

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings
Of The Park and Recreation Advisory Commission
Wednesday, March 13, 2013**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Eiden called the March 13, 2013 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: Chris Solberg, Jim Huffman, Willie Krech, Joe Boehmer, and Mark Freer

Absent: Commissioners Stan Johnson and Mary Hapka
Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson
Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

Chair Eiden introduced the newest Commissioner, Mark Freer to the Commission. We look forward to working with him.

Commissioner Mark Freer introduced himself saying he is semi-retired. He worked for the State for about 35 years with the last few years working for Safeway Bus Company. He and his wife are very active with running, biking, snowshoeing, and skiing. They are on the trails and in the parks a lot. He enjoys our town and feels it is a very good Community. He hopes to keep things rolling with the parks system.

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Presentation – Member Services –Bethany Adams

Recreation Superintendent Tracy Petersen, filling in today for Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson, introduced our Marketing and Guest Services Supervisor Bethany Adams.

Marketing and Guest Services Supervisor Bethany Adams oversees all of the memberships at the Community Center as well as the Guest Services front desk Staff and the Managers on duty as well as the marketing for the Parks and Recreation Department. Tonight she will go over some membership highlights and marketing items for the upcoming year.

-Revenue:

Membership revenue has increased and is the highest it has been since the aquatic and fitness centers opening.

-Estimated 2012 Revenue: \$836,774

-2011 Revenue: \$829,896

This is a 1% increase over last year and without a dues increase. We consider that increase due to the retention of our current members, our quality programs and services, and our marketing efforts to get new members into the facility.

-Demographics:

Our older adult program continues to grow within this Community. Our Silver Sneakers program continues to grow as well. Silver Sneakers is a free membership program for those with eligible health care plans. We are compensated by the visits that those members make to the Community Center. We have over 700 current enrollees. Payment doubled from December 2012 to January 2013.

We have over 1,100 members over the age of 60. Our oldest member is 91 years old. Our youngest member are newborns who use the water park, or at six months old, the child care area.

Over 78% of our members currently reside in Inver Grove Heights. Some other Cities that our members reside include: South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Eagan, St. Paul, Cottage Grove, Mendota Heights, St. Paul Park, and Rosemount.

-2012 Improvements:

We did a few improvements to the facility.

Painted the leisure pool to go with our rebranding some warmer colors.

New tables and chairs were added in the lobby area.

Added the group cycle studio and bikes which has been a great amenity to our members. It's a popular trend that has been around for awhile.

-Other Highlights:

In January of 2012 we had over 16,000 member check-ins. In January 2013 we had almost 18,000.

Promotions and Marketing Efforts:

Plum District promotion offers a discounted rate to use the facility.

We have continued to use the Money Mailer that goes to 10,000 homes. We had about 700 people redeem those.

Our Facebook page has grown tremendously. We have over 570 people on our page now. We advertise to grow that traffic. This is a great way to communicate for free.

We will be advertising our summer membership again. This is a great way to get people in the door during the summer months. We are trying to promote the pool more for the summer months. We also offer an option for Grandparents and their Grandchildren.

Our Website was improved and updated over the last year.

We created some printed fliers this last year. We did a rental flyer and a membership flyer.

We will be marketing to the new neighborhoods over by the Target store area.

Commissioner Solberg commented she is doing a great job, keep it up.

B. Presentation – Natural Resource Restoration – Mark Borgwardt

Parks Superintendent Mark Borgwardt stated last spring he approached the group, The Friends of the Mississippi River that has already done a lot of work up and down the Mississippi River. He wanted to see if they had any Grant dollars to help us restore the 17.2 acre area around the Rock Island Swing Bridge. With the work going on with the County, we thought we should also try to restore some of that acreage into native vegetation. There is a lot of invasive species down there that we would like to take out. They are speaking with the Marina down there in cleaning it up a bit. We had the Friends of the Mississippi do a Natural Resource Management Plan last May. It was approved by the Council in June.

Commissioner Krech asked if there would be some walking areas down there?

Superintendent Borgwardt stated the Master Plan did include a looped chipped trail down by the river. He thought maybe they could do that as part of this project.

Commissioner Krech asked if they had enough chips?

Superintendent Borgwardt stated Xcel calls him, or Wright Tree Trimming calls. We also trim our own trees; we keep the piles for this reason.

Friends of the Mississippi River have agreed to contribute up to \$15,000 for this project. This will be a two to three year project, but this financing is just for one year. The City Council has also authorized \$15,000 toward this project as well. After this year we would have to apply for more Grant money for additional projects.

Commissioner Solberg asked how they remove buckthorn? Do they re-seed it?

