

MINUTES
WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
February 12, 2019

Park & Rec. Members Present: Bonnie Bellows, Jay DeLaRosby, Brad Erickson, Bob Gausman, Rachel McNamara

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon G. Hatfield, Parks and Public Works Administrative Specialist; Wendy Berry, Councilperson; Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

1. ROLL CALL

2. REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Schletty directed the meeting in the absence of Chairs/Members Petrasek and Lynch. Schletty called the meeting to order at 5:34 pm.

The committee approved the minutes from the January 8, 2019 meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. CIP/CEP Discussion

Schletty reviewed the Capital Equipment Plan (CEP) and Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) with the committee. He said that park projects are all funding dependent. Funding comes from cash reserves, property taxes, local aid, reserves, tax levies/ franchise fees, revenue, etc. Schletty said, "Basically, we're taking money anywhere we can find it." Member Bellows mentioned having bake sales. Schletty talked about the recent park improvements 2012- 2018. This included the Sports Dome, Harmon Park, the Sports Complex and the Ice Arena. (The Sports Complex rehabilitation will be completed this year and will add a storage building and to make upgrades to other existing buildings.) There have also been improvements to the park trail system with some debt issuance.

The city is trying to do the improvements with local funding /franchise funding and without issuing any other debt or levying. The Marthaler Park Master Plan was [completed] by the committee in 2018. (It has not however, been adopted by Council.) No improvements will be done to Marthaler Park until the City obtains funding. There is minor playground replacement in the pocket parks that will be done in 2019.

Dakota County is working with the city to develop the River-to-River Trail. The city is also working with Hy-Vee to get the trail tunnel constructed as well.

Schletty said the YMCA operates the city pool and that the pool is open for only three months of the year. The city anticipates that \$400,000 is needed to maintain the pool. The city will look for alternatives to operating the pool.

Schletty said the Ice Arena refrigeration equipment was improved in 2015. The taxpayer supplies sixty-two thousand dollars of support per year for the Ice Arena and [the Arena] should be self-supporting. The parking lot improvement is being put off. The second phase of the improvements, (two million dollars) has been delayed. (The HVAC replacement, however, is slated for later this year.)

The Regional Athletics Center (RAC)/Sports Dome was completed in 2012. It is operated by a separate management company. The city entered a long-term contract (five- year) with the company. Turf replacement has been pushed out five to ten years because the turf has been

well maintained. Other projected repairs have been pushed farther out, (2028). The taxpayers support for the Sports Dome is \$23,000 per year to pay for the debt on the dome.

Schletty showed the committee the cash balance goals for the park improvements. The worksheet showed a 10-year breakdown of future revenue for the park improvements. Schletty asked the committee if he had bored them asleep. Bellows asked what Schletty was looking for. Schletty said he is not looking for suggestions yet; this session is just an overview. The main park projects, however, will be planned through the committee. For example, the committee will help with the warming house replacement options.

Schletty talked about the CEP. The park redevelopment is mostly centered on Marthaler Park. The city will do "one big ticket item," [at a time.] The north end will be redeveloped, (\$170,000) first. By 2021-2023, the southern end piece will be completed. If funding becomes available, the city can adjust the [redevelopment plan.]

Some smaller parks have playground equipment that is fifteen years old. Some of the equipment is "still in good shape." The city has \$70,000 set aside for playground equipment.

The Sports Complex storage buildings are having a facelift. The orange and brown color palettes are from the 1980s.

The City has pledged \$1.2 million dollars to Mendota Heights/school district for a new pool facility.

There is a placeholder for the Mud Lake Improvements; the improvements are slated for 2026.

The Ice Arena is slated to have new water heaters, restrooms, the furnace replaced and a "dehumidification." The Zamboni® ice resurfacing machine is still in good shape. Lighting upgrades are "up in the air" because the Xcel grant program was discontinued.

There is no major capital equipment expense planned for the Sports Dome in the next few years. A new control system was installed; the system is now automated by computer and can be monitored remotely.

