



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes October 12, 2022

Duluth City Hall, Conference Room 330



### I. Call Meeting to Order

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m.

### II. Roll Call

Present: Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Natalie Chin, Kala Pedersen, Barb Darland, Tjaard Breeuwer, Jenny Peterson, Sarah Beehler, Terese Tomanek – City Council Liaison, Ashley Grimm – St. Louis County Commissioner

Not Present: Britt Rohrbaugh, Amber Sadowski – ISD 709 School Board Liaison

### III. Approval of the September 21 Meeting Minutes

**Commissioner Pedersen motioned for approval of the September 21 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Demmer. Unanimously approved.**

### IV. Presentations

#### V. Commissioner Committees

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Thursday, December 1 at noon, Parks Conference Room  
Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Natalie Chin [Jessica Peterson]

Public Golf Committee – Tuesday, November 15 at 5 p.m., Conference Room 330  
David Demmer, Amanda Crosby [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

#### VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

#### VII. New Business

#### VIII. Old Business

A. Parks Referendum Update (Informational) – Jessica Peterson, Manager and Emily Larson, Mayor

Jenny Peterson questioned what funds the City has besides the \$2.6 million in the Park Fund. Mayor Larson stated that tourism tax is used to fund parks, though it goes to parks that can function as tourist attractions. Stated that around \$200,000 out of tourism tax goes to maintenance in those areas, and tourism tax does increase with inflation. Manager Peterson stated that in addition to park fund & tourism tax, there are general fund allocations in Park Maintenance budget and a small amount in Parks and Recreation budget, rounded out by revenues that the park system brings in.

Pedersen questioned if the levy is not passed, does the \$2.6 million ever expire. Mayor Larson stated that it will remain in place and will not sunset.

Questioned what happens in 2048. Mayor Larson stated that both the levy and the \$2.6 million will sunset in 2048. Stated that the public will make another decision in 25 years.

Demmer questioned whether the general fund dollars would be at risk if the levy passes. Mayor Larson stated that the general fund is always at risk, so there is value in having dedicated funds used specifically to parks. Stated that the referendum is about asking voters to renew their commitment to parks, as the City remains committed to parks using general fund dollars.

Demmer questioned if there is any risk of taking tourism tax away from parks through City Council. Mayor Larson stated that it could happen, but the values of the elected leaders are to not cut City services and



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to provide tourism support from the tourism tax fund.

Crosby questioned how many attended the Morgan Park public meeting. Mayor Larson stated that there were about 10 residents from the neighborhood. Stated that a virtual meeting is being planned to allow more people to engage.

**B. Options for Duluth Golf Operations during Enger Renovations (Informational) – Jessica Peterson, Manager**

Crosby questioned if the irrigation system would provide water even in a drought. Manager Peterson stated that the system would collect surface water but also would be filled by a city supply of water. This means that in the event of a drought the course could be irrigated with city supplied water, allowing the course to be well maintained despite weather conditions.

Darland questioned if minimal amounts of work is planned for the clubhouse. Manager Peterson stated that the ongoing commitment to golf from the park fund will go toward the clubhouse for some of the basic functioning and safety needs.

Questioned if there would be money from the levy assigned to building a new clubhouse. Peterson stated that Enger Golf Course is listed as a 2023 project for the levy dollars.

Breeuwer questioned what the value of players lost with only 9 holes open during construction would be in 2025 and beyond. Manager Peterson stated that there has not been a specific analysis with dollars and cents. Stated that projections show that some holes must remain open during renovation. Stated that 9 is the minimum, but there could be more open at a time. The hope is that the improvements will be enough to draw people back to Enger.

Beehler questioned what would happen if Lester closes before the plan that was set in place. Manager Peterson stated that if Lester does not reopen for play, it will be permanently closed. The city would then proceed with a planning process for Lester Golf Course as public park land for the community to determine next steps.

Grimm questioned what the general feedback was from the Public Golf Committee. Crosby stated that there was a lot of disappointment, but also insightful questions. Stated that there will be further discussion at the November Public Golf Committee meeting.

Pedersen questioned if the operating model is changed, how it would be decided. Manager Peterson stated that the decision will likely lie with the City Council and will be in conjunction with the budget presentation.

Demmer questioned if there would be any value in the Commission making a recommendation to the Council in December. Manager Peterson stated that the Council will be approving the operating agreement with Indigo in November. Then the Council will need to approve the contracts for construction at Enger. Council has financial oversight, where the Commission does not. A decision for an operating model may need to be made in order to proceed with the contracts, which is Council purview.

**IX. Public Comment**

Tom Burns spoke on the Park Levy Referendum.

Steve Kinney spoke on Public Golf operating models.



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**X. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:06 pm.

**XI. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 14 at 5:00 p.m., Conference Room 330.