

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings  
Of The Park and Recreation Advisory Commission  
Wednesday, September 10, 2014**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Eiden called the September 10, 2014 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

**2. ROLL CALL:**

**Present:** Chair Al Eiden; Vice Chair Dennis Schueller; Commissioners: Jim Huffman, Mary Hapka, Deb Tix, Mark Freer, and Kathryn Bauer

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson

**Absent:** Commissioners Willie Krech and Joe Boehmer

Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

Chair Al Eiden stated he wanted to change the agenda slightly. Under Presentations Amy Crary is listed with the Fitness Center. After that, he would like to have Director Carlson give a quick update on the October 4<sup>th</sup> neighborhood meetings that will be coming up.

**3. PRESENTATIONS:**

**A. Presentation from the VMCC/Grove Fitness Coordinator – Amy Crary**

Amy Crary, Fitness and Childcare Coordinator at the VMCC, stated she will be updating them on the Fitness Center.

-Fitness Equipment:

In the last three years they have been upgrading alot of the fitness equipment. Last year we did a major upgrade replacing about 20 pieces of our strength equipment, which was the original equipment that we started with when the center opened. This year we added some new weight plates as the original plates were made of metal and rusted. The new ones are rubber coated and have handles on them. They also upgraded the lateral raise, which is a shoulder machine, as well as a hip sled machine. In addition to that they turned over two treadmills, two elliptical, one of our new steps, and two of the hybrid elliptical/bikes.

-Memberships:

Last year they saw a big increase in memberships with the new equipment and we continue to see that this year. It also boosted personal training. Year to date personal training is at \$40,000. Last year we finished at \$37,000 so we are ahead of schedule and we still have our upcoming winter months. To date we have sold 169 training packages. Our demographics for training is at 31% for senior memberships, 26% households, and the remaining percentages are single and duo memberships. That equals 1/3 single/dual, 1/3 seniors, and 1/3 households. Our revenue for memberships is also up \$30,000 from that point last year. Investing in the fitness center in the last couple of years has paid off.

-Childcare:

We are busting at the seams in our childcare room. Due to that, we have started adding a second person on and they have been taking the older children to another part of the building where they are able to use the birthday party room in the evenings. We are able to use this room as most of the birthday party room use is on the weekends.

-Group Fitness Classes:

In the fall we are offering a fitness attendant on duty from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Since that change, two of our trainers picked up new clients because they were there.

Group fitness classes have always done well. We continue to offer 50 classes seven days a week. Favorites continue to be our Aqua, Silver Sneakers, Barre Pilates, Kick Boxing, and Zumba. Our strength class called

Body Blast is popular as well. As far as our fitness lessons go, we offer small group training at an affordable price. Classes are about \$40.00 for a set of eight classes with small class sizes of about six to 15 people. The classes that we offer in this frame include Boot Camp, Boxing, TRX, Kettle Bell, and Beginning Yoga. We also make good use of the cycles as we have a class that is half strength and half cycle. Last year we brought in \$55,000 with these paid classes and this year we sit at \$35,000, which is a little bit ahead of last year. We expect to top out at \$60,000 to \$65,000. We are using the spaces that we have to generate a lot of revenue for the fitness center.

-What's New:

This year we are offering a new class called Natural Eating 101 in November. It will be taught by our nutritionist Sarah Gorder.

We continue to have several business partners in the Community. One of which is Health East. They do blood pressures in our lobby on the third Friday of every month. They also advertise some of our programs in their monthly newsletter. We also did some partnering with the Arthritis Foundation. We had a program called Walk with Ease. This program is designed to motivate individuals who have a hard time getting going and help set walking goals each week. You meet with a trainer, they stretch you out, do an education piece, and then they walk with you. The goal is to progress a few laps each week. We have had almost 80 people take advantage of this program. The program runs from April to the end of this month. We wrote a grant and we received \$4,000 to subsidize this program so it was only \$5.00 for members and \$10.00 for non-members for a 16 session class. The Arthritis Foundation found us a second grant that was offered through Allina that will allow us to continue this program through February or March. Business partners are important so they can help us and we can help them. We also partner with Walgreens on Upper 55<sup>th</sup> and they do some advertising with us as well. They will be doing flu shots at our October 11<sup>th</sup> Woman's Expo. Last year they gave about 30 flu shots.

