

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

SEPTEMBER 2, 2021

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 2nd day of September, 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 (arrived at 6:34 p.m.), Miller, Ray, Chu, and Abruzzese.

ABSENT: Schletty

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Sierra Hietala.

MINUTES

Commissioner Abruzzese made a motion to approve the August 5, 2021, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Ray seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Chair Miller read the parks and recreation mission statement.

OLD BUSINESS: PIONEER PARK MASTER PLAN UPDATE

The Community Services Manager stated that they are in the final stages of the Pioneer Park Master Plan process. He stated that the final plan is on track to be presented to the City Council at its meeting the following week. He stated that the ranking system has shifted from short, mid, and long term to a system ranging from one through five. He stated that the Master Plan will be designed as a working tool and the numbers for specific projects will become more refined as the City goes forward. He stated that while the plan includes the entire park it focuses on the playground, water feature, and trail lighting.

Commissioner Horwath arrived.

The Community Services Manager stated the projects ranked with a one has a total of \$1,600,000 while the overall estimate for improvements within the entire plan would be \$5,500,000. He noted that while some items have been identified, they are a long shot, using the example of artificial turf. It acknowledged that the Commission and Council would like to see something begin for improvements this next year but recognized that the City does not have the funds to implement \$1,600,000 for the park improvements at this time. He identified the next

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steps in the budget and capital improvement project reviews by the City Council. He stated that staff will look at grant opportunities for playground equipment. He noted that they would also look at utilizing a community build, which was popular with the community and also provided cost savings.

The Community Services Manager said he would distribute that plan to the Commission once it was made available to him. He stated that the play node would almost have to be one project rather than breaking that up into smaller projects and having that area be a construction zone multiple times over multiple years. He stated that the preference would be to have that area shut down for one year to fully complete that section.

Commissioner Hipp noted that perhaps when that construction occurs there could be a play option for kids on the other side of the park. She asked if there has been any more discussion on naming opportunities.

The Community Services Manager commented that he is not aware of any such discussion.

Commissioner Hipp stated that perhaps that would be an option for additional funding options.

Chair Miller stated that this is just the beginning, and the next step would be to look at playground equipment and move forward from there depending on funding opportunities. He expressed thanks to the work that was done by the University group related to engagement.

The Community Services Manager commented that the group of students received recognition for the work they did as that is work that could be replicated by other cities.

NEW BUSINESS: NEW RECREATION COORDINATOR

The Community Services Manager introduced Sierra Hietala, the new Recreation Coordinator, noting that this is now a full-time position. He noted that the City Council agreed to recategorize the position to full-time and he is excited to have the new Recreation Coordinator. He highlighted some of her previous experiences.

The Recreation Coordinator introduced herself and highlighted some of the work she has done since joining Little Canada including the farmers market, youth programming, and recreational programming. She provided additional details on what drew her to the position, noting that she enjoys the sense of community and the staff members. She stated that she is excited to be a part of the team.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that there is nothing specific to report on Spooner Park.

Commissioner Horwath referenced the foliage around Gervais Lake that was previously discussed and was unsure if staff had addressed that. He noted that he has not noticed anything

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forcing him off the trail at this time. He stated that he does run the trail out to the east to Labore Road and the vehicles on that road are traveling at high speeds and not slowing down for the crosswalk. He stated that perhaps the police could station a vehicle there to complete speed enforcement.

Commissioner Ray suggested the use of a speed trailer.

Commissioner Chu stated that perhaps a blinking stop sign could be used to ensure vehicles are stopping where they should.

Commissioner Horwath commented on the high use of trails and increased youth pedestrians with school starting again and urged vehicles to slow down.

Chair Miller stated that as the Pioneer Park Master Plan wraps up, the Commission should begin to think about what is next.

Commissioner Ray commented that there has been extensive discussion about Pioneer Park. He suggested a fountain within the pond.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that element was included in the plan. He confirmed that a solar feasibility study was mentioned as well.

Commissioner Chu stated that her assigned park seems fine. She asked for an update on the park entrance improvement project.

The Community Services Manager stated that staff is still working on the grant as additional work was required to be submitted. He anticipated that the funds would be accepted in the next few months, the project would be bid this winter, and the entrance would be rebuilt next year.

Commissioner Hipp commented that Nadeau is a small park but very cute with wildlife and nature areas.

Commissioner Ray asked if the dog park in the hockey rink has been well used.

The Community Services Manager commented that the area is used at least once a day. He provided additional details that staff previously used a camera to gather data on usage on the dog park was well used. He also stated that cameras have been used in other areas to catch wildlife and gain footage of areas that have had incidents.

Commissioner Horwath commented that he enjoys the posts on the City's Facebook.

UPDATES

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The Community Services Manager reported that the new hoops have been installed at Pioneer Park and there will be a basketball clinic beginning on Saturdays. He noted that the hoops were donated by the Little Canada Youth Association. He advised of upcoming youth and adult programming opportunities. He stated that he received a donation for bike racks and hoped that a few could be installed this year if the materials can be obtained in time. He commented that the donation should support three bike racks. He provided an update on partnership work the City continues with Great River Greening and Xcel related to pollinators.

Commissioner Chu thanked staff for all their continued hard work.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.