

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Rich Bluma, Tiffany Bushland, Bruce Cantor, George Foulkes, George Hagemann, Peter May and Rachel Salzer.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Elizabeth Griffin

**GUEST(S) PRESENT:** Jamie Marshall, Friends of the Arts Executive Director

**STAFF PRESENT:** Rick Beane, Parks Superintendent, Jason Eisold, Rec Center Manager, Mark Oestreich, Westwood Hills Nature Center Manager, Kori Shingles, Recreation and Facilities Supervisor, Cindy Walsh, Director of Operations and Recreation, Stacy Voelker, Recording Secretary

**1. Call to order**

Commissioner Bushland called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

**2. Presentation – St. Louis Park Hockey Association**

Mr. Eisold advised the St. Louis Park Hockey Association had an unexpected schedule change for the evening and will reschedule their presentation.

**3. Approval of Minutes**

**a. February 22, 2018**

*Commissioner Hagemann made a motion to approve the minutes of February 22, 2018. Commissioner May seconded the motion. The motion passed on a vote of 7 - 0.*

**4. Business**

**a. Introduce Kori Shingles, Recreation and Facilities Supervisor**

Introductions were provided by all. Ms. Shingles indicated she began working with the city on April 9. Prior to St. Louis Park, she worked in Eden Prairie for three years as Adult Athletics Supervisor and at the University of Minnesota for nine years prior to Eden Prairie in facility and events. Ms. Shingles is originally from Kansas City, Kansas and attended college at Central Michigan University majoring in sport administration. The coolest part of the job so far are the people, Ms. Shingles indicated. She will handle reservations for the Banquet Room, Gallery and ROC; oversee youth sports and provide outreach in the community.

Ms. Walsh advised when the Westwood Hills Nature Center building is complete, Ms. Shingles will assist with the reservations held at that location also. The Commission members welcomed Ms. Shingles.

**b. Friends of the Arts Update**

Jamie Marshall, Executive Director, invited Commission members to *Unity Sings*, an event being held in the ROC on Tuesday. The program is presented by Arts Midwest, an organization that serves other small art organizations. Arts Midwest program *ArtsLab* offers retreats to assist with a business model. The first retreat provided by Arts Midwest focused on communities and people that have an interest in the sovereign arts and culture sector in community; what can have the greatest impact on the community. Commissioner Hagemann provided an example of the Grand Marais arts colony that relies on tourists. St. Louis Park is on the other end of the spectrum – we rely on who is here, who was here and where do people gather. They explore the city and review challenges such as the economy, housing, etc. The *ArtsLab* assists in creating a cultural plan, like a comprehensive plan for arts, and build the plan to see how artists and creative thinkers can address some challenges facing the community to make a bigger impact. Cook County has a program to provide temporary housing when they need to host more activities to bring people in. The plan considers using a robust art sector to address broader challenges or opportunities. It's planning how we might develop a cultural plan in St. Louis Park to do the same thing so Friends of the Arts isn't just doing projects for those interested in arts. Commissioner Hagemann feels arts can help bring people together which is the focus of Racial Equity. The goal is to develop a draft of a cultural plan to present to city leadership and stakeholders. Then determine a roadmap for the next two years.

Mr. Marshall indicated part of the process is to work with daily facilitators, including various stakeholders in community or those that have a common interest in arts. The hope is to add an arts section to the city's comprehensive plan, commented Commissioner Hagemann.

Commissioner members inquired if it is funded by the city to which Commissioner Hagemann indicated it is. The city provides funding to Friends of the Arts which is not specified allotment so they are using for administrative expenses.

Mr. Marshall reminded members of the event being held on Tuesday in the ROC from 6 – 8 p.m. The event is a continuation for Our Town Sings which is held in the Wolfe Park Amphitheater, and uses singing to bring the community together. It's an opportunity for people to come together and share a passion for singing together. Choirs from various churches and David Hurst, Twin Cities Gospel Choir, will be at ROC in June to lead the audience in song. It's a great way for people to share a common connection with one another.

In 2018, the Arts and Culture Grant program provided a grant to the Twin Cities Gospel Choir (David Hurst) to provide a community music conference and concerts at the ROC.

