

COON RAPIDS PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES OF
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2012

The regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission was called to order on November 5, 2012 at 6:30 P.M. in the Public Works Conference Room.

Members Present: Commissioners Tim Arntson, Mary Lou Hecht, Gen Sand and Neal Livermore.

Members Absent: Commissioners Mike Jacobson, Steven Head and Ryan McAlpine.

Also Present: Gregg Engle, Parks Supervisor, Ryan Gunderson, Recreation Coordinator, Steve Gatlin, City Manager and Tim Himmer, Public Works Director.

1. ROLL CALL

Gregg Engle acknowledged roll call. He confirmed that Sign Crafters will install the Lions Creek sign on Friday or Monday.

2. APPROVAL OF THE NOVEMBER 5, 2012 AGENDA

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LIVERMORE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER SAND, TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 5, 2012 AGENDA AS SUBMITTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

3. APPROVAL OF THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2012 MINUTES

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER ARNTSON, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LIVERMORE, TO APPROVE THE SEPTEMBER 10, 2012 MEETING MINUTES AS PRESENTED. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. OLD BUSINESS

None.

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Parks Master Plan Prioritization.

Mr. Gunderson noted that at the joint Parks/Council worksession it was decided that 45 minutes of time would be dedicated each month to work on the Master Plan. He reviewed that there is a list of items for this discussion. He asked the Board to review the list and prioritize it for these worksession discussions. Items on the list are Recreation Supervisor position, Recreation Council, increasing funding back to what it was prior to

the 2009 level, Cornerstone Parks and Neighborhood Parks. Mr. Gatlin reviewed that it will take three to four months to work through the topics on the lists with Council.

Commissioner Livermore stated that Sand Creek Park seems like a separate entity. He commented that the Cornerstone Parks are a significant element that changes things if they are not in the discussion. He recommended taking about Sand Creek Park next year with the new Council.

Commissioner Sand added that the Cornerstone Parks will be showplaces that stand out in the community. She commented that they will be well utilized by the community. Commissioner Livermore stated that he supports having large parks like Lions Park and Riverview although they are being put in a different category in the plans. He expressed support of the Cornerstone Park concept.

Chairman Arntson stated that the Community Building is at about the same level as Sand Creek Park. He stated that having a park in each area of the community makes sense. He is in support of the Cornerstone Park concept.

Commissioner Livermore stated that there has been discussion about financing with two different areas.

Commissioner Sand questioned how long it will take to complete the Cornerstone Parks. Commissioner Livermore reviewed that with the updated plan it will take five to ten years. He asked if Coon Creek Park will be considered at the level that Lions Creek Park will be. He suggested making this recommendation. He stated that if Coon Creek Park is the only sticking point they can discuss their options.

Chairman Arntson stated that Coon Creek Park has a unique amenity.

Commissioner Livermore stated that the budget discussion should be moved to next year.

Mr. Himmer recommended creating a unified front with their decision so communication with Council is clear. Chairman Arntson stated that the concept of Cornerstone Parks and park tiers was new in his previous comments. He asked what the Cornerstone Parks will need in the future. He commented that his only concern had been that Cornerstone Parks would take priority and the Neighborhood Parks will not be addressed. He asked that the need for buildings be defined. He stated that he is not against the plan but would like clarification. He expressed support to still have a Community Center to create identity for the city. He suggested this is important in a different way than neighborhood parks.

Chairman Arntson asked where trails fit into the prioritization. Mr. Gunderson stated that they are the number one priority for parks, which is why they are not on the list to consider. He stated that in the joint Council meeting the parks selected for Cornerstone

Parks was questioned. He reviewed that these parks are already functioning as larger parks in the community.

Chairman Arntson stated that he is in agreement with Pheasant Ridge as it is the only location in its area. He commented that Riverview Park is used by Little League. He reviewed that at Crooked Lake Park there is not a lot of land but there is a lake. He stated that he does not want land used for parking spots for a splash pad.

