

Wednesday, October 16, 2019
Community Activity Center 6:30
Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission
Minutes

1. CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL - The Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission meeting was called to order by Chairperson, Monica Dillenburg at 6:35 p.m.

***Commission Members present:**

Monica Dillenburg, (Chair)
Dwain Erickson, West
Deb Everson, At-large
Colleen Groebner, At-large
Christy Sandberg, East
Susan Pha, City Council Liaison
Marshell Spears, Planning Commission Liaison

Commission Members absent:

Mark Nolen, At-large (Vice Chair)
Patricia Dominguez-Mejia, East
Aslam Tajim Hayat, At-large
Francis Killen, At-large
Lang Vang, At-large
Cindi Matthew, Central
Jane Wilson, West

***A quorum was not present.**

Brooklyn Park Staff present:

Jody Yungers, Director of Recreation and Parks
Brad Tullberg, Manager of Parks and Facilities, Recreation and Parks
Greg Hoag, Parks and Buildings Manager, Operations and Maintenance
Michelle Margo, Recreation Manager
Kelly Mertes, Supervisor Recreation Programming
Jeanine Machan, Program Assistant

2. OPEN FORUM-PUBLIC COMMENT AND RESPONSE
No Comments

3. APPROVAL OF October 16, 2019 AGENDA
There was no motion - A quorum was not present.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM September 18, 2019 MEETING
There was no motion - A quorum was not present.

5. ACTION ITEMS

1. FAIR OAKS SALE OF PARK LAND

Director Yungers reported that on Monday, October 4, 2019, she brought the potential sale of Fair Oaks Park to the City Council Work Session to get some idea as to their interest and/or concerns for the sale of Fair Oaks Park. The City received the results of the property value appraisal. Staff presented multiple options for the City Council to consider.

Options	Strategy for Price Determination	Price
1	Sell full at Industrial Value	\$1,130,000
2	Sell full at split value (W/ind. & E/Park)	\$ 959,627
3	Sell full at Park land value	\$ 694,949
4	Sell only east portion at Industrial value (try to sell west parcel)	\$ 570,418
5	Sell only east portion at Park value (try to sell west parcel)	\$ 346,955

As outlined in the above chart, the discussion with the City Council resulted in multiple approaches to the sale, however, it was clear that the City Council was in favor of working with the Academy on the sale of the park land to allow for the expansion of the school. The current number of students (K – 8) served is 475 students and the proposed expansion would increase capacity to 545 students. Currently, 211 families with approximately 378 of the students are residents of Brooklyn Park. The following was discussed:

- The recommendation from the RPAC was to sell all the land to Excell Academy and not to parcel off any of the land.
- Community Development Department recommendation would be to sell only the 2.7 acres originally asked for by Excell Academy and keep the 2.9 acres to be developed thus keeping it on the tax rolls.
- The majority of the City Council direction was to sell the 2.7 acres at Park Land Value which would be \$346,955.00 and sell 2.9 acres as industrial.
- The City Attorney has confirmed there is no lien on the property. No particular use rights that we have to work through.
- Next step would be to declare a public hearing of vacating of City Park property. A first and second reading would follow. Rezoning and then the replottings followed by the actual sale.
- All proceeds from both sections would go into OSLAD.
- Director Yungers asked that comments regarding the proposal be directed to City Council Susan Pha to take them back to rest of the Council.

RPAC Discussion:

- Commissioner Sandberg asked; what the value of the west parcel would be based on? Director Yungers responded; that the appraisal is based on best value commercial / business. We would retain the 2.8 acres of storm water pond section because the requirements and our agreement with MNDOT when 694 was built.
- Commissioner Everson asked; do we have a covenant that would restrict them from selling the property? Director Yungers responded; that we could place a covenant that the purchase is contingent on the planned use and if different it would be returned back to the City as Park Land.
- Commissioner Everson asked; if there would be adequate room for cars? Director Yungers responded; that plans show adequate parking expansion.
- Commissioner Everson asked; if Excell Academy owns the building? Director Yungers responded; that no, they current lease the property. The purchase of the land can only happen if they purchase the building for the planned expansion.
- Commissioner Sandberg asked; if their planning to purchase the building is tied to the purchase of the park land? Director Yungers responded; yes, it is all tied together. Each step

in the process is necessary for the next step to take place. There are seven different actions from start to finish.