Another grant was provided to Alysha Boie to implement an arts and craft fair in the ROC. The Park Theater Company used the grant awarded to them by providing a presentation with the St. Louis Park Community Band and Meadowbrook Gospel Choir in the ROC. The Children's First event was also very successful. The ROC is getting great use!

**c. 2018 Capital Improvement Project Review**

Rick Beane, Parks Superintendent, reviewed the 2018 Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) with the Commission.

Staff was busy today participating in the annual Beautify the Park event which supports the annual tree replacement budget from the CIP. The CIP budget contains \$15,000 to toward ADA accessibility connections. This may include accessibility to playgrounds or other park amenities. The CIP includes \$20,000 to replenish the woodchips in the playgrounds annually.

Shelard, Roxbury and Birchwood Park playgrounds will be replacement this year advised Mr. Beane. Two of the playgrounds have been installed; one will be installed later due to the late spring. Mr. Beane advised the removed playgrounds are recycled through "Kids Around the World", which the residents appreciate. Ms. Walsh asked if the Commissioners would like Paul Bierhaus, board member, to attend an upcoming meeting; Commission members agreed. Mr. Beane stated playgrounds have a 15-year lifespan. Ms. Hoffman inquired on the budget for playgrounds to which Mr. Beane advised a typical playground replacement is \$65,000. Larger playgrounds such as Wolfe Park, are budgeted at \$100,000. After approximately 15 years, some playgrounds do not pass inspection. If they do not pass, parts need to be replaced or the entire structure will need replacement. This also depends on the location and use of the structure. If heavily used, the structure may need more repairs or replacement sooner than 15 years. All 43 playground structures are inspected and documented at least monthly. Commissioner Cantor indicated it is nice to know they are inspected monthly and feels residents should be aware also. He suggested adding this information to the Park Perspective, along with pictures of the playgrounds in their new locations. Mr. Beane advised St. Louis Park pays for some employees to become certified playground inspectors. Since the United States cannot install refurbished playgrounds, they are installed in other countries. Many kids in other countries have never seen a playground before and they love it!

This year, Mr. Beane advised, the courts at Wolfe Park, Shelard Park, Roxbury Park and Aquila Park will be resurfaced. The general lifespan of a court is 5-10 years. The first repaint of the park buildings was in 2002 so a lot of the building need repainting. This year staff will focus on Aquila, Birchwood, Browndale, Carpenter, Cedar Knoll (re-side and new doors), Dakota, Fern Hill, Louisiana Oaks, Nelson, Northside and Oak Hill Parks.

The parking lots will be resurfaced at Cedar Knoll, Creekside and Nelson Parks. The shelter at Jackley Park needs to be reworked. In Louisiana Oaks Park, staff will install taller poles and LED fixtures. Field lighting at Aquila and Dakota Parks is also in the CIP. Staff hopes to start the 2018 project prior to the end of June.

Mr. Beane reviewed the Aquila Park project. The fields in the park will be reconfigured and a storage garage will be built. The Girls' Fastpitch Association will get covered dugouts and have two scoreboards. Peterson Company hopes to begin construction this week, with substantial completion by August 15, 2018. The fields will be seeded so they can be utilized in 2019. The construction will begin after school ends. It includes new light poles and LED lights. The poles on the south side of the park will remain wood poles. Ms. Hoffman inquired on the cost of field lights at Dakota Park. Mr. Beane advised \$280,000 which includes the service. Musco Lighting is providing the work. The lights and poles were able to be purchased directly via a national contract which is more cost effective. Staff is researching two different scoreboards for the fields. Both say *Oriole Fastpitch*. Staff is working closely with Girls' Fastpitch Association so both the high school and association get recognition. Ms. Hoffman inquired if the Association was donating toward this project. Mr. Beane indicated the association has mentioned it. Originally they wanted scoreboards that were \$25,000 apiece. They have now agreed on scoreboards that cost \$8,000 each. They have a new president and have been great to work with.

