

MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Bluma, Tiffany Bushland, Bruce Cantor, George Foulkes, Elizabeth Griffin, George Hagemann and Peter May.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

GUEST(S) PRESENT: Barb Elmore, St. Louis Park Resident

STAFF PRESENT: Mark Oestreich, Manager of Westwood Hills Nature Center, Cindy Walsh, Director of Operations and Recreation, Jason West, Recreation Superintendent and Elizabeth Miller, Recording Secretary.

1. Call to order

Commissioner Bushland called the meeting to order at 7:49 p.m.

2. Presentation

None.

3. Approval of Minutes

a. January 29, 2018

Commissioner Hagemann made a motion to approve the minutes of January 29, 2018. Commissioner Cantor seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 7 - 0.

4. Business

a. Park Naming Request Discussion

Commissioners Griffin and Cantor met prior to this meeting with Barb Elmore and friends who submitted an application requesting a park or field be renamed to honor Marty Hammer. Ms. Elmore, on behalf of friends and family, spoke of community member Marty Hammer's involvement in sports and mentoring. Marty was a three sport athlete at St. Louis Park High School. After graduation, he became active in the City adult leagues playing in many of our city parks. Mr. Hammer passed in October of 2017 and his friends and family would like to honor him by naming a field after him. Marty's character and sportsmanship set him apart from others. After suffering a tragic accident, he continued to participate in as many activities as possible. The honoring group has received a lot of community support and have started a fundraising campaign. The incoming support has

been via donations. A golf tournament to raise money is also planned this summer. Ms. Elmore reiterated that Marty's character exemplified the best of St. Louis Park. He was a friend to many and always had a kind word to share.

Ms. Walsh added that during a subcommittee meeting, the group discussed ideas regarding which park or field would be the best fit. Since Marty was an avid softball and baseball player, the preference was to name a field at Dakota Park after him. The park has a history of naming fields, with the baseball field currently being named after Derrick Keller. Ms. Elmore and supporters indicated their first choice would be to name one of the softball fields at Dakota Park "Marty Hammer Field". Ms. Elmore and her friends have heard the City is intending to add lights to Dakota Park. The group felt that Marty would have been a big supporter of that since the fields at Dakota Park are used by adults and youth.

Ms. Elmore said they would be willing to contribute all the money they raise toward the field lights. Commissioner Griffin mentioned the subcommittee discussed a sign or plaque with Marty's name could be attached to the backstop or fence to recognize him. Ms. Elmore wants to ensure Marty is remembered. Ms. Elmore will email Ms. Walsh the website and Facebook pages to forward to the committee.

Ms. Walsh confirmed that the naming policy outlines a process by which the Commission would discuss details and how it would look. Then they would provide a recommendation to the City Council for formal approval. The City Council has the final say in confirming this request. Commissioner Griffin added the next step in the process would be to bring this request to the City Council. That would likely happen near the end of the summer since our policy indicates that a year should pass after the death of a person before a formal naming occurs.

Commissioners inquired on the cost of lighting; Ms. Walsh indicated lighting would be approximately \$250,000 (including electrical and earthwork). Ms. Elmore and the Commission exchanged thanks.

After Ms. Elmore left the meeting. The Commission discussed this naming request. Members decided to vote on the park naming request now.

Commissioner Foulkes moved to approve naming a softball field in Dakota Park "Marty Hammer Field"; Commissioner Haegmann seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

Staff was then asked to bring this forward to the City Council in a time that coincides with the policy which would be near the end of summer for the potential of an October naming celebration.

b. Westwood Hills Nature Center Update

Ms. Walsh advised there will be another public meeting next week. The format will be similar to the meeting just held. Ms. Walsh inquired if the Commissioners have any comments or suggestions to change for the next meeting. Commissioner Griffin suggested having a microphone available so all can hear. Commissioner Bushland commented that overall there was a lot of support for the project. Staff and Commissioners discussed sustainability and finances of the new building. The cost in taxes per year would be \$34 - \$37 additional per family during the duration of the bonding as this is a new building. Staff members compared other local nature centers. Staff noted that the costs could total \$12 million dollars. Funding has been in the CIP for years and has been planned for. The City staff created two video clips about the Westwood Hills Nature Center project for use on social media. The Commissioners viewed both videos.

5. Staff Communication

Ms. Walsh advised the Commission has a new youth member, Rachel Salzer.

Ms. Walsh discussed upcoming meetings. February 26 is the annual Board and Commission meeting with the City Council. Commissioner May will provide a five minute presentation to the Council highlighting what the Commission is and has been involved in. On February 28, another public meeting will be held regarding Westwood Hills Nature Center. On April 4, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission will meet with the Planning Commission and the Environment and Sustainability Commission to discuss the City's Comprehensive Plan. Staff has been asked to provide a presentation on the Westwood Hills Nature Center project at that meeting.

Ms. Walsh was asked how long the Nature Center project has been in the CIP. She noted that it has been for three years. Nature Center Manager Mark Oestreich mentioned that 38,000 participants of programs and outreach came through the Nature Center last year.

Ms. Walsh advised the Minnesota Wild practiced at the Recreation Outdoor Center. Commissioner Cantor was present at the practice and told the board how nice the players were and how fun it was. The facility worked out great. Recreation Superintendent Jason West noted the Wild also enjoyed their time. Staff is hoping for a chance at Hockey Day Minnesota in the future. Ms. Walsh noted that from a logistic standpoint it went quite well. Staff would like to see more signature events at the Recreation Outdoor Center next winter and also when the turf is in. Mr. West discussed the open parks and recreation position with members.

6. Member Communication

None.

7. Other/ Future Agenda Items

- a. Board and Commission Meeting with City Council: February 26, 5:30 p.m.
- b. Joint Meeting with Planning Commission and Environment & Sustainability Commission: April 4

8. Adjournment

It was moved by Commissioner Hagemann and seconded by Commissioner Griffin to adjourn at 8:46 p.m. The motion passed 7 – 0.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Miller

Elizabeth Miller, Recording Secretary