

COON RAPIDS PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF  
MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2012

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The regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order on September 10, 2012 at 6:30 P.M. in the Public Works Conference Room.

Members Present: Commissioners Tim Arntson, Mary Lou Hecht, Gen Sand, Ryan McAlpine (arrived 6:38 p.m.) and Neal Livermore.

Members Absent: Commissioners Mike Jacobson, and Steven Head.

Also Present: Gregg Engle, Parks Supervisor, Ryan Gunderson, Recreation Coordinator and Steve Gatlin, Acting City Manager.

1. ROLL CALL

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Gregg Engle acknowledged roll call.

Chair Arntson suggested starting with a resident who has a concern.

2. OTHER

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Rochelle Ness of 10178 Cottonwood Street NW lives across from Acorn Park. She stated that the slide, which was recalled, had been a concern as there was nowhere to hold onto it. She noted that the large climbing structure does not get used much by the kids. She expressed concern that there is not a traditional slide for the kids. She reported talking to staff about the replacement slides proposed by the company. She requested that a new slide include a place to hold onto and safe steps to use. She added that her three-year-old would like to make use of a bigger slide. She noted that the baby swing is often in use and a second one is needed.

Mr. Engle stated that the Acorn Park equipment was replaced six years ago. He noted that there had been vandalism several times. He added that due to complaints about the equipment from neighbors they added a separate swing structure and a dinosaur climbing structure. He noted that Landscape Structures was in a lawsuit regarding the original slide, which they lost. He commented that he has been given a \$5,000 voucher to replace the slide. He added that Acorn Park has been a topic of discussion in the comprehensive plan. He commented that he received notice a week ago of a slide that was suggested as a replacement.

Chairman Arntson inquired if the voucher would cover the cost of replacing the slide. Mr. Engle confirmed that it would. He explained that the plan is to have a separate, set apart slide. He reviewed that the recommended option was an attached slide like before, only it has a covering over it.

Mr. Gatlin asked if they have to replace the slide with the one that is recommended. Mr. Engle commented that it is the company's recommendation but they do not have to choose this one.

Commissioner Livermore asked if the slide with closer steps can be modified by installing hand rails. Mr. Engle commented that the warranty would be void if they modify it so they cannot. He commented that the slide recommended by the company has cupped sides. He noted that it is a reputable company.

Commissioner McAlpine arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Mr. Engle reviewed that there has been consideration for removing the tennis court and reducing the amenities at Acorn Park so it is not a good time to add to the park. Chairman Arntson commented that he does not want to remove amenities but if there is a voucher they should consider using it.

Mr. Engle confirmed that the recalled slide has been removed and the play structure is safe. Ms. Ness asked for a more traditional slide so most kids can make use of it. She confirmed that the Acorn Park play equipment is not used frequently and they choose another park over this one even though it is across the street.

Chairman Arntson explained that the Commission was trying to provide a unique play structure when this equipment was selected.

Commissioner Livermore asked for price estimates on alternative slides. Mr. Engle passed around a quote sheet. He suggested having an independent slide that is not attached to the current structure. He noted that Alder Park is 2-1/2 blocks away and has many more amenities.

Chairman Arntson suggested selecting a slide and then deciding what to do with it later depending on how the rest of the plan is decided. He recommended a free standing slide. He requested that the voucher be used. Mr. Engle commented that they may end up keeping a play structure at the park and relocating the current equipment in order to replace it with something different. He noted that the equipment was replaced as it was previously vandalized and the current piece has been maintenance free. He acknowledged that the neighborhood does not like the structure.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LIVERMORE REGARDING ACORN PARK TO RECOMMEND THE FREE STANDING SLIDE FOR \$4,200 AND USE THE VOUCHER.**

**MOTION FAILED FOR LACK OF A SECOND.**

Mr. Engle stated they could use the remaining money to buy the matching smaller dinosaur structure. He explained that the slide would go along the pathway on the way to the tennis court. He confirmed that it will not fit within the pad for the play equipment. Jason Amberg of Brauer & Associates suggested not creating a separate pad to confine the slide into as it would create a tripping opportunity.

