

MINUTES
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING
JUNE 13, 2023

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tom Anderson, Kristine Bommersbach, Tim Faver, Tonya Prim, and Bethany Wesley

MEMBERS ABSENT: Don Heinonen

COUNCIL & BOARD REPRESENTATIVE:

CITY STAFF & OTHERS: Bill Sanford, Dave Willword, CT Marhula, Danelle Grace, Marcia Larson, and Lolly Randall

CALL TO ORDER:

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

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA:

Motion by Kristine seconded Tim by to elect vice-char. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MAY 9, 2023 MEETING AND MAY 24, 2023 SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES:

Motion by Bommersbach, seconded by Faver, to approve the May 9, 2023 Meeting and May 24, 2023 Special Meeting Minutes as written. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

CT Marhula, 4525 Birchmont Dr #10, asked if the water could be turned on at the dog park at Nymore park. He asked the commission to consider putting a car port or roof over the 2 benches for shade and protection in the winter. He also shared that he believes one dog park in Bemidji is sufficient.

Danelle Grace, 410 Pershing Ave SE, addressed her concern that there is no shade in the dog park.

CURLING CLUB

Bill Sanford, Curling Club board member and Dave Willford, Curling Club President, were at the meeting to give the Commissioners an update on the Curling Club.

Dave explained that they had the ice plant go out last spring. The new plant has been installed and will soon be turned on. They did have a full season with approximately 250 members. They had a tournament that brought out of town folks and are looking at doing another one this summer.

They signed an agreement with USA curling and will hold the mixed doubles youth Olympic playdowns where the players compete to go to South Korea for the Olympics. Potential of 40 teams

from out of town. They will also hold the 18 year old State of Minnesota playdowns which is a step for players to compete at nationals. They have been talking with the pickle ball association to expand their use of the curling club out of season. They could fit four pickleball courts. They are working on liability insurance for the pickleball association to rent the building.

Their current lease is due September/October 2024 and they have sent a letter of intent to extend their lease to the city. They are interested in what the city has planned for the other side of the building that housed the Neilson Reise Arena because they are working on the interior and exterior of the building. The Curling Club explained that the club built/paid for the half they are in and donated it to the city. Their operational costs are covered by their memberships and they do charge rental fees for others to use the club and they receive profits from the bar in their building.

The Commissioners shared the process they have gone through to look at what to do with the old Neilson Reise Arena. They did get costs to a variety of options through a feasibility study and turned over the findings to the City Council but nothing has been decided to date. The Curling Club doesn't need it for curling sheets but they are concerned if it was to be torn down and how that would affect their side of the building. They are interested in it becoming a multi-use area and asked if they could own it but the city cannot sell a city owned/public building. The Commissioners would like to see it re-used but the costs to refurbish it were astronomical. Some felt that potential wellness center was a roadblock in moving forward with determining the re-use of the building.

Larson stated that the facility was discussed during the budget sessions and the City Council acknowledged that they need to determine what to do with the building.

The Curling Club said they may come back to the Commissioners with potential ideas as to what to do with old Neilson Reise Arena and the Commissioners agreed they would be open to that discussion.

OUTDOOR PROGRAM CENTER – REVIEW FINAL UPDATED PROPOSAL

Larson explained that the city attorney has not had an opportunity to review the new lease agreement received from BSU. BSU want their current lease to end at the end of September instead of the end of October and this was the only change. The lease amount is \$1,800 per month and BSU provided Attachment A laying out the agreement. Marcia is comfortable with the lease provided by BSU that runs until the end of September.

Motion by Anderson, seconded by Faver, to approved the Amendment #3 to Lease Agreement with BSU for the Outdoor Program Center that will extend the lease through September 2023 and they need to vacate the building on September 30, 2023. Motion carried.

Larson stated that BSU is interested in renting the building in the future for a week in August. Discussed that the Dragon Boat group has an agreement with BSU to use the OPC for training and storage.

Commissioners agreed that will start talking about future plans on what to do with the OPC next year at the July meeting.

COMMISSION APPLICATIONS – RECOMMEND APPOINTMENT

Two applications were received for the open Parks & Recreation Commission position. One application was received after the closing date.

Motion by Faver, seconded by Bommersbach, to recommend Michael Cronin as an appointment to the Parks and recreation Commission. Motion carried.

Discussed that the Mayor would like a statement as to why the particular candidate is recommended. Commissioners liked Mike Cronin's involvement in outdoor sports for many years. Working for the school district was another plus as well as his background in the facility construction process that could be beneficial as parks facilities are being built.

Motion by Prim, seconded by Faver, to elect Kristine Bommersbach as Parks & Recreation Commission Vice-Chair. Motion carried.

PARKS UPDATE:

Natural Playground at North Country Park Phase 2 will be completed in the spring. The concrete path is complete and the additional features will be installed. A final walk through is scheduled for June 26th. There are items still to come that have been purchased by the No child Left Inside grant.

Larson selected to go with the silver racking on the Tourist Information Center.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Prim, seconded by Bommersbach, to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Lolly Randall
Administrative Assistant