroad's importance. Stated Lincoln sent the Supreme Court Justice to Duluth in 1870 because it was a big deal. Stated it was disappointed to know that City Council went against what was advised by the commissions. Indicated that Joel Sipress will be getting in contact with the Parks Commission for their involvement in the future. Indicated he was speaking as a representative of Friends of the West Duluth Parks and Trails. Stated it was nice to know that Denette got answers to questions tonight and that he seldom does. Stated he was not allowed to be a stakeholder during the Keene Creek restoration, indicated Friends of Western Duluth Parks and Trails are an organization with by laws and is recognized by the State. Indicated the group interest in being part of the planning process of the new COGGS trail. Stated he has requested minutes from the meeting, but he has not received them yet. Thanked the Parks Commission.

XIII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm. Moved by Commissioner Breeuwer. Second by Commissioner Isernhagen.

XIV. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday January 9, 2018 at City Hall – Room 303.