



MINUTES
Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission
June 2, 2021 City Hall
Zoom, 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, Amelia Kuiper, Matt Johnson (Chair), Julia O'Rourke, Michael Spooner, and Charles Warner.

Members Absent: Commissioner Kristin Hicks

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

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bank, seconded by Abdiwahed to approve the agenda as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 8-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Bank, seconded by Spooner to approve the May 5, 2021 minutes as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 6-0-2 (Commissioners O'Rourke and Warner abstained).

V. Business Items

A. Facility/Park Naming Policy Draft for Recommendation – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated staff has assembled a number of examples of park naming policies. Those examples provided best practices language to incorporate into a draft naming policy. It was noted feedback from PREC and the City Council has been incorporated into this draft document. Staff reviewed the draft policy in further detail with the Commission and requested comments or questions.

Discussion included:

- The Commission recommended the language that addressed naming parks after historical persons be revised.
- The Commission suggested a morality clause be considered within the policy. It was noted the City would always have the right to rename parks if not in conformance with City policy.

Motion by Bank, seconded by Spooner to recommend the City Council approve the Facility/Park Naming Policy. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 8-0.

B. Midtown Village Playground Engagement Results and Recommendation – 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 residence of the Midtown Village development. Staff shared the results of the resident engagement process, and reviewed the questions and feedback that came from the public during the engagement process.

Discussion included:

- The overall cost for the park playground structure (\$80,000) was discussed with the Commission.
- The accessibility concerns for this park were addressed. It was noted staff explained to residents that Lions Park was a fully accessible playground.
- It was noted this was a relatively small park and it would be difficult to make this park fully accessible.
- The Commission suggested benches be placed outside the play area.
- The Commission thanked staff for the public engagement process that was pursued for this project. It was recommended staff consider other ways to engage minority populations in the community.

Motion by Bank, seconded by Abdiwahed to recommend the City Council purchase and install the playground design from MN-WI Playground. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 8-0.

C. July Meeting

Director Fink reported City meetings would be held back at City Hall beginning in July. She anticipated the July meeting would be canceled but the group would meet in person in August.

VI. Announcements

A. City Council Report – Council Member Emily Dunsworth

Councilmember Dunsworth provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She explained the Council held a worksession this week and discussed how to implement and fund the Parks Comprehensive Plan. She reported there was unanimous approval from the Council to bond for \$10 million in order to move this plan forward. Director Fink discussed the six parks that would be improved through the \$10 million bond issuance. The draft concept plans for Sunnyside Park, Creekview Park, Hansen Park, Totem Pole Park, Silver Oaks, and Lions Park were reviewed with the Commission.

Councilmember Dunsworth commented further on how this project would be a visible use for tax dollars and will enhance the livability of the community. She thanked staff and the PREC Commission for all of their efforts on the Parks Comprehensive Plan.

Councilmember Dunsworth explained the City Council voted last week to create a new Commission that would focus on diversity, equity and inclusion. She reported the Council would be taking

applications for this Commission later this summer. Director Fink reported the City would be hiring a DEI Coordinator to assist with this initiative.

B. PREC Chair Updates – Matt Johnson

Chair Johnson commended the City Council for moving forward with the Parks Comprehensive Plan.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink congratulated Commissioner O'Rourke on the birth of her new baby. She discussed the vaccine clinics that were held at the Community Center every Wednesday noting the Pfizer vaccine would be offered for the next two weeks, which meant those 12 and over could attend the clinic. She noted memberships and usage at the Community Center were on the rise after having the mask mandate lifted. She explained the golf course has been extremely busy already this year. She discussed the new programming staff was working on for this fall, which included ethnic cooking. She encouraged residents to consider visiting the farmer's market every Wednesday at the Community Center.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Warner to adjourn the meeting at 7:38 p.m. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carried 8-0.

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