

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

**MARCH 4, 2021**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of March 2021 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Dave Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION:** Hipp, Horwath, Miller, Ray, Chu, and Abruzzese.

**ABSENT:** Schletty

**ALSO PRESENT:** Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen.

*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 Commission 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.*

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Ray made a motion to approve the February 4, 2021, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Horwath seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

**NEW BUSINESS: BIKE RACK SUBCOMMITTEE PRESENTATION**

The Community Services Manager stated that this subcommittee was formed in November of 2020 and the group has been meeting to discuss bike racks, possible locations, cost, and design.

Commissioner Abruzzese provided background information on the importance of having bike-friendly parks noting it is a family-friendly exercise that is accessible to all ages and

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environmentally friendly. She stated that bike racks encourage bicycling, create less clutter from bikes laying around the park, and provide a sense of security and safety for bikers. She reviewed different design options, along with potential costs. She stated that the group also reviewed possible locations, noting that different parks could be phased in at different times dependent on cost and budget. She reviewed the park prioritization tiers that the subcommittee developed along with potential costs for the tiers based on the different design choices. She noted that the cost estimates include the rack purchase, cement base, and installation cost. She reviewed the timeline, noting that if the Commission supported this action they would present to the Council in April, program this into the CIP in 2021, and installation could begin in spring of 2022. She noted that the subcommittee also discussed the concept of a bike maintenance station and identified some potential locations.

Commissioner Ray commented that he is pleased to see the costs as he thought the costs would be higher.

Chair Miller asked if both options would be freestanding and whether one option would be better than the other for those that just want to set their bikes and do not use locks.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that the loop would be more stable for that purpose.

Commissioner Horwath commented that typically the hitch style is found on narrower sidewalks. He commented that in the parks either option could be used but believed the loop would be a better choice for stability and the ability to keep more bikes.

Chair Miller agreed that he also preferred the loop design with the Little Canada logo.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that if there is a quick release back tire it would be more difficult to secure the bike on the hitch style.

Commissioner Chu stated that she prefers the loop option as well as it would be more aesthetically pleasing even when not in use.

Chair Miller commented that the group would not have to limit to one design, noting that if one style fits into a location better, it could be chosen for that location.

Commissioner Ray commented that there is a premier bicycle shop in Little Canada and perhaps they could approach that business for support.

Commissioner Chu commented that would be a great way to show community support.

Chair Miller noted that sponsorship opportunities could provide potential funding.

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Commissioner Ray commented that perhaps the bike shop would want to sponsor the maintenance station.

Commissioner Horwath commented that he is working to locate a maintenance station in Minneapolis and is currently working with sponsors.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that local businesses could choose to buy in and have their sponsorship displayed on the unit and the unit could be located on their property.

Commissioner Horwath commented that there is a neighborhood organization in Minneapolis that sponsors many bike racks throughout the community.

Commissioner Abruzzese confirmed the consensus of the Commission to support the loop style.

Chair Miller asked if the designs are from different vendors.

The Community Services Manager commented that the City could work with one vendor to get both styles.

Chair Miller commented that although he prefers the loop, perhaps a business would want a rack on their property in the hitch style.

Commissioner Horwath noted that not all the racks would have to have the logo design, therefore some of the racks would have a lesser cost.

Chair Miller suggested adding a bike to the design to make it clear to users that it is a bike rack. He asked if there would be funds available in 2021 to start with one or two racks.

The Community Services Manager commented that the 2021 budget has been set but there could be some flexibility, or some projects could be shifted. He noted that one project did come in slightly over budget already for 2021, so that will be a factor. He noted that if the Council supports moving forward it could potentially go forward this year but otherwise this would be worked into the CIP budget for 2022. He noted that bike racks would provide an opportunity for recreation that matches within the Strategic Plan goals and mission of the Commission to provide opportunities for all ages and demographics.

Commissioner Chu noted that sponsorships could help to move these forward sooner as well.

Commissioner Ray noted that this is broken into tiers and therefore perhaps tier one could move forward this year and the remaining tiers could be worked into the CIP.

Commissioner Abruzzese confirmed that she could present to the City Council and would display the loop option as that was preferred by the group.