Chairman Arntson asked how to make the connection to the slide safer. Mr. Engle stated that it will be similar to the swings that are not on the pad either. He noted that the pathway goes between these play features. He commented that to change the pad creates a cost for borders, sand base and removal of trees. This would cost another \$3,000 to \$4,000. He commented that they will look at ADA guidelines.

Commissioner Livermore stated that by removing the tennis court there would be enough room for a safe zone for the slide. He asked that this be looked at to solve the issue. Mr. Engle reported that \$2,000 has been set aside for a new border for the slide.

Commissioner McAlpine asked to look at the park before deciding. Mr. Amberg commented that Acorn Park has been scheduled for a low amount of maintenance in the new Master Plan.

Chairman Arntson suggested obtaining the slide and work on installing it later down the road after the plan for the park has been addressed. He confirmed that a motion is not needed to purchase the slide with the voucher.

### 3. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2012 AGENDA

Chairman Arntson confirmed that they added a discussion on the slide at Acorn Park.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER MCALPINE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SAND, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2012 AGENDA AS AMENDED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

### 4. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 6, 2012 MINUTES

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LIVERMORE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MCALPINE, TO APPROVE THE AUGUST 6, 2012 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. COMMISSIONERS SAND AND ARNTSON ABSTAINED.

### 5. OLD BUSINESS

#### A. Parks and Open Space Master Plan Update.

Jason Amberg of Brauer & Associates gave a presentation of the updated Parks, Recreation and Trail Masterplan. He noted that the plan includes large cornerstone parks. He added that Al Flynn is a large park and possibly a large park will be added at the community center. He reviewed a display showing parks based on major renovations, mid-level renovations that would not be complete renovations and include Vineyards, Alder, Kennedy, and Towerview Parks. He commented that the lowest level may include ADA improvements and seating. He reviewed the trails and past plans. He commented that his display has gaps in the trails identified. He commented that intersection and pedestrian crossing improvements are included. He noted that missing trails and sidewalks are also noted.

Mr. Gatlin requested that Foley Boulevard be researched as the county is doing a project from the post office to Northdale Boulevard. He reviewed that connections to cornerstone parks are identified. He noted that this was a result of their survey and residents felt it was important. He reviewed preliminary cost projections. He noted that cornerstone park renovations cost 5.3 to 6 million dollars for the five parks which does not include the buildings. He asked to discuss the priorities on the buildings. He noted that Sand Creek Athletic Complex will cost 4.9 to 7.5 million. He noted that mid-level park improvements cost \$870,000 to 1.2 million. He noted that Evergreen Dog Park has been budgeted at \$50,000 to \$100,000. He reported that total improvements are \$21 to \$27 million dollars. He explained that these are preliminary cost projections.

Commissioner McAlpine confirmed that there is one building per cornerstone park.

Commissioner Livermore asked how many miles of trails are included. Mr. Amberg explained there are 14.5 miles of sidewalk and 4-1/2 miles of miscellaneous sidewalks. He noted that this does not include pending sidewalks or trails that are already funded. He added that there is an option to obtain grants but this is not guaranteed.

Chairman Arntson commented that on Shenandoah and Sand Creek to the railroad tracks there is no trail. He asked if it has to be a trail versus a sidewalk. Mr. Gatlin stated that trails are often 5-6 feet and are wider than sidewalks.

Mr. Amberg noted that there are gaps in the regional trails. He provided a list of items to consider for prioritizing. He suggested considering maintenance of existing systems, completing trails connections, the cornerstone park developments, community buildings in the parks, Sand Creek or additional ideas.

Mr. Gatlin asked if maintenance includes the improvements. Mr. Amberg commented that the costs will depend on the priorities. He asked if developing a beach at Crooked Lake or adding splash pads would create new maintenance costs. He recommended that the maintenance cost baseline remain the same as it was six years ago before budget restrictions.

Commissioner McAlpine commented that the field distance and parking are issues at Sand Creek Park. He recommended updating it for more adequate use.

Chairman Arntson asked about asphalt and whether the new ordinance requires this surface. Mr. Gatlin commented that asphalt and curbing will be required.

Mr. Gunderson commented that Thorpe Park warming house needs restrooms added. He noted that two of the winter warming houses need running water bathrooms added and two of the warming houses need to be replaced.

