



PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes August 10, 2022

Duluth City Hall, Council Chambers



I. Call Meeting to Order

President Crosby called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Amanda Crosby, Britt Rohrbaugh, David Demmer, Natalie Chin, Kala Pedersen, Jenny Peterson, Barb Darland, Terese Tomanek – City Council Liaison, Amber Sadowski – ISD 709 School Board Liaison; Ashley Grimm – St. Louis County Commissioner

Not Present: Tjaard Breeuwer

III. Approval of the June 8 Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Darland motioned for approval of the June 8 meeting minutes; second by Commissioner Peterson. Unanimously approved.

IV. Presentations

A. Proposed Parks Referendum (Informational) Mayor Emily Larson, Councilor Terese Tomanek

Pedersen questioned if the current funding is not equitable. Mayor Larson stated that it is important to make it very plain that equitable investment is the intention.

Chin questioned what the proposed Spirit Valley Center would add to the community. Mayor Larson stated that it would fill a need in the Spirit Valley area for a community center and programmable space.

Demmer questioned whether the funding increase would bring funding to a truly sustainable level. Mayor Larson stated that it will still not be enough, but it is a step toward more sustainable funding. Manager Peterson stated that Parks staff will be thoughtful with investment and will do what is possible within the funding available.

Demmer questioned what efforts have been made to engage key stakeholders. Mayor Larson stated that an alliance of 17 user groups is already meeting and efforts are being made to connect with various stakeholders and user groups.

Demmer questioned whether the language in the resolution about equity will be too limiting for doing work where it is required. Mayor Larson stated that the language does not fall in conflict with where the needs are. Manager Peterson stated that there are various layers of equity and responses to needs will meet where the needs are.

Beehler questioned what factors go into determining equitable distribution. Mayor Larson stated the master plan will be a guide in determining equitable distribution.

B. Presentation of Essential Spaces: Duluth Park, Recreation, Open Space & Trails Plan (For Future Action)
Anna Laybourn & Callie New, Design Workshop

Jenny Peterson questioned how deep the community input went into the action steps of the plan. Manager Peterson stated that a review of community comments went into the action steps. The public comment period will allow for feedback on the plan and action steps presented. Anna Laybourn stated that the survey was conducted in a way to identify place-based recommendations based on where community members lived within the three geographic areas of the City. Stated that community members also provided action steps for specific places at the community workshops.



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Jenny Peterson questioned what kind of criteria went into inventorying the parks. Knettel stated that a firm was hired to help create a system for prioritizing asset management within the park system. Stated that a rating system was created for the plan: good, fair, poor. Stated that staff went to the parks to evaluate the condition.

Demmer questioned if the action steps in the plan were ordered in a prioritized way. Manager Peterson stated that they are not prioritized in a specific order, as the timeline for each action step is different.

Demmer questioned what the process would be for a group wanting to implement an action step not specifically mentioned in the plan. Manager Peterson stated that the plan as a whole with its themes will be taken into consideration when a project is proposed that is not directly listed in the plan.

Pedersen questioned if the draft plan will be on the website for public review. Manager Peterson stated that it is.

Grimm questioned if there was any consideration of the amount of services that exist in a given space during equity mapping. Manager Peterson stated that a program delivery analysis was not conducted but there are action steps in the plan that call for such an analysis. Anna Laybourn stated that there were many layers of factors considered in the equity mapping process. Peterson stated that the map of park amenities will also be considered when identifying gaps in the park system.

Tomanek questioned if there will be printed copies of the draft plan available for those who do not have access to the internet. Manager Peterson stated that paper copies will be made available.

V. Commissioner Committees

Administrative (E-Board) meeting date: Thursday, September 29 at noon, Parks Conference Room
Amanda Crosby, David Demmer, Natalie Chin [Jessica Peterson]

Public Golf Committee – Tuesday, September 20 at 5 p.m., Conference Room 330
David Demmer, Amanda Crosby [Jessica Peterson, Bridget Erickson]

VI. Commissioner & Liaison Reports

VII. New Business

VIII. Old Business

IX. Division Report

Demmer requested information about the agreement with Duluth Area Hockey Association, specifically at Portman. Manager Peterson stated that the neighborhood association will be responsible for portions of their utility use.

Jenny Peterson requested more clarification on why the new utility fees are being instituted. Manager Peterson stated that Manager Birkeland would have more information on the policy. Stated that there is a need to recognize the costs and insufficient funding to provide services.

X. Public Comment

Judy Gibbs spoke on funding for the Natural Resource Management Program Plan.



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XI. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 pm.

XII. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Wednesday, September 21 at 5:00 p.m., Council Chambers.