



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting of February 12, 2015



The meeting was called to order at 5:15 PM in the City Center West-Evergreen Senior Center, 5830 Grand Avenue, Duluth.

Chairman Welles called the meeting to order at 5:15 PM at the City Center West-Evergreen Senior Center, 5830 Grand Avenue, Duluth.

Members Present: Thomas Albright, Joel Braun, Edwin Hall, Andy Holak, Susan Beasy Latto, Eric Viken and Jon Welles.

Member(s) Absent: Erica Erickson, and Michael Schraepfer.

Also Attending: Art Johnston, Duluth School Board Liaison, Kathy Bergen, Manager, and Judy Gibbs, Trails Coordinator, City Parks and Recreation Division.

Upon motions made and seconded, the Minutes for the December 11, 2013 and January 8, 2014 meetings of the Commission were unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONS:

Luke Sydow of SAS & Associates, Landscape Architects and Consultants to the City Parks and Recreation Commission provided the Commission an update on the Chester Bowl Mini-Master Plan. Previous presentations, with public comment, had been made at the November 13 and December 11 meetings of the Commission. Additional public comments had been submitted to the Parks Division since the December 11 meeting.

Mr. Sydow reviewed with the Commission the process of developing a mini-master plan as a blueprint to guide planning and construction for the future use of a park, as funds become available. Every effort is made to have a mini-master plan be a consensus builder for the future use of a park, using surveys, public meetings, on-site meetings, on-site experience and on-line comments, so that the result is a community-based master plan. Guiding principles used in this process include: upgrade facilities; environmental and historic stewardship; improve access and connectivity; identify and create greatest value at acceptable cost; respect the park; honor the history; keep the character; conserve the environment, manage outside connections to the park; consider all ages.

In response to questions at the December 11 meeting of the Commission, Kathy Bergen had indicated that the Chester Bowl Mini-Master Plan was being developed through extensive public input over a period of time to reflect issues the public wished to address at Chester Park, and assured the Commission that opportunities for public input on the details of the plan would continue from the time a Mini-Master Plan was approved by the Commission and the City Council up until actual work on the plan was done. As indicated, the Mini-Master Plan is, in essence, a blueprint to guide planning and construction for the future use of the park.

After Mr. Sydow reviewed current aspects of the Preliminary Mini-Master Plan for Chester Bowl, there were a range of comments, questions and suggestions from members of the Commission and individual members of the public in attendance.

It was noted that there are plans for the Duluth Traverse, a "Single Track Multi Purpose Trail" to enter the park on the northeast side off of 19th Avenue East and go along the perimeter of the park, exiting the park at the south west side by Kenwood Avenue. There was extensive discussion about whether any of the trails inside Chester Bowl Park should permit the use of bicycles or have bicycles limited to the perimeter Duluth Traverse trail, which would connect with Piedmont Park on the west and Hartley Park on the east. These two parks facilitate the use of bicycles within those parks. No decisions were made regarding this or other issues raised during the meeting.

The Parks Division will work with Mr. Sydow to review all the comments received over the past several months, and bring a final Mini-Master Plan for Chester Bowl to the Commission for its review and approval at a future meeting. Upon motion of Commissioner Beasy Latto and second by Commissioner Viken, consideration of the Chester Bowl Mini-Master Plan was tabled until the next meeting of the Commission.

COMMISSION COMMITTEES:

There were no reports from Commission Committees at this meeting.

COMMISSIONER AND LIAISON REPORTS:

There no Commissioner or Liaison Reports at this meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

Selection of 2014 Members of the Neighborhood Parks Fund Grants Selection Committee:

Commissioners Albright, Braun, Hall and Welles were appointed to represent the Parks Commission on the Neighborhood Parks Fund Grants Committee for calendar year 2014.

Revitalization Plans for Gary New Duluth:

Kathy Bergen informed the Commission that it would receive a Mini-Master Plan for Gary New Duluth for consideration at its March 12, 2014 meeting at Stowe Elementary School. This Revitalization Plan will build off the Mini-Master Plan previously discussed by the Commission and the recommendations will reflect extensive public discussion and input received prior to the March 12 Commission meeting.

Potential Indoor Facility:

At the request of Commissioner Holak, a Task Force consisting of Commissioners Albright, Holak, and Judy Gibbs was appointed to review prospects for an indoor sports facility and bring recommendations to the Commission for its consideration. Additional interested parties will be asked by the Task Force to participate in this review.

Cross City Trail:

Judy Gibbs informed the Commission that a public meeting on the status of the Duluth Cross-City Trail would be held in the third week of March.

OLD BUSINESS:

Election of Officers:

The following were elected to serve as officers of the Commission until the February 2015 meeting.

President: Edwin K. Hall

Vice President: Erik Viken

Secretary: Thomas Albright

Annual Meeting:

The Annual Meeting of the Commission is now set for Wednesday April 2 at the Spirit Mountain Grand Avenue Chalet. The guest Speaker will be Sam Cook of the Duluth News Tribune. The detailed agenda for the Annual Meeting will be discussed at the March 12 meeting of the Commission.

Future Meetings of the Commission:

It was decided that the regular meetings of the Commission on the second Wednesday of each month would be held at the Central Hillside Center, 12 E 4th Street, Duluth. It was noted that the growing

agenda of issues before the Commission would necessitate the scheduling of periodic special meetings during the year.

DIVISION MANAGER'S REPORT:

Kathy Bergen indicated she and Judy Gibbs are developing a process which will provide members of the Commission regular updates on the wide range of projects under the purview of the Parks Division, such as mini-master plans and initiatives for specific parks, recreation areas, and trails.

Commissioner Hall noted that we are moving into the third year of enhanced funding for the City's parks, recreation areas, and trails, resulting from the successful November 8, 2011 referendum which authorized a special levy in the amount of \$2,600,000 to create a dedicated Parks Fund by a vote of 57% to 43%.

The *Good News from Parks and Recreation* for February, was passed out and will be available on the Parks Division's new website in a few days. Among many enhancements, the new website will provide a way for members of the public to make their views known directly to members of the Commission.

PUBLIC COMMENT/SPEAKERS:

There were no public comments or speakers.

ADJORNMENT:

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm, on motion of Commissioner Braun, second by Commissioner Viken and a unanimous vote.

Respectfully Submitted,

Edwin K. Hall, Secretary