Superintendent Borgwardt responded they have someone go down there with a machine that has a scissors on it that drags it out and then we either chip it or burn it down there. They do re-seed it with an oak savannah mix. They will plant some trees and then prairie. They will treat the stumps with a round up mix.

Superintendent Borgwardt continued to say they could probably do the north side of the bridge next year along the shore and then the County will be working on a plan to restore and irrigate another area around the area and parking lot. They hope to start the last week of March.

Commissioner Krech thinks it's a great idea.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if we sub-contract the work out or does the City do it?

Superintendent Borgwardt responded the Friends of the Mississippi River bid it and contract it, and we are available for consulting. We may have the STS Crew out there or even our Tree Trust Crew.

Chair Eiden asked about the need for additional Grant money? He stated it is one thing to know people are committed and you know what you can get done with that money.

Superintendent Borgwardt responded yes, the City is contributing up to \$15,000 and FFM is also contributing \$15,000. Any Grant money we don't use this year will roll over into next year. He feels they can get 90% of it done this year.

Chair Eiden stated since you know you are going to get done this year. In the fall you should know what you need to get done next year. Then you can apply for those grants early?

Superintendent Borgwardt stated Friends of the Mississippi is already planning for years two and three.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our Web Site at:

www.invergroveheights.org

B. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 10, 2013. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Approval of Minutes of February 13, 2013

Motion by Commissioner Solberg, seconded by Commissioner Huffman, 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. Consider Park Dedication Requirements for Plute Homes – Case NO 13-05S

Superintendent Petersen stated Pulte Homes is requesting a two lot subdivision to be known as Summit Pines 2nd Addition. The recently adopted Comprehensive Park Plan and Development Guide does not identify a need for a park in this general area; therefore, Staff is not recommending the developer provide any parkland dedication for this development. It is recommended that the developer be required to provide cash in the amount of the rates in effect at the time the final plat is approved. The current 2013 rate is as follows:

Single Family \$4,011 per lot (2 x \$4,011 = \$8,022)

Commissioner Krech asked where they came up with the extra lots. The area was already plotted out in lots. He didn't understand what they were doing here.

Superintendent Petersen was not sure at this time.

Motion by Commissioner Huffman to accept the Cash dedication on this item. Commissioner Krech seconded.

Aye: 7

Nay: 0 Motion carried.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:

A. Department Happenings

Superintendent Petersen stated there is nothing specific to report, but wanted to mention that the summer brochure was mailed out this week.

Commissioner Huffman felt they did a good job.

B. Future of Our Parks Report – Park & Recreation System Plan

Superintendent Petersen commented as you know the Park Champions group is meeting on a regular basis. The group has discussed park service areas, the northwest quadrant, trails, open space, and park amenities. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 3rd at 6:30. At that meeting the group will look at the parks via Google Earth. We will review some examples from other Communities regarding open space and linear parks, as well as other amenities. We will start to look at some criteria for adding and eliminating amenities in the future. The goal is to develop a vision for the system, bring it back to the Park Commission for their input, and then bringing it to the City Council. Anyone is welcome to attend any of the meetings at anytime during the process.

Commissioner Solberg stated they met last week. They decided there is going to be a greenway in the northwest corridor. We were talking about different amenities in that area. We are going to have one large park connect to satellite parks within walking and biking distance. Last week during brainstorming one idea was brought up to have a refrigerated outdoor rink. These are just big ideas to throw out there for the next 15 to 20 years. Natural walking areas, large park, smaller satellite parks, etc. A lot of great ideas are being thrown out there. Anyone with any other ideas, please attend the meeting and let us know.

Superintendent Borgwardt stated they were going to talk about criteria for future and existing things in the parks. What we want, what do we have, what do we need, those types of questions.

Chair Eiden stated the next meeting may be an interesting one as we get a panoramic view of our parks. Now the idea is to look at it again from a different perspective. There are a number of things that have come to light with this group and the process. We are getting about 9 to 12 citizens at each of the meetings. Please know that the Champions of the Park are not a group of confined people. Anyone is invited at anytime and we are open to everyone joining in with their observations. We have had some interesting and unusual ideas. There are a lot of passive type activities that most are in favor of. There is a lot of discussion about athletic issues as to the aging population, as well as what sports are coming and going. This will be a valuable experience to look at the amenities.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if the Champions of the Park had any ideas about how we are going to deal with the funding gap of \$300,000 since we need to maintain what we have first. They have to realize one of the major problems we have is the funding gap. We need to maintain what we have here in the present.

Chair Eiden stated there were no suggestions regarding financing at this juncture. That is something that has to be considered. We do not have solid lists together yet, but we are still in the deciding stages. We are not dealing with specific dollars right now. We are more interested at first, in seeing what they want to see at the parks. They do know that once it's refined, we need to discuss financing. In terms of maintaining, we can do what we need to do, cut back, or change going forward.

