



# PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

## Meeting Minutes December 11, 2024

### Duluth City Hall, Council Chambers



#### I. Call Meeting to Order

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

#### II. Roll Call

Present: David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Beth Olson, Josie Laporte, Sarah Beehler, Terrance Lovejoy, Dave Cizmas, Brooke Marinan, Hailey Sigafus, Stephanie Williams – School Board Liaison, Azrin Awal – City Council Liaison

Not Present: Ashley Grimm – St. Louis County Commissioner

#### III. Approval of the November 13 Meeting Minutes

**Commissioner Pedersen motioned to approve the November 13 meeting minutes. Commissioner Olson second. Unanimously approved. Motion carries.**

#### IV. Presentations

##### A. Park Point Community Club (Informational) Dawn Buck and Pat Sterner

LaPorte questioned what the pleasure rink is, which is featured on their website. Buck stated that a skating rink is flooded in the big field during the winter.

Lovejoy questioned what the traffic safety committee is and what kind of impact it has had. Sterner stated that it is a group that communicates directly with the City and the police department on traffic safety issues, which has led to radar sign, traffic studies, and other signage. Stated that they encourage residents to call 911 when they see dangerous driving. Buck stated that it was an initiative that started during the pandemic.

##### B. 2025 Parks Capital Budget (Informational) Jessica Peterson, Parks and Recreation Manager

Pedersen questioned what "other city funding" means. Peterson stated that some years the finance office will allow underspending from other divisions within the Property, Parks, and Libraries department to transfer into the Park Fund. Stated that a portion of funds coming from a sale of property was allocated into the Park Fund in the past year through City Council.

Olson questioned where the match dollars can come from for grants. Peterson stated that Park Fund dollars can match, and some grants can match against other grants. Stated that each grant has different matching requirements. Olson questioned if there is a grants team working on these applications. Peterson stated that the planning and stewardship team within Parks all work on grants as part of their projects.

Beehler questioned if there is any thought of revisiting the Parks Levy Referendum. Peterson stated that it could be an option, but would need direction from the new administration. Stated that the property tax levy is not the only way to fund the park system. Stated that the council and the mayor can choose to allocate general fund dollars to the park fund.

Sigafus questioned where revenues generated from rentals are allocated to. Peterson stated that for the most part, rental revenues go to support the operating budget, especially for facility needs. Stated that the Beach House has a separate budget line in order to reinvest those specific revenues into the Beach House building.



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LaPorte questioned what the commission and citizens can do to support funding for parks. Questioned what outreach efforts have been made by the new administration. Peterson stated that it is never too early to begin conversations on the next year's budget. Stated that commissioners have a great deal of influence, and can have conversations with City Councilors and City Administration.

Awal questioned why parking lots are the responsibility of the Parks budget instead of Public Works. Peterson stated that it is unclear why that delineation was made. Stated that parking lots are one aspect that Parks could work with other city departments on for improvements.

Awal questioned if there have been transfers from the Parking Fund into Parks. Peterson stated that has not been the case in the past. Stated that for the most part, parking is free. Stated that considerations have been made as to whether paid parking could be instituted in the future at select locations.

#### C. Golf Operating Budget 2025 (Informational) Jessica Peterson, Parks and Recreation Manager

Pedersen questioned when the bond payments are done. Peterson stated that they were either 10 or 15 year bonds.

Lovejoy questioned if the trout stream is protected now or if there is still more to do. Peterson stated that the work is still ongoing but expects the work to be completed by the 2025 golf season.

Awal questioned if Lester Park has been considered as a location for disc golf. Peterson stated that the disc golf community has long expressed interest in a disc golf course on the east side of town. Stated that the disc golf community is connected with the Duluth Area Outdoor Alliance, and that organization is involved with the planning efforts for Lester Park Golf Course.

Awal questioned if housing projects are being considered for the Lester Park Golf Course. Peterson stated that the portion of the course has been transferred to DEDA, which is closest to utility services.

Awal questioned what equipment is included in the equipment replacement costs. Peterson stated that the golf course leases the fleet of golf carts, as that is more cost effective than purchasing and maintaining them. Stated that utility carts and vehicles were leased to purchase. Other equipment includes maintenance and grounds equipment.

#### V. Commissioner Committees

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Thursday, January 9 at noon, Parks Conference Room - David Demmer, Kala Pedersen, Josie LaPorte [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

#### VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

LaPorte reported on the year of 2024 serving on the Parks Commission.

#### VII. New Business

A. 2025 Commission Schedule (Action Requested)

**Commissioner LaPorte motioned to approve the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting schedule for 2025. Commissioner Pedersen second.**

LaPorte questioned if a virtual meeting is ever an option. Peterson stated that according to Open Meeting Law, in-person is required except for military or medical reasons.



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**Unanimously approved. Motion carries.**

B. E-Board 2025 (For Future Action)

Olson questioned whether the current E-Board is interested in continuing in their roles for the following year. Demmer, Pedersen, and LaPorte all stated they are interested in continuing.

**VIII. Old Business**

**IX. Division Report**

Manager Peterson highlighted the Bayfront operator selection, which will go before Council next week.

**X. Public Comment**

**XI. Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 7:18 pm.

**XII. Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 15 at 5:00 p.m., Council Chambers.