



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes January 13, 2021

### Webex



#### I. Call Meeting to Order

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

#### II. Roll Call

Present: Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Tjaard Breeuwer, Britt Rohrbaugh, Jenny Peterson, Barb Darland, Natalie Chin, Noah Kramer, Jill Joyce, City Council Liaison – Arik Forsman, St. Louis County Commissioner – Ashley Grimm

Not Present: David Kirby - ISD 709 School Board Liaison

#### III. Approval of December 9 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Breeuwer motioned for approval of the December 9 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Chin. Unanimously approved.

#### IV. Presentations

##### A. Draft Waabizheshikana Heritage Interpretation Plan (For Future Action) Cliff Knettel, Senior Planner

Presentation slides provided by Sam Geer, President of Urban Ecosystems and John Koepke from Urban Ecosystems.

Demmer questioned how successful the social pinpoint tool has been and what other platforms have been used to collect public comment. Sam Geer shared many comments have been emailed, as well an online form that has been utilized by a smaller group of people. Shared there is likelihood that having digital meeting platforms could lead to less public comments.

Demmer questioned the cost of the project. Geer indicated the estimate will be finalized soon. Demmer questioned if the cost estimate could be shared to the commission before the next meeting. Knettel indicated this can occur. Demmer thanked Sam and Knettel, stated full support of this project. Jim Filby Williams mentioned US Steel has committed to fund a portion. In addition, the EPA improvements at Munger Landing, which would include a portion of funding for the Waabizheshikana Interpretive project. Stated the City will be meeting with the Fond du Lac Band soon to review and finalize the budget.

Chin questioned who drafted the materials and how they will incorporate the historical violence that has occurred. Geer stated Christine Carlson shared a deep interest with the people in this area. Stated the history of the Treaties that were signed at FDL, the tragedy during 1815, where supplies that were promised were not delivered. Shared they listened to all stories to curate messaging. Koepke mentioned they are sharing difficult stories that have been brought to their attention to bring healing and recognition.

Darland questioned what the total length of the trail will be. Geer stated around 10 miles. Koepke indicated the story poles will be placed at approximately each mile, which also serves as a mile marker.

Jim Filby Williams shared there will be an additional implementation phase, which includes a separate process for the US Steel segment, which the public will view detailed images of the proposed artwork. Stated the City partnered with the Fond du Lac Band, which is primary and requested the Fond du Lac



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Band to assist and advise the City and Urban Ecosystems.

#### **B. 2021 Capital Overview (Informational) Jess Peterson, Manager**

Jenny Peterson requested more information on the open space projects, questioned how the land will be used. Filby Williams stated many Duluthian's don't know that many spaces are not owned by the City nor are they permanently protected. Shared the City has been working with the County to identify essential properties and obtain in affordable ways. Highlighted the City is investing \$100,000 to obtain \$7 million dollars of land for permanent protection. Areas of focus this year include Amity Lester, Piedmont, St. Louis River Area, and Mission Creek. Jenny Peterson questioned if these areas will be official parkland. Filby Williams shared the City will commit to environmental protection, but how we designate the property could be different. Shared some will be public park, some for the Duluth Natural Areas program, wetlands, areas near watersheds for trout stream protection, but none will be designated for development.

Demmer questioned how much of the 450 acres of the Lester/Amity area will occur this year. Filby Williams shared they will pursue all of it with the County, but they retain the right to determine on a parcel by parcel basis. Shared there will likely be an agreement for 95% of the proposed areas.

Demmer questioned if there is an opportunity to change the Parks budget, as it is capped and decreasing annually. Jessica Peterson shared the previous tax levy did not include inflation. Expressed gratitude towards the Division for maximizing the use of dollars, which have decreased every year. Shared it is a good point in time to discuss the size and scope of the parks fund in order to meet needs in the future within the upcoming Master Planning process.

Darland questioned if we partner with Clean Water Legacy and the MN Parks and Trails for grant opportunities. Jess Peterson shared the Division has been very fortunate to receive funds on a number of different projects.

#### **C. Lakewalk and Sea Wall Repair Project (Informational) Cliff Knettel, Senior Planner and Jim Filby Williams, Director of Parks, Properties and Libraries**

#### **V. Commissioner Committees**

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Thursday, February 25 at noon via Webex  
Amanda Crosby, Tjaard Breeuwer [Jess Peterson, Alicia Watts, Jessica Haig, Jim Filby Williams]

Public Golf Committee – Tuesday, February 16 at 5 p.m., virtual meeting on Webex  
David Demmer, Jenny Peterson, Noah Kramer [Jess Peterson, Jessica Haig, Jim Filby Williams]

#### **VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports**

Demmer shared the Public Golf Committee met in December, discussion focused on reviewing the Enger Golf Course facilities. Shared Jess Peterson and Jim Filby Williams gave an overview of the current situation; and the group discussed what it would take to look at Enger improvements and how to prioritize the capital improvements, and creating a plan. Shared there was a motion made by the Public Golf Committee to accept and recommend approving the ten major points of improvements for Enger, which will start conversations for next steps – including a capital plan. Stated committee members have been drafting steps to reach this goal. Stated progress is being made, and tough topics will be fleshed out in the future, and the committee will be looking to the commission for guidance.



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**VII. New Business**

**A. Parks and Recreation Commission Officer Elections (Action Requested) – Amanda Crosby, President**

Rohrbaugh motioned to nominate Crosby as President, Demmer as Vice President, and Breeuwer as Secretary. Jenny Peterson second. Approved 6-0. 3 abstained including Crosby, Breeuwer, and Demmer. Motion carries.

**VIII. Old Business**

**IX. Division Report**

Jess Peterson shared there were two retirements within the Division, Pamela Page and Theresa Iverson. Parks and Recreation recently hired Cliff Knettel as the Senior Parks Planner, and staff are currently interviewing for a Parks Project Coordinator to round out the Stewardship Team.

**X. Public Comment**

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:01 pm.

**XII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, March 10 via Webex.