

**MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
MARCH 8, 2022**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kristine Bommersbach, Tim Faver, Gwenia Fiskevold Gould, Tonya Prim, and Bethany Wesley. Tom Anderson joined at 5:25

MEMBERS ABSENT: Don Heinonen

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE: Dan Jourdain

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: Sam Anderson, Keith Kinnen, Mitch Rautio, Marcia Larson, Aaron Weeks, and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

Bethany Wesley called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:

Added the Bemidji Middle School request to tap Maple trees at City Park to Agenda.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 1, 2022 MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Faver, seconded by Prim, to approve the February 1, 2022 Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

CT Marhula, 4524 Birchmont Dr NE #10, spoke to the Commission regarding the splash pad.

23rd STREET TRAIL PROJECT – SAM ANDERSON

Sam Anderson, Assistant City Engineer, reviewed the plans for the trail project on 23rd Street and Middle School Drive. A small section of this trail was completed in front of City Park a few years ago and this project will complete the remainder of that trail this summer. Sam applied for and received TAP funds for the trail project a few years ago with the understanding that funds would not be available until 2022.

Anderson shared a map providing an update on the trail being proposed with the Bemidji Middle School having a connection that will be the start and stopping point of the trail. City Park and the armory will be affected by the trail. The school district gave an easement for the trail which will provide more separation from the street. There will be a push button flashing beacon at two of the crosswalks giving vehicles notification that there are pedestrians crossing the street from the trail. Reviewed the path the new trail will take through City Park and the armory. The need for this trail was identified in the 2011 Master Open Parks and Trails Plan as a highly connective trail in an area that has many pedestrians with the schools in the area along with the park.

Discussed the impact of the TH 197 project affecting this trail project which there should not be any negative impact. Hoping to have the project completed by the 2023 school year.

Anderson shared an overall view of new paved trails projects throughout the city, including the 2022 Street Renewal project that includes a new paved trail and proposed future paved trails making many trail connections throughout the city.

MOUNTAIN VIEW MEADOWS – KEITH KINNEN AND MITCH RAUTIO

Keith Kinnen and Mitch Rautio presented the updated design for the park located in Mountain View Meadows, a housing development Mitch Rautio is building. Reviewed the concepts that were presented previously to the Commissioners and then reviewed a few of the park amenities that include two sledding hills with each having different slopes. There is also a snowboarding hill. The playground has a natural theme included in the five playground pods. There will be a variety of trees throughout the park. The park will be built in one phase and completed in the first year and once completed, it will be turned over to the city. Discussed the expense of the maintenance for the city once they take over the park.

The Commissioners agreed they like the plan so far and will consider approving when there are final plans.

Marcia will be working with Keith to do a risk assessment of the park and discuss some of the details such as the plantings throughout the park.

Motion by Anderson to approve the plans reviewed and for them to move forward with completing the plans. Motion not seconded; motion failed.

BMS REQUEST – MAPLE TREES IN CITY PARK

Marcia shared the request from a Middle School science teacher who would like to tap some Maple Trees in City Park as a science project.

Commissioners all agreed that it was a great idea and supported Marcia giving them permission.

Motion by Bommersbach, seconded by Fiskevold Gould, to give Bemidji Middle School Science Teacher, Andrew Dahlby, permission to tap Maple Trees located in City Park for his science class. Motion carried.

FACILITIES UPDATE/DIRECTORS UPDATE

The City Council approved a small internal remodel at the Tourist Information Center. Mike Johnston is working on the architectural plans and specs and should go out to bid in the near future.

Hired Earl LaMaack for the fulltime Lead Representative position at the TIC. He will handle the rentals and some of the marketing.

There is a potential solar panel project at the TIC. Marcia will get a design and cost estimates and take it to the City Council to see if they want to proceed with the project.

The Tourist Information Committee met a few months ago and agreed to renting kayaks and paddle boats out of the TIC this summer so Marcia has place an order for them. Jamie is working with Visit Bemidji to host a spring event fundraiser.

The tenant in the bottom of Carnegie Library will be moving out the end of April. Staff is still working on a transition plan.

City Council allocated \$400,000 from the American Rescue Program to support the grant application for the Cameron Park project.

An RFP for professional and construction services was sent out on March 4th for the Paul Bunyan Park project that includes raising Babe. Brian Grund is working on specifications and plans for resolving the drainage issue on the plaza. The project will be taken to the City Council for approval hopefully in May.

Recreation is planning a few ice skating events with recently purchased ice skates.

The survey for the strategic planning process has been sent out to Commissioners for review and suggestions before it is launched. Will be at the home sports and travel show in early April and will try to get input from people there along with having a QR code that will take recipients directly to the survey.

Bethany is working with Josh Peterson to get the display board/monitor ready to sell advertising in an effort to raise funding for recreation programs.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Prim, seconded by Bommersbach, to adjourn the meeting at 6:15 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant