

**MINUTES OF THE WORKSHOP MEETING
CITY COUNCIL
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

MARCH 10, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a Workshop meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 10th day of March, 2021 in the Conference Room of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes. Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the City Council members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.

Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.

Mayor John Keis called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and the following members of the City Council were present at roll call:

CITY COUNCIL: Mayor Keis, Council Members Fischer, Torkelson, McGraw & Miller.
Absent: None.

ALSO PRESENT: City Administrator Chris Heineman, Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen, Public Works Director Bill Dircks, Community Development Director Corrin Wendell, Finance Director Brenda Malinowski, City Clerk/HR Manager Heidi Heller, Eric Seaburg, Josh Shields and Maddie Dahlheimer with Bolton & Menk, Parks & Recreation Commissioners: Dave Miller, Tom Ray, Shawn Hipp and Ron Horwath.

JOINT MEETING WITH PARKS & REC COMMISSION TO DISCUSS PRIORITIES FOR PIONEER PARK

The Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager provided a summary of the master planning process for Pioneer Park. He stated that initial discussions started in 2017 and the Park Master Plan was adopted in 2018. Additional public engagement efforts were completed through a partnership with the University of Minnesota Resilient Communities Program (RCP). Shearen explained that tonight City Council and Parks & Recreation Commission members will be asked to discuss and develop a list of priorities for inclusion in the Pioneer Park Master Plan Request for Proposals (RFP).

Josh Shields and Maddie Dahlheimer, Landscape Architects with Bolton & Menk, provided an overview of the overall parks system master plan and how the City is now ready to narrow that to Pioneer Park and the specific wants and needs for improvements.

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Fischer asked if adding additional parking would be considered one of the big-ticket items. Shields explained that additional parking was not identified as one of the primary needs, but parking can be discussed at the end. He reported that the improvements that have risen to the top are a multi-use facility, water feature, artificial turf, lighting and a new playground.

Mr. Shields reviewed the potential benefits of a multi-use facility and showed several examples from other cities. Dave Miller stated that a multi-use facility has been an important focus point but asked if Pioneer Park would be the right place or if there were other options. Fischer added that a community building would be amazing and he strongly supports this idea but was not sure if Pioneer Park is the right location and noted that the City could lease space for many years for the cost of building a multi-use facility.

McGraw stated that this park has a lot of athletic features and asked why we are calling it a community park. He suggested that maybe we need to decide what Pioneer Park should be, and if it is really an athletic complex, then maybe a gathering space does not belong here. The Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager explained that the Parks Master Plan and the 2040 Comprehensive Plan classify Pioneer Park as a Community Park. He stated that it is very common for a community park to include athletic features.

Torkelson stated that Pioneer Park does not have good connection or transit options, is off the beaten path, and not connected to anything else. He suggested that Pioneer Park may not be the best location for a multi-use facility. Parks and Recreation Commissioner Ray suggested the possibility of removing one of the ballfields and using that space to expand the existing building and add parking. The Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager stated that we would likely lose most of the tournaments since they utilize all four fields.

The presentation moved on to discuss the possibility of a water feature. Maddie Dahlheimer stated that a water feature was not part of the initial Parks Master Plan, but it was mentioned many times during the community engagement process. She explained that there are many options for an interactive water feature, and they could be incorporated into the park. Particularly of interest was a misting station near the softball fields and possibly including a small interactive water feature somewhere else in Pioneer Park. There was general consensus that a water feature be included in the RFP.

Bolton and Menk presented the pros and cons of installing artificial turf on the soccer field. The Public Works Director explained that the soils are poor so the field does not drain well. He stated that drain tile was added several years ago, but it is still a struggle getting the water to the drain tile. He explained that a cheaper option is to gradually inject sand in to the field and eventually there would be a better base that would drain better. He stated that the grass would still take a beating from use, but it would hold up better if it was not so wet all the time. He stated the cost would be about \$30,000 over the course of three years and staff is planning to move forward with this unless we decide on the artificial turf instead.

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The Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager stated that the current field use is very limited. Rentals are limited to youth leagues and high school sports. The rentals are only for games and no practices in order to maintain the condition of the turf. Due to the high cost, there was limited interest in artificial turf at this time. City Council and Parks & Recreation Commission members were interested in seeing the results/impact of sand injection before turf should be considered.

The discussion moved on to potential lighting improvements. He stated that there was very strong community interest for increased lighting to park paths. Torkelson stated that he did not agree with lighting only the center of the park and he is very much in favor of adding lighting to the entire loop. Josh Shields stated that the presentation included the example of path lighting in the center of Pioneer Park simply to provide a basic cost estimate. There was strong support for including park lighting in the RFP.

Mr. Shields provided a brief overview of potential funding sources and stated that it appears that all of the features are still on the table. City Administrator stated that he was not sure if there is enough support to include a multi-use facility in the RFP and requested further clarification from City Council and Parks & Recreation Commission members. Dave Miller stated that his opinion is that Pioneer Park is not the right location for a community gathering space. Fischer stated that he wants to know where other alternative locations are. He noted that is an expensive feature, and could space be leased somewhere else in the city. McGraw stated that he does not know how it could fit into Pioneer Park. Miller stated that she cannot visualize where else a multi-use facility could go in the city. It was suggested that Pioneer Park could be considered again if the privately owned parcel between the Public Works shop and Pioneer Park is acquired by the City.

McGraw asked what the next steps are. The City Administrator explained that a draft RFP for professional assistance with the Pioneer Park Master Plan would be brought to the City Council for review and approval at an upcoming meeting. Fischer stated this discussion has gone on way too long and would like to see something started this spring. Keis and McGraw agreed.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

John T. Keis, Mayor

Attest:

Christopher Heineman, City Administrator