- Commissioner Sandberg asked; if the sale of the east side is contingent of the west side? Director Yungers responded that the west side of the space will still need to be maintained until it is sold. We will be asking Excell to mow the west side when they mow their side.
- Chairperson Dillenburg stated; that the proposed design by Excell would have the children crossing the parking lot to get to the playground area and that this was unsafe. If they are taking the land and mostly turning it into a parking lot versus green space for the kids, maybe they need to pay full price for the land.
- Director Yungers responded; I told the City Council that RPAC did not want to give this land away but will be up to them as to price based on the appraised value.
- Councilperson Pha stated; that she also has a concern with the location of the parking lot and playground. Director Yungers stated; that the Planning Commission would be responsible for working out those details. RPAC is responsible for determining if and how to sell off park land and then reinvest the revenue back into the park system.
- Chairperson Dillenburg asked; if the west section that the city retains could be turned into a prairie nature area versus being mowed. Director Yungers responded; prairie takes a fair amount of money to put in and maintain.
- Commissioner Everson stated; would there be a way that we could keep the property by putting in a zero-lot line clearance on the north side and they can build to the property line, they could put in a parking lot but Brooklyn Park still owns it. The reason would be that the company that puts up a building on the west side would have use of the parking lot. She goes on to state that charter schools do not typically have a longevity. Director Yungers responded; that Excell has been around for quite a while.
- Councilwomen Pha asked; has the school inquired into buying the entire park land? Director Yungers responded; that originally, she told them they would need to buy the entire park but due to the funds available they can only afford the 2.7 acres.
- Councilwomen Pha stated; I understand we are losing park land and we do not want to do that unless we are not really utilizing the land and seeing that we have an entity that can use it to its full capacity. We have land sitting there and we have people that could really be using it. Based on the school's great track record of high educational scores, longevity of the school at over 15 years, and that most students come from disadvantaged families. They have taken kids from disadvantaged families and low incomes and have results that they have. They are doing something right.
- Planning Commission Liaison Spears stated; Excell does have a great curriculum.
- Councilwomen Pha stated; so, we are talking about \$600,000 for this park land at park value, but we spend a whole lot more than that fixing problems when we don't invest in our kids. I feel that park land sitting there not being used and we have someone that can use it.
- Director Yungers pointed out that the park land is being used by the cricket community.
- Councilwomen Pha stated; that the land would be used by the school every single day. For football, track, baseball. They could really use it for sports. Would RPAC ever consider selling all of the land at the half price of \$346,000? At the City Council level, I have seen us give millions of dollars to private companies and apartment complexes. I've seen us spend millions of dollars fixing problems because we are not investing in our kids, we have \$346,000 that we can give up so that they can buy the whole piece and ask them to build things there to invest in the kids.
- Commissioner Everson stated; the only way she would agree to that would be that 100% of the students be Brooklyn Park residents. Right now it is at 44% of Brooklyn Park kids.

Councilwomen Pha said; that would be impossible to ask of them. Director Yungers agreed; that we can't restrict it that way.

- Planning Commission Liaison Spears stated; that is one of the best charter schools in the state.
- Director Yungers stated; that we need to clarify the report that there are 211 families with 378 kids of the 545 are Brooklyn Park residents.
- Chairperson Dillenburg stated; that if we give away \$346,000, we are taking that away from other parks and other kids in our community. It is a fair price. If at a future date the other half of the land is still available, and they can afford it than we can consider selling it to them. This is one of the only cricket places in our park system and there are a lot of kids that love cricket that we won't be able to replace right away. And what about other schools that would see this and want the same treatment.
- Councilwomen Pha stated; that public schools get more money from the state and can afford to purchase land easier than charter schools.
- Commissioner Sandberg stated; that she is a big proponent of school choice, however, she agrees with Chairwomen Dillenburg and would be very hesitant to give away park land.
- Director Yungers asked if RPAC is supportive of the idea of selling the 2.7 to the Academy and keeping the 2.9 for a business at premier price to get it on the tax rolls? I need an idea because I am going to have to represent it because of the timing it will have to go to vote before it comes back here again.
- Commissioner Groebner asked; do they want the land for the building itself or for the parking lot. My experience is that school parking lots are at capacity maybe 5 times a year. Director Yungers stated; that the Planning Department drives the number of parking spots based on square footage and capacity. Student capacity will increase to 545 students from 475.
- Commissioner Erikson asked; one of our goals is not to lose park land and with this we are going to lose about 5.5 acres would the City rezone 5.5 acres somewhere else and give it to RPAC for parks. Director Yungers stated; that one of the goals of RPAC to preserve and protect the park lands for the system and be the guidance for the development of the system. We never want to lose park land; however, we had identified that this property is land locked to the rest of the community and we can use these funds to build another cricket field and other enhancements in the park system.
- Chairperson Dillenburg stated; that we should offer the higher price and then negotiate if they don't take it.

