



**Park and Recreation Commission
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2024
6:30 PM**

North St. Paul City Hall – Council Chambers
2400 Margaret Street

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Lloyd Grachek called the meeting to order at 6:31 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

COMMISSION

Lloyd Grachek, Chair
Laura Greenlee-Karp, Vice-Chair, absent
David Andren, Commissioner
Ben Hansen, Commissioner, absent
Ingrid Koller, Commissioner
Sue Springborn, Commissioner
Sarah Zahradka, Commissioner

STAFF/LIAISONS

Cassidy Schweer, City Council Liaison
Sara Lang, Staff Liaison

III. ADOPT AGENDA

Chair Grachek called for a motion to adopt the October 23, 2024 meeting agenda.
M/Andren, S/Koller
Motion carried 5-0.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Approval of Minutes from September 25, 2024 PRC Meeting

Chair Grachek called for a motion to approve the September 25, 2024 meeting minutes.
M/Andren, S/Springborn
Motion carried 5-0.

V. MEETING OPEN TO PUBLIC

John Schmahl, 2750 Chisholm Ave, spoke noting that the meeting information was not available on the calendar and that there is no Zoom available even though it is listed. He also noted that the park dedication fees have not been transferred yet to cover the missing funds from the Sentinel building.

A public comment provided in written form was read aloud by Chair Grachek. The comment had thoughts on improvements for Casey Lake Park including ninja courses, and upgrades to seating areas.

VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS, ACTION ITEMS 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

A. HGA Updates

Tryg Hansen from HGA updated the Parks and Recreation Commission on the status of the park planning project. A recap of the community engagement was presented including a recap of the meeting with the City, ISD 622 and HGA. The community engagement process continues at the open houses at Casey Lake Park.

Initial cost estimates were provided, highlighting that the renovations for McKnight could cost between \$5-\$13 million and the costs included were based on rough square footages and unspecific items in the parks. Tryg highlighted the opportunities for potential grants for these projects including the DNR and professional sports teams.

For the downtown open space, the “front porch” option received positive feedback that included large swings. Public art versus play sculptures were discussed with the public, and in general the feedback has been to provide flexibility with a level of playfulness along with space making or seating.

For the 3rd St open space, the nature play and community garden option received positive feedback. A dog park has been also positively received. The corner of the space along 7th Ave may be a good spot for a dog park, community garden or green space.

For the McKnight complex, there is currently a use agreement between ISD 622 and the City. Athletic complexes can allow for other programming, while still serving as an athletic complex. The approach of the concept plans would align with the City’s Comprehensive Plan as an athletic complex. In conversations with the community, the feedback has been to provide additional programming with more flexibility for field sports. The concepts include one option that takes the area that is not currently softball and baseball fields and making improvements including sport courts and parking. Option two includes the same ideas but a larger flexible field with less sport courts. Options three and four include ideas on serving the current softball and baseball needs but with more flexibility including an option to turf the north side of the softball fields. This is also including an option to place a new park building on the site as well.

The next steps include taking the continued dialogue to create a 95% complete draft for the next community liaison meeting and then final concept reports at the next Park and Recreation Commission meeting.

Commissioner Koller asked if there is an example of a nearby field using that turf field system that can be flexible for softball and other field sports. Tryg noted that The City of St. Paul does have a field that is used in that capacity. Tryg will provide some further examples that can be sent out.

Commissioner Zahradka brought up the agreement with ISD 622 for the use of the softball and baseball fields and asked what obligation the City has to keeping those fields as softball or if they can be adjusted? She continued to ask where the other Commissioners lie with their thoughts on the softball fields and if we are utilizing the space to serve the greater good of the community? Council Liaison Schweer noted that the agreements need to be dug into a little deeper to understand the current obligations of the City. Tryg also explained that the first meeting with the ISD 622, the City and HGA showed an interest in having this space benefit the school district and the greater community.

Commissioner Andren also noted that he would like to see the agreements with the school district.



Commissioner Koller noted that the solution of the flexible fields allows everyone to win.

B. Park Hours Discussion and Recommendation

Per Council Liaison Schweer, the Commission was asked to discuss and recommend official changes to the park hours for all North St. Paul parks.

Commissioner Koller asked if there has been any feedback on the temporary hours and the 7am start as people may like to walk their dogs or run in the morning. Staff Liaison Lang and Council Liaison Schweer noted that there has been no feedback.

Commissioner Zahradka asked about the winter time and if 10pm too late as it gets dark early.

Commissioner Andren believes that the current temporary hours of 7am-10pm are appropriate.

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to approve the recommendation of park hours of 7am-10pm.

M/Andren, S/Zahradka

Motion carried 5-0.

C. Memorial Program Update Approval

Staff Liaison Lang mentioned that the current prices for the memorial offerings, including benches, picnic tables and trees, are not in line with the current costs to the City. The attachment reflects the current costs and proposed increases.

Commissioner Andren asked for clarification on where the pavers are installed. Commissioner Zahradka responded that they are installed in front of Janie's Playground.

Commissioner Koller acknowledged that the price increase is large but due to inflation, it is appropriate. She continued to ask that the City makes it clear that the buyer knows that there is normal wear and tear that will happen, which is not the City's responsibility however the City will make effort to contact the family if the items are breaking down to recommend replacement.

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to approve the price changes for the memorial program.

M/Zahradka, S/Andren

Motion carried 5-0.

D. Park Policy Updates

Staff Liaison Lang spoke about the recommendations from City Staff that are outlined in the attachment and asked the Commission for questions and a formal approval of the changes.

These changes include the removal of the deposits for the open air shelters, updating the priority scheduling for non-residents to begin booking mid-December, access tips for the keypad at Casey Lake Park, clarifying that rescheduling dates is subject to a \$25 administrative fee, the removal of the food truck portion, updates to the inflatables/moon bounce requirements, updates to staking for tents, update on grill regulations and the addition of facility emergency phone numbers.



Commissioner Andren recommended the addition of a key pad at Hause Park to prevent potential issues with keys for access. The rest of the Park and Recreation Commission echoed the same feeling.

Commissioner Koller asked if shelters, like the one available for rent at Northwood Park, need to be available for rent as not renting it would allow for anyone to access the space and asked staff how many rentals throughout the summer occur at Northwood. Staff Liaison Lang responded that there are only a couple rentals there during the summer.

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to approve the updates to the park rental policy.
M/Andren, S/Koller
Motion carried 5-0.

VII. REPORTS FROM STAFF

No updates from City staff.

VIII. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS & PARK LIAISONS

Commissioner Andren noted that at Casey Lake Park on the west side of the building the rafters need to be restrained and sealed.

Commissioner Springborn had no updates.

Commissioner Zahradka had no updates.

Commissioner Koller had no updates.

Chair Grachek had no updates.

Council Liaison Schweer had no updates.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Grachek asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 PM.
M/Andren, S/Springborn
Motion carried 5-0.

The next regularly scheduled Park and Recreation Commission Meeting is Wednesday, November 20th, 2024 at 6:30 PM.