We will have our annual Taking Care of You Program which targets "hunting widows" on November 1<sup>st</sup>. They get a healthy breakfast, a chair massage, some relaxing yoga, and this year our Nutritionist will be teaching natural beauty remedies.

We will also have our Black Friday Boot Camp on the day after Thanksgiving. Its 90 minutes with two of our toughest trainers, Claudia and Laura, where they give challenges and then we do drawings for prizes.

Commissioner Freer asked about the spinning classes. Are they growing in popularity?

Coordinator Crary responded they are growing in popularity. They offer free spinning classes Monday and Wednesday mornings as well as the evenings. When the weather is bad, they seem to be more popular, when it's nice out, it's not so much. We also have a Saturday and Sunday morning session. Starting last fall they had the idea in partnering it with TRX and Kettle Bell, and they do a ½ hour of each. People seem to like that better. It's been a great addition.

Commissioner Freer felt the area was a bit out of sight. It's not well seen.

Coordinator Crary stated they keep the room open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. while the attendant is on duty and a lot of people tend to go in and cycle on their own.

Commissioner Hapka commented they do an exceptional job over there. The staff is very welcoming. She noticed a lot of the staff cross promotes when she is there. She liked that. They do a good job with all the programs that are offered, it's very diverse. You can see a lot of things growing.

Coordinator Crary stated the best employees are the ones that live in this community. They are not there just to earn a paycheck. They are vested. Their kids play ball with these people, or on the PTA together, etc.

Commissioner Huffman complimented a younger person named Justin who really gets him motivated and moving.

Chair Eiden asked how many trainers and instructors they have up there?

Coordinator Crary stated about a dozen are certified, and a core group of about six or eight that are very focused.

Chair Eiden stated if you are interested at all about improving your health, please go up there. The staff up there is very accommodating. He used to think it was just a room full of machines. There is such a variety of programs, particularly for seniors. He advises anyone out there that this is a great place to go.

Vice Chair Schueller asked what happens with the older equipment? Is it sold?

Coordinator Crary responded they trade it in. A lot of it can be refurbished and resold. Hotels and other areas buy refurbished equipment. It is very cost effective. We bought seven treadmills and five or six elliptical and they covered them all an additional year. She thinks that has saved them about \$10,000. The company was in just the other day to do some work on the machines, which was included in our warranty. With our CIP Plan, it's a great idea to keep up with that and stay ahead of the game. It saves in a lot of materials, repair, etc.

Vice Chair Scheuller asked if the instructors and trainers are City employees? Are they subcontracted or full time employees?

Coordinator Crary responded they are all considered part-time seasonal employees. They can all work up to 1,040 hours per year. No more than 20 hours a week on average.

## **B. Neighborhood Meeting Update**

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson updated the Commission on the Neighborhood meetings that will take place on Saturday, October 4<sup>th</sup>.

We will be hosting meetings in neighborhoods on that day and invite the Community to take part in that process.

- The Purpose of the meetings is to provide residents with information.
- Provide residents with an opportunity to ask questions.
- Provide residents with an opportunity to provide their opinions about what they want in a park, trail, and recreation system.

There will be three groups that will consist of one of three staff members that include our Recreation Superintendent, Parks Superintendent, and himself. There are nine Commissioners and each of you will team up in each group, visit parks for about 45 minutes each, which leaves us about 15 minutes to get to the next park. If people can't come on October 4<sup>th</sup>, there will be additional dates held at the Veterans Memorial Community Center, 8055 Barbara Avenue:

- Tuesday, October 7<sup>th</sup> 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Community Room 1
- Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. Community Room 1

The reason for the back-up dates is for people that are out of town or busy, or should the weather be poor on October 4<sup>th</sup>. We want as many people to come and participate in the process as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- I can't make the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting at the park closest to me, what should I do?
  - \*You can attend any one of the meetings listed at any park.
  - \*You can attend an alternate meeting on October 7<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> as listed.
  - \*You can review the information at [www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org)
- How can I communicate with the City Council to tell them my opinion?
  - \*You can send an email to [futureofourparks@invergroveheights.org](mailto:futureofourparks@invergroveheights.org) and the email will be delivered to the Mayor and Council as well as to City Administration.

In an effort to encourage people to come we will have some door prizes that include:

- Passes to the VMCC
- Rounds of Golf at Inver Wood
- Gift Certificates to local businesses

We want to thank Total Construction for their contribution to be able to get some of those door prizes. Residents that attend either the parks meetings or the alternate meetings will be asked to fill out a comment card. We will gather the cards with their information on it, and those cards will be entered into the door prize drawing. How to find out more information and provide feedback:

- Residents will receive a brochure in the mail the week of September 15<sup>th</sup>.
- More information will be available on our website at [www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org).
- On-line survey tool will be available on our website.
- Residents are encouraged to send their comments to: [futureofourparks@invergroveheights.org](mailto:futureofourparks@invergroveheights.org).

Vice Chair Schueller asked if they could make it easier to find Community Room 1. Is it possible to indicate on the flyer what door to enter? There could be some confusion. Are the doors numbered or lettered?

Director Carlson responded they are numbered or lettered, so residents would want to enter Door "E". That will be the door closest to where you will be meeting.

#### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our Web Site at: [www.invergroveheights.org](http://www.invergroveheights.org)**
- B. Next Meeting: October 8, 2014. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

#### **5. CONSENT AGENDA:**

- A. Approval of Agenda**
- B. Approval of Minutes of July 16, 2014**

**Motion by Commissioner Tix, seconded by Commissioner Freer, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.**

**Aye: 7**  
**Nay: 0      Motion carried.**

#### **6. PUBLIC COMMENT:**

None

#### **7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:**

None

#### **8. REGULAR AGENDA:**

##### **A. Schedule Special Park Commission Meeting**

Director Carlson stated the Special Park Commission Meeting is to talk about Inver Wood Golf Course. Back in April the City Council asked that a work study group of Park Commissioners be made to look at the best management practices for Inver Wood Golf Course. We are holding that meeting on Wednesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 at the VMCC in Community Room 1. You would be meeting as an entire group and reviewing and seeing a presentation from the Inver Wood Golf Course Work Group about what they learned and what their recommendations are for moving forward. It is an open meeting should the public wish to attend.

**Motion by Commissioner Hapka to approve the special meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Bauer.**

**Aye: 7**  
**Nay: 0**      **Motion carried.**

**B. Consider Approval of Concession Agreement with Inver Grove Heights Youth Hockey**

Director Carlson stated this is an agreement with the Inver Grove Heights Youth Hockey Association for the concession stand outside the two ice rinks at the Community Center. This agreement, other than the dates and term of the agreement, is the exact same agreement that has been used over the past few years. The lease amount has not changed this year. It was changed last year. It is a one year agreement that would start October 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> of 2015. The Hockey Association would pay the City \$9,600 for the use of that space. The Hockey Association would be responsible to staff, order, and pay for all the items in the concession stand as well as the accounting of the money. The City's role is to supply the space, heating, and lights.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if there had been any problems in the past with the agreement or the process? Is it known how much money they make on the operation?

Director Carlson stated there have not been any major issues. He is unsure of any money they make. The lease they use is just a fixed rate and we are comfortable with that. They are doing it with volunteers, and use the proceeds to buy down the cost of hockey or ice in general.

Vice Chair Schueller felt it sounded like a good plan.

**Motion by Commissioner Huffman that we accept the proposal. Seconded by Vice Chair Schueller.**

**Aye: 7**  
**Nay: 0**      **Motion carried.**

**C. Consider Approval of Dasher Board Agreement with Inver Grove Heights Youth Hockey**

Director Carlson stated this is a similar type of agreement. This one expired in August of this year. The agreement ran for a total of three years. We are proposing another three year agreement. The Hockey Association solicits businesses within the Community for dasher board advertising. They establish the rates and the City gets a cut of the dasher boards that they sell. The Hockey Association pays the City for the cost to install it on the board. The Association and/or the provider pays for the cost to produce the dasher board itself. The Hockey Association keep the balance of the revenue generated through the dasher board sales. This agreement hasn't changed, other than the term of the agreement.

