



MINUTES

Parks, Recreation and Environmental Commission
September 1, 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.

II. Roll Call:

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

Members Absent: Commissioners Amelia Kuiper and Michael Spooner.

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

III. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Bank, seconded by Warner to approve the agenda as presented. Motion carried 7-0.

IV. Approval of Minutes

Motion by Alfors, seconded by O'Rourke to approve the August 4, 2021 minutes as presented. Motion carried 6-0-1 (Chair Johnson abstained).

V. Business Items

A. Census Data – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink presented the Commission with information on regional and local data from the 2020 Census. She explained the census was completed every 10 years, was required by law and impacts funding from the federal government and election districts. She reviewed high level statistics from the census and discussed how the BIPOC community had increased in the past 10 years.

Discussion included:

- The Commission thanked staff for the thorough report.

B. Equity Statement Engagement Opportunity – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work is not just a priority of the City Council or a response to cultural and societal pressure. Ensuring all residents are served and treated equitably is a key function of local government and intentional work in this area is important to the success of the City. The City is working to set up a governance structure and management function that helps the City achieve equity now and into the future. The outcome of these efforts will be focused on structural changes including policy, practices and built in environments that support individual and social efforts. There was a current draft of the Equity Statement and Framework available for residents to comment on. This information was available on the City's website. The City encourages everyone to visit the site, read the materials, and provide feedback on the statement proposed. Staff commented further on the DEI Coordinator position the staff was pursuing along with a DEI Commission. The Equity Statement was reviewed in further detail with the Commission and staff asked for comments or questions.

Discussion included:

- Staff discussed the outreach efforts to advertise the Equity Statement to the public in order to gain community feedback.
- Councilmember Dunsworth commented on a minor language change that was made to the Equity Statement.
- It was noted CultureBrokers hosted the survey.
- The Commission encouraged the City to not rush through this process, but to take their time gathering feedback from the community.
- Councilmember Dunsworth discussed how the City was working to reach a broad cross section of the community. It was noted the Equity Statement was a living document that could be amended over time to address the needs of the City.
- The Commission further discussed how difficult it was to reach the minority and low income families in the community and suggested the City's workforce be connected with for feedback.
- Staff described how the DEI Coordinator would work to better connect with residents and businesses, while instilling a DEI lens throughout the City's culture.
- The Commission suggested the Equity Statement be adopted after the DEI Coordinator was brought on board.
- The Commission recommended the feedback from the public reflect the demographics of the community or that additional feedback be pursued until the demographics properly reflect the community.
- The Commission encouraged staff to speak with the schools to gain additional feedback.
- Staff encouraged the Commission members to share the Equity Statement survey with their networks in the community.

C. Midtown Village Playground Name Update – Jennifer Fink, Director of Parks and Recreation

Director Fink stated City staff engaged the public in a solicitation of names for the Midtown Village playground. Those names were narrowed down to the top three names that adhered to the Park and Facility Naming policy. Staff engaged the public in ranking the choices and the top three options came in very close. It was noted staff would be bringing

the final three names to the Council for a final decision. She reported staff would like to have a park name selected by the time a ribbon cutting ceremony was planned for the park.

Discussion included:

- The Commission supported the final three name choices.
- The Commission asked when the park would be completed. Staff noted the concrete border was being installed and staff anticipated the playground would be installed in the next month.

VI. Announcements

A. City Council Report – Council Member Emily Dunsworth

Councilmember Dunsworth provided the Commission with an update from the City Council. She reported the Council has been devoting a great deal of time to the PRD at the former US Bank site. She stated Stockyard Days was a great success this year.

B. PREC Chair Updates – Matt Johnson

Chair Johnson discussed the recent interview Director Fink had regarding the implementation of the City's Park Master Plan and thanked staff for their great efforts.

C. Department Happenings and Upcoming Events – City Staff

Director Fink stated this would be Commissioner Abdiwahed's last meeting noting he would be moving outside of the community.

Chair Johnson thanked Commissioner Abdiwahed for all of his contributions to the community and wished him all the best in the future.

Director Fink reported Facilities Manager Bill Bach has put in his notice for retirement and September 30, 2021 would be his last day with the City. She explained Jeff Johnson would be replacing Mr. Bach. She commented further on other staffing changes that have occurred within the Parks and Recreation Department.

Director Fink reported the Adventures Summer Camp program had to close three days early due to a COVID exposure.

VII. Adjournment

Motion by Bank, seconded by Hicks to adjourn the meeting at 7:32 p.m. Motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,



Jennifer Fink
Director of Parks and Recreation