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Ray introduced the following motion:

***TO SUPPORT MOVING FORWARD TO THE CITY COUNCIL WITH A  
RECOMMENDATION FOR LOOP BIKE RACKS IN LITTLE CANADA PARKS.***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Chu.  
Ayes (6). Nays (0). Motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS: PARKS ENTRANCE SIGNAGE**

The Community Services Manager stated that the replacement of City park entrance signs was included in the 2021 CIP. He noted that the existing wood signs and posts are near the end of their lives. He provided details on the proposed material for sign replacement along with recycled plastic posts. He reviewed some different sign shapes, colors, and text options for the group to consider. He stated that he would not propose to replace the Spooner sign because it is a monument but would potentially add a sign for Veterans Memorial Park, which does not currently have a sign. He noted that Thunder Bay Westwood is a long linear park and perhaps there would be a few locations within that park where signage could be added. He stated that staff would prefer the green and tan color scheme.

Commissioner Horwath commented that he liked the last design with the red logo as it stands out. He stated that he also prefers the green and tan color scheme over the lighter scheme and prefers the new design shape.

Commissioner Chu commented that the tan color may stand out more than the green color within the parks. She stated that she also likes the red logo on the older style shape.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that she is fine with either color choice but was drawn to the green. She stated that she also likes the older font and style. She asked about the cost difference for adding the red logo.

The Community Services Manager confirmed there is an increase in cost, estimating about \$150 per sign to add the red logo.

Commissioner Horwath noted that you can clearly see the contrast on the darker colored sign and lighter colored lettering and therefore prefers that option over the lighter option.

Chair Miller commented that he would be open to either color option. He stated that he does prefer the older style. He asked if the address or year the park was established should be added to the signs.

The Community Services Manager commented that there was a lengthy discussion about adding the address and while that would work for some parks it would be confusing at others because

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there are multiple accesses to the park. He stated that the sign company would not recommend adding the address to avoid confusion. He acknowledged that color is more of a preference but noted that the sign company stated that the green color has been more popular for city parks. He stated that the Commission does not have to choose color today.

Commissioner Chu commented that a green sign will blend into the park in the spring and in the evening hours a thought lighter-colored sign would be much easier to see.

Commissioner Horwath stated that he would disagree. He stated that he is not concerned with the background of the sign being visible, but the lettering. He stated that he would defer to the more traditional shape if Commissioner Chu would defer to the darker colored sign.

Commissioner Chu asked if there is a cost difference between the shapes.

The Community Services Manager replied that the shapes are the same size.

Commissioner Ray commented that he prefers the older shape, the tan color, capital letters, and the red logo.

Commissioner Hipp asked the size of the sign and which would be most visible.

The Community Services Manager replied that the signs would be six feet long by four feet wide, which would be wider than the existing signs.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she would prefer option three with the larger lettering but would prefer the traditional shape with the green background and red.

The Community Services Manager acknowledged that the Commission members have different preferences but there is consensus that new park signs are wanted.

Commissioner Ray commented that the materials will be an excellent choice and will have longer durability.

Chair Miller commented that it seems that the majority prefer the traditional sign style.

Commissioner Horwath asked if a color or style has to be recommended, or whether the sign replacement could be recommended, and the color and style choices are left to the Council.

Commissioner Chu commented that green on green is a boring choice.

Commissioner Horwath disagreed as he believed that green is more of a traditional park color. He believed that the tan choice was more boring.

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Commissioner Abruzzese agreed that the tan is a more boring choice.

Commissioner Chu asked if green and tan are the only choices, or whether a different color could be chosen.

Chair Miller asked if there is precedent for a consistent font on other signage.

The Community Services Manager commented that the traditional font was chosen for other signs for consistency.

Chair Miller noted that whatever color is chosen should be consistent and if the traditional font has been used, perhaps that should continue to be used.

Commissioner Ray confirmed that there was consensus to support the red logo.

The Community Services Manager commented that there are ten different color options, but they chose options that were more traditional to parks in this area to ensure visitors know this is a City park.

Commissioner Chu commented that just because it has been done that way does not mean it has to be done that way.

Miller introduced the following motion:

***RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF THE REPLACEMENT OF PARK ENTRANCE SIGNS RECOMMENDING THE TRADITIONAL STYLE WITH THE TRADITIONAL FONT WITH A RED LOGO TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE SIGN.***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Ray.  
Ayes (6). Nays (0). Motion passed.

**NEW BUSINESS: WINTER ACTIVITIES**

The Community Services Manager commented that staff has been hearing input from residents related to the lack of winter activities. He stated that Vadnais Heights purchased snowshoes and it has been popular with residents, renting the equipment for \$1 per rental. He stated that he reached out to a local sporting goods store, noting that winter activity gear for this year has been sold out but the vendor is willing to provide the City with a sizable discount when the gear comes in for next season. He stated that the cost for 25 pairs of snowshoes would be about \$1,600 and the community events fund could be used for the purchase. He noted that the timing would be well as the number of community events may continue to be reduced this year.

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Commissioner Horwath stated that he has received interest from his spouse as she noticed that Vadnais Heights had this option available to residents.

Commissioner Chu stated that tonight the group talked about bike racks and snowshoes which are geared towards the community. She stated that this would be another way to potentially bring in sponsorships and show community support. She stated that perhaps there be a process developed for sponsorships.

Chair Miller asked if there would be recommended trails and whether they would have to be groomed or whether residents would go wherever.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she is an active snowshoer and noted that there is a path around Pioneer Park that is useful. She stated that she also visited Spooner and the area near the nature play area is wonderful. She believed there is a lot of potential.

Chair Miller noted that perhaps a small map of parks could be provided, and residents could explore.

The Community Services Manager noted that the City does not have the ability to groom trails, but perhaps that is an option for the future to create more defined trails.

Commissioner Ray noted that this would be a great effort.

Commissioner Horwath stated that one conflict would be that many people would want to use the equipment on the weekends when City Hall is not open, and perhaps there could be a campaign to remind residents to get the equipment in advance of a weekend.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that Vadnais Heights did make an effort to encourage residents to rent on Friday for weekend use.

Horwath introduced the following motion:

***RECOMMENDING THE APPROVAL OF A PURCHASE OF SNOWSHOES FOR WINTER RECREATION OFFERING AT A COST NOT TO EXCEED \$1,600.***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Abruzzese.  
Ayes (6). Nays (0). Motion passed.

**REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS**

Commissioner Chu commented that she loves the Gervais Mill Park, especially in the winter months. She noted that so much of the park is not paved and therefore snowshoes would fit well in that park. She asked for details on the yellow item near the bridge.

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The Community Services Manager replied that the Watershed District is completing dredging in the area before it reaches Gervais Lake.

Commissioner Abruzzese replied that she has not visited a park since the last meeting but is looking forward to visiting more parks with the warmer weather.

Commissioner Ray referenced the orange DOT trailer and asked for an update.

The Community Services Manager commented that the trailer has been sitting at an exit ramp and noted that he would follow up on that.

Commissioner Horwath commented that he has not visited Rondo Park recently but will soon. He stated that a Google search does not generate Rondo Park and even the map does now show it as a park. He noted that staff could follow up by adding that. He was excited about the snowshoes and hoped that perhaps cross-country skis could be an option for the future. He noted that there are well-groomed Ramsey County facilities that residents could use, therefore the City would not necessarily need to provide trails.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she has noticed a lot of winter activity in the park, mostly children playing in the snow. She stated that it looks like the park has two squares that connect in the middle.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that staff will follow up to ensure the City parks are listed on Google.

Chair Miller stated that he visited Veterans Memorial Park recently and the trail has been well plowed and used. He stated that he likes the sign as it is today and was unsure that another sign was needed as the flags make it obvious there is something there. He asked if many new pavers or bricks have been purchased or whether there should be a renewed advertisement of that opportunity.

The Community Services Manager stated that they have not had many paver donations recently and the City plans to swap the sand area with concrete, therefore additional pavers are not necessarily needed.

**UPDATES**

The Community Services Manager noted that there is a joint Council and Commission meeting the next week related to Pioneer Park which will be held virtually and encouraged Commissioners to attend if available. He stated that the City has received 30-35 applications for the Recreation Coordinator position and noted that the application window closes the following day. He reported that the recreation calendar for youth and adults is available on the website for registration. He stated that bids were received on the lower shelter and Council approval could

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be gained the following week to allow that construction to begin once road restrictions are lifted. He confirmed that the current structure would be torn down.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*