Commissioner Solberg stated it is all part of the process. We are determining what we need and what we don't need. It's not just a wish list for replacement, but an overall list of what may or may not be needed.

Chair Eiden stated the typical meeting has been about an hour and a half. It's usually held in the Vets Center, and we do not have a set schedule. They try to do them every two weeks. The next scheduled meeting April 3rd. The one after that will be about April 17th or 24th.

Commissioner Huffman agreed with Vice Chair Schueller in that we need to take care of what we have until we get the money.

C. Update on the MRRT Trailhead Facility

Superintendent Borgwardt showed a power point summary of what we have done and where we are at regarding the MRRT Trailhead Facility. Information is as follows:

- Rock Island Swing Bridge Area Improvements
 - 2010-2011 the Swing Bridge Project took place at a cost of \$2,300,000
 - 2012 the 66th Street Project was completed at a cost of \$1,200,000
 - 2013 the Trailhead Project is anticipated to cost \$1,300,000
- Trailhead Partners
 - Dakota County
 - National Park Service
 - City of Inver Grove Heights
- Project Goals
 - Provide for off-street parking
 - Provide year round public toilets
 - Provide information center and historical interpretation
 - Provide for picnic facilities
- Restroom Facility:
 - Men's and Women's Restrooms
 - Custodial Closet

- Water Fountain
- Way Finding Signs
- Historical Information
- Overhang
- Floor Plan
 - ADA Compliant
 - Heat for Year Round Operation
 - Men's and Women's Restrooms
 - Overhang area
- Picnic Shelter near Mississippi River
 - Seats 50 to 60
 - River views
 - Electrical
 - Free standing water source
 - Built-in counter
 - Security lighting
 - Rentable
- Site Layout
 - Includes arch that is currently being worked on.
 - Picnic tables
 - Irrigation
 - Stairs made of limestone slabs.
- Project Costs
 - Consultant: KHA Inc. & Partners & Sirny
 - Anticipated costs at 30% construction documents
 - Interpretative budget may need to be increased
 - Already have made adjustment in project to reduce costs
- Funding Sources
 - Scenic Byway Grant
 - Dakota County Byway Match
 - Dakota County CIP
 - National Park Service
 - City of Inver Grove Heights (via State Bonding Grant)
 - Funding Gap
- State Bonding Grant SG 2010-049
 - \$1,000,000
 - Only used on Rock Island Swing Bridge or Heritage Village Park
 - Must be spent by June 2015 or grant money is lost
 - Must be used on capital investment, cannot be used to purchase land

Commissioner Freer asked if it was part of the project to estimate yearly costs of what the City will need to maintain it? It can't be cheap to maintain.

Superintendent Borgwardt stated he didn't think there was any money dedicated. That isn't figured in and it does concern him. His budget has been frozen for five years. From a maintenance perspective, he wishes that would be taken into consideration before we start building things. We need to maintain what we have. They are also working on a naming plan. It was unofficially named Heritage Village Park, but it was never formally named that. He was fine with the name, but with the Rock Island Swing Bridge possibly being a part of the park, there is some confusion in the naming. Swing Bridge Park was appropriate with the Swing Bridge, and then since the Old Town Hall and Schoolhouse is moving down there, Heritage Village seemed appropriate.

Vice Chair Schueller liked Heritage Village Park.

Superintendent Petersen stated the naming will come before this Commission.

Commissioner Huffman liked the idea of Rock Island Swing Bridge Park because of all the artifacts he saved.

Vice Chair Schueller asked if ADA meant wheel chair accessible.

Superintendent Borgwardt responded yes.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Solberg stated we have a lot happening in our City with our parks. Check out the Heritage Village Park, or Rock Island Swing Bridge. If you are interested in the parks, come out to a meeting and help us design a park from scratch.

Commissioner Krech had no comment.

Vice Chair Schueller stated he spent some time last weekend in the Splash Park with his grandkids and then the hockey rink. We have great facilities. It is a tribute to the Commissioners who are here today and who are retired. It is all an experience that is being enjoyed.

Commissioner Huffman had no comment.

Commissioner Boehmer welcomed the new Commissioner.

Commissioner Freer thanked everyone for the warm welcome. He looks forward to working with them.

Chair Eiden commented there is a lot going on in this town. It would be to your benefit to check out things that you may be interested in. Come join in on all the fun.

11. ADJOURN

Motion by Commissioner Solberg, seconded by Commissioner Huffman, to adjourn the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Aye: 7

Nay: 0 Motion carried.