Director Yungers asked; Councilwoman Pha if she had the information, she needed to go back to the City Council. Councilwoman Pha stated; yes, she did.

Director Yungers thanked Councilwoman Pha.

No further discussion.

6. GENERAL INFORMATION - PRESENTATIONS

1. SUMMER PROGRAMMING WRAP UP

- Director Yungers reported that, Youth Services Manager, Pam McBride was called to attend a meeting at Zanewood and would present her report on Youth Services at the January RPAC meeting.
- Director Yungers introduced Program & Services Manager, Michelle Margo to provide a recap of the 2019 summer recreation programming and events.
- The Recreation Programs and Youth Services Divisions has completed a post season analysis of current programs and services to assess if they reached their stated goals.

Program & Services Manager, Michelle Margo presented a summary of 2019 performance measures and what the focus for 2020 Recreation programs will include:

- Reorganization of the Recreation Division
- Evaluation of Tater Daze / Community Event and the future of City-wide events
- Inclusion and ADA Plan to ensure staff are trained, programs and services are inclusive and accessible and accommodating plans are developed
- Advancing the “Becoming an Age Friendly Community” Plan
- Eidem Farm 40-year celebration and advancement of Farm Master Plan and Interpretive Plan
- Summer Camps integration of nature-based programs

The following are highlights of the program participant numbers:

- 29 of the summer staff were graduates of the Leaders in Training program.
- We had 352 participants in the Summer Camps or 65,000 hours contact hours up from 60,000 in 2018, of kids with caring adults spent time outdoors.
- Introduced 3 specialist teachers in art, science and nature.
- Preschool Nature Camp had an increase enrollment of 7 participants over 2018.
- Increase of 119 more participants in dance, tap and ballet just by providing specialty dance in the summer.
- Over 800 community youth participants in youth sports and instructional classes, ages 3 to 18.
- Youth scholarship is now offered at 50 – 75 – 100%, allowing all kids to have the opportunity to participate in the offerings. Incorporated use of tiered pricing for families.
- Inclusion – total of 85 programs with 47 participants and 12 staff for a total of 6000 contact hours of service.

RPAC Discussion:

Chairperson Dillenburg asked if we provide equipment for kids of families that can't afford to buy the equipment such hockey? Facilities Manager Tullberg stated we do not provide hockey equipment, but the Hockey Association may have a program. We do provide skates for lessons.

Manager Margo stated; that in the tap, ballet and dance program we do have a used shoe buy / exchange program that many of the participants take part in.

We are also looking at adding Adult scholarship fund for those adults on a fixed income to participate in some of our adult programs.

7. OLD BUSINESS

1. THREE RIVER PARK DISTRICT COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Director Yungers reported on the Work Session of September 4, 2019. Two of the Three River Park Commission and staff person Jonathan Vleming were present. In general, the City Council was in favor of the elements of the Cooperative Agreement, however City Councilmember Mark Mata, was concerned about the proposed land use agreement to place the Three Rivers maintenance building on the City's property. A Three River Park Commission staff member will meet with Councilmember Mata to explain the advantages of the maintenance building placement in the approved Master Plan. TRPC wants a unanimous vote to go before the Legislature for State Bonding.

2. OXBOW LAKE ACQUISITION

At the September RPAC meeting the RPAC recommended to move forward to acquire the tax forfeiture land that would result in acquiring Oxbow Lake and Trail. This will be taken up by the Brooklyn Park Economic Development Agency to move forward.

8. WRITTEN REPORTS

1. PROGRAM AND EVENTS UPDATE

No Comment

2. UPDATE ON PARK BOND REINVESTMENT PROJECTS

Besides the written report, Brad Tullberg reported that on October 14, 2019, the City Council voted 4 to 1 to approve LHB, Inc as the Master Planning and Design Development Consultant for the Park Bond Reinvestment project.

No Further Comment

3. UPDATE ON OTHER PARK AND FACILITIES PROJECTS

No Comment

4. DIRECTORS REPORT

A. UPDATE ON 2020 BUDGET

No Comment

B. UPDATE ON 2020-24 CIP/CEP

No Comment

9. DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. TATER DAZE/SPECIAL EVENTS

Kelly, Mertes, Recreation Supervisor reported on the City Council Work Session that occurred on October 7, 2019. Staff within the Recreation and Parks team reported that they have seen an increase in participation at our one-day, smaller scale community events like concerts, Movies in the Park, and the Kick-off to National Night Out, along with receiving positive verbal feedback. Also noting the community has asked us to provide more of these types of free family-oriented opportunities.