Mr. Gatlin commented that at the Council workshop a suggestion was made to create a Cornerstone Park at the Community Center. Chairman Arntson stated that this would be on the same level as Sand Creek. He added that initially they sought to have a park at the Community Center site.

B. Recreation Supervisor position.

Mr. Gatlin stated that the proposed position would change from the recreation coordinator to a recreation supervisor. This position would involve the Senior Services, Arts Commission, Adult Sports, recreation coordination and Ice Arena. He confirmed that this position would still be involved in this Board. He stated that they are identifying how the job description fits in a pay scale. Mr. Gunderson commented that the Senior Center does not have recreation programs except for two. He stated that this could be improved under the new position. He added that he sees the Community Center functioning for seniors in the morning. He reviewed that this would change the function of the manager there so they can have time to create programming.

Commissioner Livermore asked if Council is concerned about the cost of this plan. Mr. Gatlin stated that the programming will hopefully pay for itself.

Chairman Arntson stated that this would not be his recommendation for the second item for Council to discuss. He stated that the supervisor position and Athletic Council needs to be tied down more. Mr. Gunderson stated that the athletic associations are more closely tied to the city now but they are not necessarily tied with each other more.

Mr. Gatlin asked about the affiliation agreements. Mr. Gunderson stated that when he started he had the associations sign agreements stating that they would uphold certain standards like performing background checks. This included field use agreements and offered some control over the associations located in Coon Rapids.

Chairman Arntson asked about the user surveys from the Task Force. He inquired if each association was interviewed. Mr. Gunderson stated that all of the sports associations along with Girls Scouts and more were involved in the surveys. He stated that the focus will be on sports and not on parks. He commented that the associations are involved in numerous fundraisers and asked if there is a way for them to work in a unified way and share the benefits.

Ted Schmolke, Coon Rapids Athletic Association (CRAA) President, stated that the organizations should operate with their own Boards. He suggested having city representation at their Board meetings. He recommended that background checks can be purchased together with other Boards for a cost savings. He noted that the Associations Boards plan to meet four times a year. He recommended that each Board send representation to this meeting.

Chairman Arntson asked if a new resident comes to the city whom do they call about recreational activities. Mr. Schmolke stated that this would be under Mr. Gunderson's role.

Mr. Schmolke stated that outside of the quarterly Board meetings the city does not need to be involved as they cover many items that do not relate to the other associations. Chairman Arntson stated that they are not trying to take anything over from the Associations.

Mr. Gunderson stated that someone from the City should be involved. He stated that a standard he goes by is to see how the citizens are best served. He asked that they all work together. He suggested that they do not need to work against each other but be unified. Ms. Schmolke stated that the groups are efficient in their functioning. He stated that at their meetings they have volunteers involved taking on various aspects.

Mr. Himmer stated that the Recreation Board would help and facilitate for the Associations. He stated that this will not be run by the city but the city will be one representative at the table. He suggested that the school should also be involved in the Athletic Board.

Mike Kowalenko of CRAA asked if these responsibilities are not under Mr. Gunderson's role already. Mr. Gunderson stated that his role is handing softball scheduling and all parks.

Chairman Arntson stated that Mr. Gunderson will not be leading the meeting but will be there to offer guidance. He stated that he will coordinate the meeting place but it will function with a Board Chairman and other Boardmembers. Mr. Gunderson stated that the Board will make decisions that the city needs to sign off on eventually so their involvement would be beneficial.

Mr. Schmolke stated that the meetings should be done whether Council recommends them or not. Chairman Arntson stated that the city wants this as part of the Park and Recreation Program.

Mr. Himmer stated that the city wants to participate so they are part of knowing the future of recreation. Mr. Gunderson stated that no city wants an interest in running the athletic associations.