**Motion made by Commissioner Huffman to approve the agreement. Seconded by Commissioner Bauer.**

**Aye: 7**  
**Nay: 0**      **Motion carried.**

**9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:**

**A. Discuss Potential Capital Improvement Project(s) for South Valley Park**

Director Carlson stated many of you were at the tour we had this evening at South Valley Park and spoke about the issues with the age of the building, picnic shelter, and playground. We wanted the Commission to come there and look at its condition first hand. It represents the condition of a lot of things within our parks system. A lot of the system was built in the 80's and 90's and many amenities are starting to get to the end of their useful life. Today you saw a building that will be 35 years old next year and that's what we call the end of its useful life. You can see deterioration of the interior and exterior of the building. It is time to do something different at

South Valley Park. Whether we build something similar or different, this is something we wanted to make the Commission aware of. We have budgeted some money in the Capital Improvement Program in 2015 to make some changes at South Valley Park. Having our meetings on October 4<sup>th</sup> will hopefully provide some feedback in some of our parks, or even this park. Hopefully it will lead to making good positive changes for our Community. We want to make sure we are spending those dollars wisely, and that they are needed and going to be used. Things changes as the demographics change. We need to look at trends here and making a wise decision and wise investment into repurposing and reusing, or in some cases to do the same things in our parks. Recreation Superintendent Tracy Petersen is here this evening to answer any questions you may have. She can answer any questions you may have about how often is the park used it is used for different activities. What kind of questions do we get with picnics or reservations, etc. Between maintenance, planning for the future, and recreational use, we are trying to make sure we are making a wise investment or reinvestment into the facilities we offer to the Community.

Commissioner Huffman stated every year for the last ten years; his family has reserved South Valley for family reunion picnics. They loved the shelter. He has seen the deterioration down there.

Commissioner Bauer felt it was very good for us to see the physical building and the deterioration around the foundation with the water issues and the crumbling exterior. We spoke about laying the area out differently in the future. As someone who has used it in the past, she felt having the playground in a different area so it isn't behind a building would be a good idea for safety reasons. There were some good things discussed.

Commissioner Hapka thought it was beneficial to take the tour. Obviously the building has lived its life. She would be open to look at some plans. It is a heavily utilized area. Some teams have end of the season picnics there. It is one of the top parks. She would be in support of changing the layout, and having a nice playground. A nice pavilion with maybe a kitchenette would also be a good idea.

Vice Chair Schueller asked how many days of the year is it rented and what is the fee?

Recreation Superintendent Tracy Petersen responded it is used for about 100 picnics a year from April to about October depending on the weather. It is our dominant picnic facility in the Community. The fee is done in blocks of time. The resident fee for a five hour block is \$55.00 and non-resident rate is \$75.00.

Commissioner Hapka asked what other types of programming do you foresee for that site? Future design?

Superintendent Petersen responded they have thought about that and it's probably one of our more diverse parks internally and externally. Externally in the winter with the sliding hill being there, it's also used for soccer and Tball, and we get other non-traditional sports in the grassy area there sometimes too. It's connected to the disc golf course. In terms of programs, that's a facility where she could see expanded events and programs such as kid's music and concert events, camps, and clinics. It has open space and indoor space as well as restrooms. We also see a need for a shelter that is larger than the current one. We don't have a shelter that can hold 150 to 200 people. Electricity, kitchen area, and those types of amenities we do not have and cannot meet those needs. Having the trail there, the course, it really is, in terms of programming and rental, a prime location where we can get a lot of extended and variety of use.

Commissioner Bauer asked what kind of comments you get with the picnic shelter? Would they like more space?