Ms. Walsh advised Commissioner Griffin is having conversations with residents regarding designated pickle ball courts. A number of courts are stripped and in the 2019 CIP, additional stripping of pickle ball courts has been added since the activity has increased in popularity. Commissioner Foulkes reiterated the popularity by indicating they may have 30 – 40 people at the Middle School on Tuesdays and Thursdays to play! Mr. Beane advised staff has included adult fitness in a future CIP, which would tie in with pickle ball.

Mr. Bean mentioned the skate park at Carpenter, which was a CIP project, has been very well received. There will be a drinking fountain installed soon. Maintenance staff loves the skate park as it is maintenance free. The users love it also!

The Oak Hill Park Splash Pad will open Friday, May 25. Last year the about ground equipment was replaced along with the UV filters. The filters were replaced as the issue was smelly water; UV filters assist with off gassing of water. Regardless of the smell, the water is safe.

#### **d. Westwood Hills Nature Center Update**

Mark Oestreich, Manager of Westwood Hills Nature Center, presented an update on the Westwood Hills Nature Center project. Staff met with the school principals, PTO and school leaders last night. It was a good discussion and opened up ideas to pursue. The schools want to utilize the nature center for education but the cost of bussing students is a barrier. Options were discussed.

The Commissioners viewed the latest plan that was approved Monday. The following changes were made to the original plan shown: one less raptor mews(three versus four; one mews is larger so could subdivide and have two small birds in the space); lowered roof on west end of building reduces glue lam beams and vaulted roof which reduces expenses and surface patio on back of building versus wood. Staff explored more exhibits, an outdoor

screen utility area on the west side and a diesel generator versus natural gas as less expensive. Mr. Oestreich indicated they want to pursue adding birds and provide more outreach. It would be great to have a fleet of birds so can choose which two to take on the outreach programs.

It was decided to keep the building in the same proposed location versus moving it due to soil conditions. Tested geo thermal and ran conductivity tests; all tests indicate this is the system to use for heating.

The landscape architect provided a view of the design details including mowing, plowing, trail width, etc. The trails are ADA accessible. The landscaping will create a buffer next to the classroom on the north side of the building. Low to medium bushes will separate trail from classroom; potentially prairie type bushes, indicated Mr. Oestreich. The draining water will be funneled to the turtle pond on the north side of the building. Mr. Beane advised the biggest concern is snow storage so will discuss making the trail to the east of the parking area larger to allow room for snow when plowed. Discussed water drainage, melting snow with debris and best location for storage.

The crosswalks through the parking lot to the playground will remain. The number of trails connecting on the north side of the building are undecided. Staff is talking with the Rotary group about the wooden structure overlooking the turtle pond in regards to what they'd like to do when it's replaced (in CIP). It was discussed to replace with a different structure and add in a fire pit area.

Commissioners viewed an empty rendering of the exhibit space. Mr. Oestreich indicated the city is working with Split Rock Studios to design the exhibits, which will be located in the middle. The exhibits will focus on four main features that are found on the Westwood property: natural pollinator area, woodland features, prairie and wetland. The exhibit area will include an exhibit wall, sitting areas, standing areas, terrace which flows outside, text written at an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level plus interactive discovery areas. Each main exhibit will have a seasonal changeability as seasonal panels will be made.

The exhibit may also include an interactive area where visitors will hear critter sounds when stepping on certain spots. Staff will go to the City Council on Monday to discuss the design phase; Commission members invited to attend. Mr. Cantor inquired on the timeline. Mr. Oestreich indicated if the City Council approves the discussion on Monday, construction documents can begin and be ready in early September. Bids can be received September, October or November. Ms. Walsh indicated the city generally uses GO bonds for funding for this type of a project.

Ms. Walsh and Mr. Oestreich thanked the commission members in the process. Once the exhibits are enhanced, an update will be brought to the Commission.

**e. Commission Sponsored Appreciation Luncheon Discussion**

Commission members discussed and decided to hold the luncheon on Thursday, September 27, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m. at Oak Hill Park. Discussed other options for food prep, potentially chicken. Ms. Voelker will email last year's list.