Schletty showed the committee the city pool expenses. Bellows asked about the history of the pool. Schletty said that the pool was originally built in the 1950s. It was renovated in the 1980s and again in 1999. The only thing original to the pool is its shell. The kiddie pool, the "mechanicals," and the changing room were added in 1999. The city is planning to sell the pool and/or redevelop the [site.] Member Erickson asked if the [nearby] football field is going away. Schletty said no, the school district plans to keep the field.

Member DeLaRosby commented. There is not a lot of funding available because of the Robert Street [debt.] The city is currently in a maintenance plan. The new councilperson, Jon Justen is working with Rick Hansen to recapture funds from the State for the Robert Street improvements. DeLaRosby asked committee members to contact government to support their efforts. It is possible to recoup up to four million dollars.

In regards to the pool, DeLaRosby asked if the funding commitment from West St. Paul to Mendota Heights is a "done deal." The location of the pool in Mendota Heights is a "problem." West St. Paul will lose the city pool and the YMCA pools as well. With the

new pool tied to the school district, there would no good opportunity for generating revenue, especially if the pool were not a fifty- meter pool. DeLaRosby said that it “maybe too ambitious,” but there are only three other fifty-meter pools in the area. A fifty-meter pool with moveable bulkheads would generate a lot of revenue. Competitive swimmers pay \$50 per weekend and \$7 per splash in a pool facility. The pool could be used as a community facility and West St. Paul would become a destination city.

Committee members talked about the new pool in Mendota Heights. Members would like more information about the new [Mendota Heights] pool.

Schletty said that the Parks Department is not the only department with funding cuts. There will be no new road construction in 2020.

b. Discuss Upcoming Easter Event

Schletty talked about the upcoming Easter Event on April 20. The event will be from 9:30-10:30 am with the egg hunt scheduled at 10:00 am sharp. There will be a petting zoo, “Cock-A-Doodle Zoo, Sustainable Safari,” which features goats, sheep, porcupines and kangaroos. The egg hunt will be organized (like last year) with four different age groups on the four fields. Schletty will double the number of eggs for this year’s event. Four golden tickets will be hidden in each field. The raffle tickets will be drawn at the same time as the egg hunt and winners will be posted. Member McNamara said that there is nothing to change about the event except the weather.

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Update on Committee Bylaws

Schletty said he reviewed the notes from the Park Committee meeting and from the Council meetings and the document signature page has been changed. Committee members need only to sign a “Received Copy” page to the city. The document no longer, “holds anyone’s hands to the flame.”

5. OTHER

a. City Council Updates- Berry reported that council reappointed each member up for renewal. There will be Neighborhood Meetings on February 21, 26 and 27. Council is open to reinstalling the basketball hoops in Haskell and Oakdale Parks after a public hearing.

b. Staff Updates

i. Basketball Hoops, Haskell & Oakdale Parks- DeLaRosby asked about necessity of the public hearing and the due diligence on the costs of the equipment. Schletty said that the city manager said it was a priority to include the public in the process. The city will send out a meeting invitation to the residents within a 300-500 foot radius of the parks. The city will invite the residents to the next Parks and Recreation meeting to discuss the basketball hoops. [The meeting will be held in Council Chambers in City Hall.] Regarding the equipment, Schletty said that the courts have “the pipes but no backboards or rims.” The city plans to install only half-court basketball in the selected courts. Schletty said the parks police officer would visit the parks with more frequency. DeLaRosby mentioned having signage at the park listing basketball playing hours.

ii. Thompson County Park Reconstruction- Schletty showed the committee an interactive map of the proposed renovation plan for Thompson County Park. Residents can comment on the new proposed features. Schletty attended the Thompson Park shareholders meeting recently.

- c. **Albert Park-** Member Gausman shared an idea about an art display for Albert Park. He has the art posted on a Facebook site.
- d. **McNamara's Happy News-** McNamara announced that she will be absent at the next committee meeting for maternity leave. She will be at the April meeting.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:47 pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 12, 2019 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield