



MINUTES

Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission

May 5, 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), and Michael Spooner.

Members Absent: Commissioner Julia O'Rourke and Charles Warner.

Also Present: Director Jennifer Fink and Council Member Pam Axberg.

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bank, seconded by Hicks to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Kuiper, seconded by Spooner to approve the April 7, 2021 minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

V. Business Items

A. Vaccine Distribution Update – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated clinics at the Community Center are now open to the public and residents can register to get a COVID-19 vaccine at www.newbrightonmn.gov/coviddashboard. She encouraged residents who have been waiting to get their vaccine to schedule an appointment. She indicated the Moderna vaccine was being offered at the Community Center and the Pfizer vaccine was being offered at the Minnesota State Fair Grounds. It was noted vaccines will be given free of charge and residents are not required to have health insurance in order to be vaccinated. She reported staff was putting out this information in numerous languages to inform the public of the City's vaccine efforts.

Discussion included:

- It was noted vaccines could be received via an appointment or through walk-ups.
- Vaccine clinics are held at the New Brighton Community Center every Wednesday.
- The Commission thanked staff for their efforts to get the community vaccinated against COVID-19.

B. Facility/Park Naming Policy Discussion – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated the Midtown Village development will include a small park. There is a desire to have that park named something other than “Midtown Village Park.” She reported staff was interested in naming this park to inform the public that this park was available to all residents versus just the residents of Midtown Village. Staff has assembled a number of examples of park naming policies. These examples were shared with the Commission and staff requested feedback on suggested names for a recommendation to Council.

Discussion included:

- The Commission supported not naming the park after a person.
- The Commission suggested indigenous or alternate languages be considered along with historical events for the park name.
- The Commission suggested the community be engaged in the naming process, with the Commission making a final suggestion to the City Council.
- Staff discuss the amenities that were being proposed for the pocket park.
- The Commission thanked staff for providing the group with a list of criteria that has been used in the past for naming parks.

C. Midtown Village Playground RFP Update - Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated the Midtown Village development will include a small park. This park will be open to the public, and not just for residents of the Midtown Village development. The size and cost (\$80,000) for the park was described with the Commission. Staff discussed the new proposal process, provided information about the selection process and commented on how Commissioners can assist.

Discussion included:

- The life and longevity of the playground equipment was discussed.
- It was noted the park may not be able to accommodate swings due to its small footprint.
- The Commission recommended the park be ADA compliant.
- Staff would be providing the Commission with more information on the park playground at the June PREC meeting.

VI. Announcements

A. City Council Report – Council Member Pam Axberg

Councilmember Axberg provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She thanked the Commissioners for their service to the community. She reported the Council passed an ordinance that addressed short term rentals in the community. She

believed the city found a very good balance for this ordinance. She explained the City Council also passed a new zoning ordinance for manufactured home parks. She reported the Council recently held a joint meeting with the Planning Commission and EDC that was hosted by the Urban Land Institute where the topic affordable housing was discussed. She indicated housing and affordability would continue to be discussed by the Council in the coming months. She stated the Council was also discussing how to better utilize its Boards and Commissions. She indicated the future plans for the Old Highway 8 corridor were also discussed by the Council, along with the implementation of the Parks Comprehensive Plan.

B. PREC Chair Updates – Matt Johnson

Chair Johnson stated Commissioner O'Rourke welcomed a baby girl named Sophie to the world several weeks ago. He congratulated the O'Rourke family on their new addition.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink stated the Public Safety Department has had several retirements which meant the department would be creating an eligibility list to fill these positions. She reported May was Arbor Month in the City of New Brighton and May 7, 2021 was Arbor Day. She thanked all residents of New Brighton for being counted and for participating in the 2020 census. She explained the farmer's market would be returning to the Community Center parking lot on Wednesday, June 2, 2021. She discussed how the changing regulations regarding COVID-19 was impacting activities in the community. She noted the golf course was doing very well this year. Lastly, she commented on the DEI training City staff received.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Hicks to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 7-0.

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