**5. Staff Communication**

Jason Eisold, the Rec Center Manager, advised the ROC ice was rented slightly less than 750 hours and collected approximately \$80,000 revenue (projected revenue was \$45,000 annually). The ROC ice was rented mostly every evening and weekend days. People skated on the ice regularly when not rented. Ms. Walsh commented – One of best things is the ice was open and free to users when not reserved. A mixture of all ages and abilities skating. The ROC was also a big hit at the recent ice arena managers meeting and the Hockey Association promoted within itself. The ROC is a huge asset! Moving forward, staff's goal is hosting a significant event once per month to showcase the ROC.

The ROC was turf March 15 through May 12, advised Mr. Eisold. Approximately 250 hours of turf was rented and provided \$5,000 revenue. The turf was busy evenings and sporadic rentals occurred on weekends. The groups that rented the turf include Lacrosse and baseball particularly due to the late spring conditions. They asked for it to remain in place longer than May 12! Staff, in conjunction with Discover St. Louis Park, is interested in holding more events on the ROC turf. Mr. Oestreich advised the extra turf was taken and used at the Nature Center.

Mr. Eisold explained to transition from ice to turf, the slab under the ice was heated. It took just over 24 hours to clear the ice, one day to dry, one day to roll out the turf and two days to remove the dasher boards. The transition schedule will remain basically the same annually. Customers have asked to transition the ice to turf for a weekend then back to ice, it is so popular.

This year the roof above the east rink and commons area will be replaced through the Capital Improvement Program. The roof, which is a great space as it is flat, will be prepped for potential solar use in the future. The budget for the project is \$500,000. The front entrance of the Rec Center will be renovated to include motion doors this fall.

The main drive areas of the Rec Center parking lot were recently repaved, indicated Mr. Eisold. The entire lot is slated to be redone in two to three years in conjunction with the Belt Line / Monterey Drive intersection project. Ms. Walsh advised the Engineering Department is looking at reconstructing the intersection, potentially with a roundabout, to allow traffic go in and out of the Rec Center at the Monterey Drive / Belt Line Boulevard intersection.

Recently the Aquatic Park filters were replaced, advised Mr. Eisold, which was also a CIP project. Staff will begin filling the Aquatic Park tomorrow or Friday with the new regenerative filters in anticipation of the June 2 opening. The new filters dump a lot less water, save chemicals and are consistent with climate action plan.

Mr. Eisold indicated the lights in the Banquet Room and Gallery will be replaced with LED this year. Once complete, most lights in the building will be LED. When the parking lot is redone, the lights there will also be switched to LED. LED saves energy and is part of the climate action plan.

Mr. Eisold encouraged Commission members to view the completed mural by the ROC.

## **6. Member Communication**

Commissioner Cantor inquired what happened to the baseball dedication request for Marty Hammer. Ms. Walsh advised the naming policy indicates a year must pass after a person is deceased prior to naming. Marty Hammer's support group will host a golf tournament this summer to acquire funds toward the lights at Dakota Park as it was agreed to dedicate one of the softball fields at Dakota Park to Mr. Hammer. The naming recommendation will go to the City Council in September.

Commissioner Hagemann mentioned there is evidence of spiking on the bike trail between Nelson Park and Louisiana Avenue. There were sharp objects strewn on the trail, which a resident picked up. Mr. Beane asked for photos to forward on to Three Rivers Park District and the Police Department to make them aware.

Commissioner Hagemann indicated the City Council received a report at Monday's Council meeting for an update on dockless bicycles, which the Cities of Edina and Golden Valley have. Commissioner Hagemann is working with the Engineering Division on what the City Council wants to do, ensuring public process and determining the city's response if dockless bicycles are left in the city, who to call, etc. There are a lot of variables to work through. Mr. Beane advised dockless bicycles were recently discussed at a meeting and many concerns were expressed.

Commissioner Foulkes inquired on the success of the Minnehaha Creek Clean up. Over 40 people attended, Mr. Beane advised, and a lot of garbage was picked up.

## **7. Other/ Future Agenda Items**

- a. Next Meeting – June 20, 2018
- b. No meetings held July and August due to lack of quorum

## **8. Adjournment**

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

Respectfully submitted,

*Stacy M. Voelker*

Recording Secretary