

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

MAY 5, 2022

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 5th day of May, 2022 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Hipp, Horwath, Miller, Mui, Schletty, Chu, and Abruzzese.

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Director Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Sierra Hietala.

MINUTES

Commissioner Schletty made a motion to approve the April 7, 2022, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Hipp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PARKS AND RECREATION MISSION STATEMENT

Commissioner Horwath read the parks and recreation mission statement.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jackie Durand, 3034 Edgerton, stated that she has been a resident of Little Canada for over 70 years. She commented that before this meeting, the Planning Commission spoke of a new development that would include 178 townhomes in her backyard. She commented on a trail connection between a trail within the new community that would connect to the Thunder Bay trail system. She stated that she and a number of her neighbors are opposed to that connection because of privacy concerns. She stated that the residents in that northern area of Little Canada have had problems with theft, homelessness, litter, people sleeping under their trees, etc. She noted that the trail has not yet gone through because of the farmland that existed. She commented that there are private property owners along the easement that do not want the trail. She commented on the different infrastructure improvements in that area that have been intrusive to the residents in that area. She commented on the high traffic levels on Edgerton and the high number of pedestrians that use the sidewalks/trail along the road. She commented that people have safe options to get to the park without connecting that trail through the power line easement.

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PRESENTATIONS: YOUTH EVENT

Ron Fulford Jr., President of iBall4Life, provided background information on his organization. He recognized the challenges that have occurred because of COVID. He stated that they brainstormed how to get the youth back out in the community and developed the idea for Youth Community Day. He felt that this day could bring families, friends, and everyone together in challenging times. He commented that youth are bored and are looking for validation and ways to be accepted. He believed that this day could give youth in the community something to look forward to in the community. He suggested a partnership with the City to create this for the community. He noted that this would also be an opportunity to advertise the available programs Little Canada has to offer its youth. He commented that the streets are taking the kids and felt that this would be an outlet to provide youth to keep them engaged and on a better path. He commented on the different elements that could be included in youth day to engage people and showcase different skills and abilities.

Chair Miller recognized the enthusiasm Mr. Fulford has for the concept.

Commissioner Horwath asked if there are sponsors secured for the event.

Mr. Fulford replied that he has not yet done that.

Commissioner Horwath asked if Mr. Fulford has spoken with the LCRA.

Mr. Fulford replied that he had not done so yet and had only spoken to the Parks & Rec Director about the concept at this time.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that staff believed that this was a good idea, and the next step was to bring this to the Commission and if supported, continue to move forward with planning the event. He reminded the Commission of Mr. Fulford's previous engagement in bringing the new basketball hoops to Pioneer Park and he received support from LCRA. He noted that Mr. Fulford has also run basketball camps for the City, has donated his time to serve the youth, and brings things from his nonprofit as well. He stated that they wanted to ensure support from the Commission before further planning the event.

Chair Miller commented that he recalled the previous presentation from Mr. Fulford. He noted that events are great to bring people to the parks.

Commissioner Horwath clarified that his intent in asking those questions was to determine how far along this was in the planning process.

Commissioner Hipp commented that if you combine, basketball and music that is great. She agreed that the hoops are used all the time and it is a draw for the community that even attracts people from other areas. She asked if there would be a large cost for this type of event.

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Mr. Fulford did not believe there would be a large budget for the event other than certain materials and planning. He stated that people will come if the information is put out there. He suggested t-shirts for players, wristbands for performers, bleachers, and food trucks. He noted that once the program is set, he could determine the logistics. He noted the proposed date of July 23rd, which would allow for that planning to occur.

Commissioner Horwath asked if this would be a direct partnership between the City, iBall4Life, and other associations.

Mr. Fulford confirmed that would be the intent.

Commissioner Horwath noted that the Commission could use its marketing budget to help promote the event.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that there is not a marketing budget, but this would fall within the community events line item.

Commissioner Chu supported the idea and the concept to engage the youth in the community. She stated that this would provide a platform for the youth that want to speak and have something to say. She commented that it would be helpful to have multiple ways for people to be able to express themselves.

Mr. Fulford stated that perhaps there is a sign-up day at school where youth could sign up. He commented that this would be organized, and a set number of kids would be allowed to present, and the intent would be to continue this in future years and gather momentum. He noted that all presentations would need to be inspirational or motivational to keep it positive.

Commissioner Mui asked if the partnership would be 50/50 in terms of funding.

Mr. Fulford replied that he would contribute his time in return for the City pushing out the vision. Mr. Fulford stated that he can bring t-shirts and those types of items as well. He stated that if the City had merchandise it wanted to use for a promotion that could be included as well.

Chair Miller stated that the Commission can voice support and volunteer but would direct City staff to go into the details and perhaps LCRA could also be brought in as a partner.

Commissioner Chu commented that this partnership has worked in the past and she views this as expanding that on a larger scale.

Miller introduced the following motion:

DIRECT STAFF TO MOVE FORWARD IN PARTNERSHIP WITH iBall4Life FOR THIS EVENT

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The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Horwath.
Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

The Commission thanked Mr. Fulford for his presentation.