Superintendent Petersen responded they get a lot of comments about lack of outlets, not having a serving table outside. The interior isn't conducive to having a lot of people indoors due to inclement weather. The big comment is the restroom facilities. Those are the main complaints that we get. We can't accommodate a business that wants to do a company picnic or a large event. We have had events go elsewhere since it just wasn't large enough.

Chair Eiden asked if she knew if most that used it were resident or non-resident?

Superintendent Petersen didn't have the numbers with her, but felt the majority of use is by residents.

Commissioner Tix asked if she knew the revenue?

Superintendent Petersen responded maybe about \$5,000. But if you have something different there you can adjust different fees.

Chair Eiden commented that the Commission seemed convinced that we need to do something down there. What we have there is falling apart and not adequate to what we are going to do. Looking at the future of our parks, that is a Community park. It's a step up from a neighborhood type park. He wants to make sure we put some futuristic thinking into the planning design as to what else may go in, or fit in there. We have two buildings and neither seems to do much good. For Staff, we would like you to get started in looking into planning and design. For whomever is doing that park on October 4<sup>th</sup>, and all you residents out there, please come forward and let us know what you want to see out there. That date is an excellent time to hear your wants and wishes.

Commissioner Hapka would like staff to do some research on what is out at other Communities, and what may or may not work. It would be good to bring some ideas to the Commission to give us a starting point.

Chair Eiden asked if we were to enhance the facility so that there was electricity and a decent kitchen, would that prompt additional volume of activities and picnics down there?

Superintendent Petersen felt it would. You would still get the small gatherings due to location, but also the larger. It would also benefit us from a programming perspective. Right now we can't store anything down there if we would do a program, as we rent the building out. We could do larger concert type things. We use it for movie in the park and it works out well, but that is an idea you could build a structured area for those types of activities. There is great possibility in exceeding revenue and programmatically as well.

Commissioner Huffman stated they are doing electrical down at the Swing Bridge Park. They are putting a lot of lightning and outlets down there.

Director Carlson stated South Valley Park will be 35 years old next year. A lot has been learned by Staff about what kind of amenities are needed. Nobody should be popping circuits down at the new picnic shelter because we have learned our lesson based on feedback.

Vice Chair Schueller stated we are asking City Staff to look at what other Communities are doing, but we as Commissioners can go on another field trip to see what other facilities have, it may be a good thing to do.

Director Carlson stated they will start the process and have conversations with the City Council as well.

## **10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:**

Commissioner Freer enjoyed the tour down at South Valley. It's always nice to get hands on. He appreciated Director Carlson getting that set up.

Commissioner Hapka had no comment.

Commissioner Huffman was glad to be back into the fold again. He will be returning with a vengeance and will get up to date.

Commissioner Bauer is looking forward to the day of meetings on October 4<sup>th</sup>. It sounds very well organized and hopes that people turn out.

Commissioner Tix enjoyed the visit they had at South Valley. This is a good example of the majority of our parks. All of these parks are going to be need replacement or upgrading. It's a call out to the Council that we need to have it in the budget and that these are taken care of, otherwise we are not going to have people coming into the Community to use our facilities.

Vice Chair Schueller commented that we just finished a weekend of activities with Inver Grove Heights Days, topped off with outstanding fireworks. He would like to congratulate the volunteers that helped, the people involved, and the City being able to help this committee put this on. He congratulated them on all the outstanding events.

Chair Eiden commented that everyone will be getting information it the mail, there's a website, and phone lines. We are looking to be constructive and positive about a challenging future for our Parks and Recreational system. It will work best to have you all give your opinions and creativity ideas. This way we can come up with a great plan to improve the future of our parks in Inver Grove Heights. Please mark down October 4<sup>th</sup> to come to any of the sessions that you want to. Our intent is to let you tell us what you think. We will study it and put it into a plan.

Also, when you come to the meetings, if you get excited about something, we would certainly love to have you join us in terms of the future planning of what we are going to do. We want you to be a part of it as much as possible.

## **11. ADJOURN**

**Motion by Commissioner Huffman, seconded by Commissioner Hapka, to adjourn the meeting at 7:58 p.m.**

**Aye: 7**

**Nay: 0            Motion carried.**