Chairman Arntson asked if the priorities should be numbered. Mr. Amberg commented that would help. He noted that he is hearing that Sand Creek is high on the list.

Chairman Arntson listed his top priorities as maintenance, completing trail connections and renovating Sand Creek Park. Commissioner McAlpine agreed. He noted that Riverview is another high priority park.

Mr. Amberg asked for priorities. Commissioner McAlpine suggested the priority order as trail, maintenance and renovating Sand Creek Park. The Board was in agreement on this.

Mr. Amberg asked which trail segments are a priority. Commissioner Livermore noted that Wilderness is missing a connection from Main Street to 121<sup>st</sup>. He commented that 85<sup>th</sup> is the priority to him, going from Kennedy into Anoka County Park system and starting the link up to Mississippi. He noted that a second priority would be Anoka by the community college. He asked if the proposed bridge over Highway 10 is in the budget. He suggested an itemization by trail so they can prioritize the bridges. He reiterated that Wilderness, Kennedy, and Anoka Ramsey Community College are his priorities.

Mr. Gunderson commented that the community would agree that by the community college from 85<sup>th</sup> to Kennedy is a priority. Commissioner Livermore added that the grant for this has been denied twice so it is up to the city to complete it.

Chairman Arntson suggested a priority of trail connections to the regional parks, which are Wilderness Park and into Bunker Park. Commissioner McAlpine commented that by Egret there is a narrow sidewalk and from Coon Rapids Boulevard into the park a connection is needed.

Mr. Amberg asked what the next priority would be following the completion of Sand Creek Park. Chairman Arntson stated that Al Flynn would not be a priority if Sand Creek is done as it is nearby.

Commissioner Sand suggested Riverview Park. Commissioner Livermore suggested Crooked Lake Park. He noted that this would spread around the improvements.

Mr. Gunderson suggested Lions Park as it is in the center of the city and very visible. Commissioner McAlpine suggested Crooked Lake as they are considering a water element.

Chairman Arntson commented that at Crooked Lake there will be a need for parking and it is close to residents. He added that the beach would create noise.

Commissioner McAlpine asked what the resident survey showed concerning water features. Mr. Amberg stated that numerous times residents brought up that they would like water features. He asked for clarification of park priorities.

The Commission was split between Crooked Lake and Riverview Park as priorities.

Commissioner Livermore commented for minor, small scale projects the dog park is a priority to him.

Mr. Amberg summarized that on October 1 there will be a meeting with this Commission and the task force at 6:30 at city hall. He commented on October 9 there will be a public meeting with maps and displays. Mr. Gatlin explained that on October 23<sup>rd</sup> there will be another meeting followed by a final review in November.

## 6. NEW BUSINESS

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### A. Disc Golf Request and Proposal. New

Dan Schnabel of 11775 Kerry Street handed out a brochure of his disc golf proposal. He identified people around the room who are present in support of this idea. He noted that the disc golf course could be a regional draw. He provided examples of the discs used for play. He explained that there are a variety of sizes for different purposes. He reported that he has lived in the community with his wife and children for many years. He has an achievement by the Guinness Book of Records for the largest number of disc golf baskets made in 24 hours. He completed 1305 holes. He walked 66 miles during this event and noted that this is a good amount of exercise with this sport. He reported there are 17 members in his club. He commented that he has had an interest in Coon Rapids developing a disc golf course. He noted that he created an online survey for disc golf and a splash pad. Mr. Gunderson commented that there were five to ten votes for each.

Mr. Schnabel commented that he has visited Woodcrest/Wintercrest Park with others to look at it for use as a disc golf course. He commented that in the 1970s the sport was formalized. He explained the game of disc golf. He described how it compares to ball golf. He noted that over 300 players participated in a two day event at Como Park. He

explained that 500,000 people play worldwide regularly. He added that any age can play. The Professional Disc Golf Association provides tournaments. He noted that Ham Lake, Bunker Hills, Mounds View, New Brighton, Maple Grove and other cities have disc golf courses. He noted that many courses are just 9 holes but if they create an 18 hole course people would come from a greater distance away to play it. He commented that scheduling is easy. He added that the sport is affordable with discs available for \$7 and up. He reviewed that several retailers in the area sell the discs. He added that installing a course costs less than new playground equipment. He explained that 72 people can play a course at a time with four at a hole. He noted that the play is self governed and not formally scheduled. He stated that it is a benefit to the community. He commented that undesirable pieces of land can be used to develop a disc golf course. He added that obstacles make the course interesting. He recommended using Wintercrest or Woodcrest Park. He commented that there are natural paths in the wood that could be used as the course ways. He noted that a slab of concrete would be needed for the starting point and a galvanized basket for each hole. He added that a tee sign would also be needed to explain the course. He explained that baskets are around \$420 each and have a 20 year warranty.

