



MINUTES

Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission

April 7, 2021 City Hall

Council Chambers 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Johnson. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this meeting was held virtually.

II. Roll Call:

Members Present: Commissioners Ahmed Abdiwahed, Pauline Alfors, Gary Bank, Kristin Hicks, Amelia Kuiper, Matt Johnson (Chair), Julia O'Rourke, Michael Spooner, and Charles Warner.

Members Absent: None.

Also Present: Director Jennifer Fink and Council Member Emily Dunsworth.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Alfors, seconded by O'Rourke to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 9-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by O'Rourke, seconded by Alfors to approve the March 3, 2021 minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 6-0-3 (Commissioners Abdiwahed, Hicks and Spooner abstained).

V. Business Items

A. Introduction of New Commissioners

Director Fink welcomed newly appointed Commission members Ahmed Abdiwahed, Kristin Hicks and Michael Spooner to the PREC Commission. Each new member introduced themselves to the group and discussed why they wanted to be a part of the PREC Commission. Chair Johnson stated he looked forward to working with and getting to know the new Commission members.

B. Department Orientation and Refresher – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated on a yearly basis, staff will strive to provide a generalized department overview at the beginning of the service year (April through the following March). This

allows new Commissioners to learn about the department and experienced Commissioners to learn about any department changes. An organizational chart was reviewed with the Commission. Staff shared additional information regarding the Parks and Recreation Department, discussed important contact numbers, and provided an overview on the programs that were being provided to the community.

Discussion included:

- The Commission thanked staff for completing a recent article that addressed the City's sustainability initiatives.
- The Commission suggested the City consider creating an environmental comprehensive plan with an overview and goals.
- The Commission recommended diversity and inclusion be promoted throughout City programming.
- Staff discussed the revenues the City received from 2020 from the golf course.
- The Commission supported staff providing the group with demographic information on who was participating in City programs and who was not.
- Further discussion ensued regarding when in-person meetings would be held.

C. Discussion about Chair and Vice Chair Positions - Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink requested the Commission make a recommendation to the City Council for the Chair and Vice Chair positions.

Chair Johnson stated he would be willing to continue to serve as Chair, but was willing to step aside if someone else wanted to serve.

Commissioner Spooner stated he was willing to serve as the Vice Chair noting he would like to take on some sort of leadership role with this group.

VI. Announcements

A. City Council Report – Council Member Emily Dunsworth

Councilmember Dunsworth provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She welcomed the new members and thanked them for being willing to serve the community. She reported the City Council received an update from its legislative delegation at its last meeting. She explained the Council continues to discuss short term rentals (Airbnb, VRBO, etc.) to address some of the issues that occurred last year. She provided the Commission with a brief summary on the language included within the proposed short term rental ordinance. She explained a number of surrounding communities already have short term rental ordinances in place. She noted the Council would be enhancing some of the HVAC units at the Community Center and was discussing how to thoughtfully implement the Parks Comprehensive Plan. She was of the opinion there was a lot of support from the Council to implement the plan and to determine how the park improvements would be financed. She noted there would be a mass vaccination clinic held at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds and explained New Brighton residents could sign up for this clinic.

B. PREC Chair Updates – Matt Johnson

Chair Johnson stated a new brochure was sent out by the New Brighton Parks and Recreation Department. He thanked staff for their tremendous efforts to maintain the City's parks as the weather has changed from winter to spring.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink encouraged the Commission to view the Council worksession meeting from two weeks ago when the implementation of the Parks Comprehensive Plan was discussed. She indicated staff was working with WSB to better understand how long each park would be out of commission if the Parks Comprehensive Plan were implemented. She explained the City would be receiving American Rescue Plan Act dollars and staff was seeking guidance on how these dollars can be spent. She reported the Hansen Park grant had been submitted. She reported staff was seeking a grant to assist with the removal of diseased Ash trees. She indicated the golf course opened for walking only in March and already had 300 rounds. She commented on the Cooking with Marilyn program that was being considered, along with painting in the park. She stated she was very pleased to see programming slowly coming back for the public to participate in.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Warner to adjourn the meeting at 7:41 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 9-0.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Fink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer Fink
Director of Parks and Recreation