Mr. Schmolke commented that if Mr. Gunderson is in the new position he is not sure how that contributes to the Athletic Board. He stated that needs would be discussed along with the number of participations. He stated that if they schedule football fields with Mr. Gunderson it would not be a decision-making topic for this Athletic Board. He stated that background checks, when combined together, allow for a less expensive cost. He commented that adding a parking lot would not be a request from the Athletic Board. He stated that it would not benefit each of the individual Athletic Boards. He stated that this would be brought by the individual Athletic Board to Council. Mr. Gunderson clarified that the athletic associations would work together to coordinate but would not involve items covered by the city.

Mr. Schmolke stated that adding signs needs to go through the proper city channel and would not be a topic for the Athletic Board. Commissioner Livermore added that he sees the athletic associations giving input in what goes into a new Cornerstone Park

Mr. Schmolke stated that only the association involved with activities at that park would want to be part of the discussion. He suggested that they could invite interested parties to be part of those discussions. He added that strength in numbers will be a benefit when they lobby for a park like Sand Creek. Mr. Himmer stated that the associations could work together in this same way to meet their needs for things like a parking lot. He stated that this would prevent one association from going to a Councilmember and another association going to another Councilmember to make their requests.

Mr. Schmolke suggested that the Athletic Board would meet four times a year but have emails in-between. He stated that they can attend other meetings based on requests that go out by email as they become aware of decisions are being made. He stated that the city does not need to be involved at their Board level but the associations do. Mr. Himmer stated that the city staff member could shepherd their topics through proper channels to create a streamlined way of handling things.

Commissioner Livermore stated that the city would not be in charge of the meeting and would act much like they do now. They would just be present to represent the city. He suggested making the Council aware that this is how they envision it working.

Mr. Schmolke stated that he supports having meetings four times a year with the associations. He explained that with or without the Councils approval the associations are planning to go ahead and have quarterly meetings. He stated that there is a good cost savings in doing this. He agreed that it is mandatory that each association participate in the Board. Mr. Engle stated that there was an athletic study six to seven years ago and he and staff tried to get the associations together like this and it did not work then.

Chairman Arntson confirmed that the association board is item number six for the Council to discuss.

Mr. Schmolke stated that he finds if the city is there all associations will be aware of what the city is working on and be on the same page.

The Commissioner agreed on the following prioritized order of items to discuss for implementing the Master Plan.

1. Cornerstone Parks.
2. Neighborhood Parks.
3. Recreation Supervisor Position
4. Sand Creek Park.
5. Maintenance Budget Increases.
6. Athletic Council.

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER LIVERMORE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER HECHT, TO RECOMMEND THE PRIORITIES IN THIS ORDER FOR COUNCIL.

6. OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. Engle stated that at Woodland Oak Park there was a low maintenance trail that someone expanded on by building a culvert and extending the trail over it. He reviewed that someone put aggregate and trail over it. Chairman Arntson stated that the trail goes almost out to the Shenandoah.

Mr. Engle stated that the work that was done needs to be mowed and maintained. He stated that this area was not previously maintained but the work was not completed by city staff. He noted that at Bison Park the developer had property behind the town homes. He noted that he has been told it is park property. He reviewed that a crew pulled out barbed wire and bridges over the course of a month. They also found 6x6 tied railroad bridges going over the creek. He stated that they were not previously aware of this but will work to maintain it now.

Mr. Engle stated that they have an open position for the Commission and there are three applicants. He explained that this will be part of the next meeting.

Chairman Arntson commented that the next meeting is December 3.

Mr. Gatlin stated that there was not a discussion on Neighborhood Parks. He asked about what to discuss with Council on this. He asked if they should review the parks based on the high, medium and low priority parks. He commented that there are some funding opportunities available such as old bond funds that could be accessed. He noted that

there is an old Main Street fund. He commented that altogether the pots of money will be enough to complete Sand Creek Park. He asked if parks are done one at a time or if a bond referendum should be proposed and the parks completed in five to seven years. He stated that these things are still being worked out.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY COMMISSIONER SAND, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LIVERMORE, TO ADJOURN THE MEETING. MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 7:44 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregg Engle
Parks Supervisor