Commissioner Sand asked how many players are in Coon Rapids. Mr. Schnabel estimated that there are around 150 to 200.

Chairman Arntson asked how Mr. Schnabel likes the Bunker course. Mr. Schnabel commented that it is not well advertised. He commented that it was originally planned as a 27 hole course but is currently 9. He explained that having to pay to play is a deterrent.

Commissioner Livermore asked if the design requires the removal of trees. Mr. Schnabel commented that there is one area, which may require removing trees, but typically only buckthorn is removed.

Commissioner Livermore asked if the trails will be groomed. Mr. Schnabel commented that in the woods the grass does not grow. He explained that there are park areas where the grass is already mowed. He noted that the grass does not need weekly mowing to accommodate the course. He suggested having a few garbage cans along the course in readily accessible areas. He commented that woodchips are spread around the baskets. He recommended creating woodchips from the buckthorn or trees that are already down.

Commissioner Livermore asked about tournament costs. Mr. Schnabel reviewed the costs. He noted that he has considered having a weekly league. He reported that Jerry Schwinn would provide a reward for a tournament.

Commissioner Livermore asked about the tournament raising money for the city. Mr. Gunderson stated that it would be similar to a softball tournament. He noted that the maintenance may be similar to a dog park.

Mr. Engle commented that he has experience with disc golf from a previous city. He commented that it was very popular. He noted that the maintenance would likely be around two hours a week to make it look right. He noted that this would include picking up trash and inspecting the baskets. He stated that it would have to be ADA compliant. Mr. Amberg stated that typically 50 percent of the features need to be accessible although he has not looked at disc golf specifically.

Mr. Gunderson commented that parking needs to be looked at. He stated that across the street are ball fields, which have a few games each weekend. Mr. Schnabel commented that they would coordinate any tournaments with the city.

Chairman Arntson commented that he likes this idea. He added that there are issues that need to be addressed. Mr. Gunderson explained that the proposed course is 18 holes and perhaps they should start with a 9 hole course and monitor it for a while. He noted that there are courses, which offer an air conditioned building, equipment sales and concessions for sale. He stated that staff will review the concept of a disc golf course and see where it fits in the master plan.

#### 7. OTHER (CONTINUED)

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Mr. Gunderson commented that in the next three days he has seniors doing trail counts from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. that includes bikers and walkers. He noted that they are stationed by Northdale by Medtronic and on Thursday along Coon Rapids Boulevard.

Commissioner Livermore asked about whether there is a tunnel connection at the Main Street trail where the Avocet overpass is. Mr. Gatlin commented that a tunnel is planned from the top of the bridge down to the south side. He noted that a north connection will be added later if the county receives grant money.

Mr. Engle commented that there are two Eagle Scout projects, which include benches at Prospect Park and an enclosure at Wildwood Park. He noted that at Anoka Ramsey they have paid for maintaining the soccer field, which has cost \$6,000 so far. Mr. Gunderson stated that the soccer field is maintained by the City of Coon Rapids who gets second priority use of it after college varsity soccer. He noted that the baseball field is the area the city is interested in. He asked whether the city should consider discontinuing maintenance on this area. He suggested trading services and maintaining a different baseball field. He noted that if they stop an agreement with Anoka Ramsey the Coon Rapids baseball associations would need to make their own arrangement or use the high school. He noted that there is no other maintenance needed in that part of town, which costs in gas.

Mr. Engle commented that a resident by Moor Park was complaining about the lighting on the south end. He noted that there were issues of people accessing the park at midnight. He noted that they put up signage to minimize the traffic.

8. ADJOURNMENT

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MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SAND, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER MCALPINE, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:31 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg Engle  
Parks Supervisor