Mertes noted that the staff is looking at the long-range future for Tater Daze. The volunteer committee has taken a diminishing role in the planning and operation of the event with the City staff taking on more of the responsibility. There is a trend nationally to do one-day events rather than multiple days. Also stating that food trucks generate positive feedback. The vision is to Celebrate Brooklyn Park by providing several events and spaces for residents to come together and celebrate our community.

RPAC Discussion:

- Chairperson Dillenburg mentioned that the email communication would be better if given more advance notice and more frequency for better results. She also liked the idea of the celebration of the different ethnicities.
- Planning Commission Liaison Spears asked how was Tater Daze advertised this year? Mertes replied that it was advertised in the Park Pages and Get up and Go, as well as through social media and posters at businesses such as Hy-Vee.

2. FUTURE OF ZANE COURT PARK

Brad Tullberg reported the Brooklyn Park Police Department has reached out to Recreation and Parks as well as Operations and Maintenance to brainstorm how to mitigate some issues they are having at Zane Court Park. The Park is located on the south side of the Zane Court cul-de-sac. The .91-acre park has a playground and small picnic shelter. Both the playground and shelter are nearing the end of its useful life and are scheduled for replacement. The park has become a safety and security issue recently as activity from the nearby Huntington Place apartments has spilled over into Zane Court Park. The park has a berm with bushes that run along Zane Avenue to create a visual barrier to activity in the park.

Questions ask of RPAC: The Zane Court playground is slated to be replaced in 2021. It is across the street and down ½ a block from Zanewood Recreation Center playground. Because of this proximity is it cost effective to replace the equipment or use that money for Zanewood playground equipment that will be replaced in 2020?

An option for the area would be to turn the park into community gardens. This could be used by residents of Huntington Place or partner with the Evergreens Homeowners Association that borders the park to the south and west.

RPAC Discussion:

- Chairperson Dillenburg asked if the playground equipment could be salvaged and used in any other parks? Tullberg responded; no, the equipment is not transportable. He also stated that the shelter would not be in any condition to be moved.
- Chairperson Dillenburg responded that she liked the idea of the community gardens.
- Commissioner Sandberg asked if this plan would deter people from going there? Director Yungers responded that it would be different kind of activity. It would not be a place for gathering unless they have a garden plat.
- Commissioner Sandberg asked for clarification of how much space would the gardens take up. Tullberg responded, those details are not yet defined, that it would depend upon the partnership. Operations and Maintenance will be taking out the berm that runs along the east side as soon as the ground dries out either this fall or spring.
- Chairperson Dillenburg asked if this park could have mounted cameras installed for security? Tullberg responded that if the park remains as it is, Brooklyn Park Police would need to make that decision.
- Director Yungers asked if RPAC was interested in the Staff contacting the Homeowners Association to discuss a community garden? Susan Pha responded she thought community gardens would be great for the apartment buildings across the street.

The staff was instructed to continue investigating the stated ideas and additional options.

3. STATUS OF 2019 RPAC WORK PLAN AND PRIORITIES FOR 2020

Director Yungers presented the 2019-20 RPAC/Dept Work Plan and priorities. Director Yungers asked RPAC members to start thinking of what they want to see on the 2020 Work Plan. RPAC will be asked to approve the 2020 Work Plan at the November meeting.

10. VERBAL REPORTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. COMMISSIONER UPDATES

2. CITY PLANNING COMMISSION UPDATES

Spears reported that another day care has approached the City to come to Brooklyn Park.

3. CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

Councilwoman Pha asked that we consider additional winter activities. She hears from the public they would like to see more year-round activities. Director Yungers indicated that she will ask staff to provide a Winter Programs and Services report for the November meeting.

4. KEY TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION AT THE NEXT RPAC MEETING

A. 2020 RPAC WORK PLAN

5. KEY DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

A. Park bond project community engagement events – TBD (Jan – Feb)

B. Youth Services report will take place in January

11. OTHER ITEMS BY COMMISSION

N/A

**12. ADJOURNMENT - The meeting ended at 8:56 p.m.
*A quorum was not present.**

**Respectfully submitted by,
Jeanine Machan**