

**MINUTES  
PARKS &  
COMMISSION MEETING  
JANUARY 10, 2023**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Kristine Bommersbach, Tim Faver, Gwenia Fiskevold Gould, Don Heinonen, Tonya Prim, and Bethany Wesley

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tom Anderson

**COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:**

**CITY STAFF & OTHERS:** Marcia Larson and Lolly Randall, Nate Mathews Joe Czapiewski, CT Marhula

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Bethany Wesley called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:**

No amendments were made

**APPROVAL OF DECEMBER 13, 2022 MEETING MINUTES:**

**Motion by Faver, seconded by Fiskevold Gould, to approve the December 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.**

**PUBLIC COMMENTS / AGENDA ITEMS**

CT Marhula, 4524 Birchmont Drive NE #10, Bemidji, expressed his concern about the dog park doors not opening after a snow event. He shared that he does not feel an additional dog park is necessary.

**STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSION/UPDATE**

Joe Czapiewski gave an update on the draft strategic planning that will include the backstory/history on how this process was handled. There will be a developed map for each park along with the prioritization and strategies on all parks. There will also be ideas on recreation programming in the parks. The implementation including maintenance and operation will be included for the specific priorities laid out in the plan. Additional development and the expenses associated with each development will also be included. The rough draft for staff/commissioners to review will be completed for the February meeting. If there are any changes after this review, they will be made and Commissioners will have another chance to review it before it is presented to City Council. Copies will be available for the commissioners a week before the meeting.

**COMMISSION/STAFF UPDATE**

Larson reported that the City Council will take action on the Committee Assignments at their January 17, 2023 meeting. The Ward 1 City Council member has been assigned to the Parks and Recreation Commission. This is an open seat with special elections to be held in April. City Manager, Nate Mathews, will attend as many Parks & Recreation Commission meetings as possible until the new City Council member is selected.

The Parks & Recreation Commission chair and vice chair are elected at the February meeting Interviews were held for the Recreation Programming & Special Events Assistant opening this week, there were several good candidates.

## **OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANT – DNR**

The DNR has opened the application process for Outdoor Recreation Grants. Last year Larson applied for Cameron Park which was not funded but she could apply for it again this year. All grants require a 50% match by the city. There is a list of amenities that have to be included in the grant application and can include an outdoor facility. Discussed applying for a grant for Algoma Park or Nymore Park. Discussed applying for the acquisition grant and using it to acquire more land to the north of North Country Park for a possible dog park. Discussed some high priority trail connections throughout the city where grants could be used.

Mathews stated that Bemidji State Park is re-starting the Friends of the Park program and will be holding a meeting this week which Larson and Mathews will be attending. There may be some potential partnership projects like creating a trail head.

Commissioners all agreed on the benefits for applying for a grant for Algoma Park that would allow for picnic shelters, picnic tables, grills, pickleball courts, develop the trails more and play structures. It is helpful that there is a master plan for Algoma in regard to writing the grant. There is \$1.3 million in the ARP fund that could be used as the city's match. Joe confirmed that Algoma Park is high on the priority list in the new strategic plan.

## **COMMISSIONER UPDATES**

Discussed the Nymore dog park doors not opening, Marcia will look into making sure it is shoveled so the gates will open and have staff leave a shovel there in case it is needed by the public. Commissioners agreed it is important to have a dog park on the north side of town.

## **DIRECTOR'S UPDATES**

**Outdoor Rinks/Warming Houses** – Due to staffing issues, only the warming house at City Park was opened on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and Nymore warming house opened on January 5<sup>th</sup>. There have been skate rentals at the City Park warming house and snow shoe rental out of the Tourist Information Center. There is not enough staff so the Nymore warming house is only opened on weekends.

Working on a birthday celebration for Paul Bunyan on February 11th.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion by Fiskevold Gould, seconded by Bommersbach, to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Motion carried.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall  
Administrative Assistant