OLD BUSINESS: BIKE RACK UPDATE

The Parks & Rec Director stated that the City was able to budget for new bike racks in 2022 and reported that 20 bike racks have been ordered, ten of which will have the City logo and ten of which are plain bike racks. He reviewed the locations where the bike racks would be installed. He noted that although this was phased over multiple years, with the budgeted amount and cost of the bike racks, they were able to expedite the purchases for years one and two.

OLD BUSINESS: RONDEAU PARK COMMUNITY BUILD SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATE

The Recreation Coordinator reviewed the members of the subcommittee and noted that the group held its first meeting.

Commissioner Schletty stated that the group discussed the list of roles, the number of volunteers needed for each category, and how people could use their different skill sets. He stated that the build event will take place on July 15th and 16th. He stated that there will be a meeting the Thursday before the event with those identified as leads to a better plan.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that there is a base and foundation because of the previous community build event that the City has completed. He stated that the contractor has participated in over 200 community builds and therefore has experience in this model.

Commissioner Schletty commented that they are aiming to start advertising for the event in late May. He noted that they also discussed reaching out to local businesses that may participate in volunteer activities or be interested in sponsoring in different ways.

Commissioner Chu asked if the neighborhood would also be targeted.

Commissioner Schletty confirmed that would be done. He stated that they are aiming for 35 volunteers for the event.

Commissioner Horwath stated that last time there was an assembly of small parts and perhaps additional equipment, chairs, and space would be needed for that type of activity. He noted that perhaps volunteers could bring chairs or folding tables as well.

Commissioner Chu noted that this would be one week before the youth event.

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The Parks & Rec Director commented that staff understands that multiple events would be happening in a short timeframe and both Rondeau and a potential youth event are exciting, and staff is happy to take on new opportunities.

Commissioner Chu asked that staff reach out to the Commission if there is an opportunity to assist.

OLD BUSINESS: GERVAIS MILL ENTRANCE UPDATE

The Parks & Rec Director provided background information on the project and funding received through the DNR. He noted that the City is following the process from the DNR and once all parties agree, the project can move forward. He stated that ideally, the City would like to complete the project this year, but there is time in 2023 to complete the project as well under the DNR grant terms.

Commissioner Horwath stated that the original plan included a gazebo, and it was confirmed that was cost-prohibitive. He asked for details on the trail near node one.

The Parks & Rec Director stated that a person on foot would have an easier time on the trail than someone on a bicycle.

Commissioner Horwath stated that node two is considerably smaller than what the gazebo was going to be but asked if the intent is to create an overlook.

The Parks & Rec Director confirmed that is intended to be an overlook area.

Commissioner Horwath asked if there is a possibility to expand the plan to add the gazebo if additional funds were obtained.

The Parks & Rec Director stated that is possible but noted that is not included in the ten-year CIP.

Commissioner Hipp commented that this is exciting and asked if this would create an ADA-accessible loop.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the trail would be ADA accessible, but the entire park would not be because of the topography. He noted that the trail would provide ADA access to the node.

Commissioner Chu stated that it would be great to have a trail map of the City that highlights ADA-compliant segments for users.

Commissioner Horwath commented that this is an excellent compromise providing ADA compliant trails and getting people off the street.

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NEW BUSINESS: RECREATION COORDINATOR UPDATE

The Recreation Coordinator provided an update on the upcoming Arbor Day event, the Sap Run, city-wide garage sale, pollinator planting event, and wildlife walk. She provided information on a newsletter that she developed that will be sent out bi-monthly and feature recreational opportunities.

NEW BUSINESS: PARK LOGOS

The Parks & Rec Director stated that staff met with Commissioner Mui about developing individual park logos, based on the previous discussion. He stated that staff felt it would be good to check in with the Commission before spending additional time on it. He stated that a few examples were provided.

Commissioner Mui commented that his idea came from the designs for the national parks where you can get stickers for visiting the different parks. He stated that if they used stickers, he would suggest those be located at City Hall, or perhaps a stamp is provided at the park to make a City park passport.

The Parks & Rec Director acknowledged that there are many ideas of how they could be used but that would start with the design of the logos.

The Recreation Coordinator stated that if there is a logo developed, they could include that on the Rondeau Park community build shirts.

Commissioner Horwath stated that his family collects the national park stamps and liked the concept.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that he wanted to check in with the Commission to see if there was support for the concept before they work with a graphic designer. He noted that perhaps the Commissioners assigned to different parks could provide input on what could be included in the logos.

Horwath introduced the following motion:

TO PROCEED WITH DESIGNING PARK LOGOS

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Mui.
Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Chair Miller asked if there has been thought to putting sitting areas around the lake.

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The Parks & Rec Director replied that is County property and he can see if the County has an interest in adding benches.

Commissioner Schletty commented that he was recently at Thunder Bay and noticed green shoots in the area where pollinator planting was done. He noted that at Spooner there is some of the poured rubber chipping away.

The Parks & Rec Director replied that staff is aware of the issue, and it may be under warranty, so they are working to address that. He noted that alternatively, they may add mats to the high use area near the swings.

Commissioner Horwath expressed concern with the condition of the Thunder Bay trail at the cul-de-sac connection.

UPDATES

No additional comments.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.