MEMBERS PRESENT: Rich Bluma, Bruce Cantor, Leah Hollingsworth and Dahlia Krebs
Elizabeth Griffin and Pete May

MEMBERS ABSENT: George Foulkes

GUESTS PRESENT: Kelly Raatz and Amelia Ryan with team members and coaches (St. Louis Park Crush Ultimate Frisbee Club) and Jamie Marshall (Friends of the Arts)

STAFF PRESENT: Jim Lombardi, Recreation Supervisor, Jennifer Monson, Planner, Cindy Walsh, Director of Operations and Recreation, Jason West, Recreation Superintendent and Carrie Mandler, Recording Secretary

1. Call to order

Commissioner Bluma, chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

2. Presentations

a. St. Louis Park Crush Ultimate Frisbee Club

Kelly Raatz introduced herself and Amelia Ryan, St. Louis Park Crush Ultimate Frisbee Club, provided an overview of the Ultimate Frisbee sport. She explained the basic goal of the game is to move the frisbee from one end zone to the other. Ms. Ryan presented a video depicting the athletic requirements of the sport. She also noted the work ethic and spirit of the game. The games are self–officiated and require good sportsmanship. The sport is one that can include athletes with many different backgrounds and skill sets. She discussed how teammates encourage each other to work together. The sport is recognized and growing in Minnesota. She advised the St. Louis Park Crush Ultimate Frisbee Club requests the same access to field space as soccer and they would like more recognition for the Crush organization.

Ms. Raatz, Crush Ultimate Frisbee Club President, identified the structure and goals of the organization and its mission statement. She advised there is a girls and boys school club and they play in the spring and summer. The funds for the club are generated from player fees and fundraising. Minnesota Ultimate is the umbrella organization for the St. Louis Park clubs followed by the larger US Ultimate organization. She introduced the
team coaches. There were several players from the club in attendance at the commission meeting as well.

Ms. Raatz noted the Crush Ultimate Frisbee club started in 2015. The middle school level is growing as there are currently 50 players and these players will feed into the high school program. Ms. Raatz advised she is the first president. The club is in the process of developing by-laws. The board meets every month. With this structure, the coaches can focus on the youth. She advised the club would like to have more access to city parks and recreation fields, as well as more coordination and inclusion in the levels of communication needed to obtain field space.

Commissioner Griffin inquired if the club has trouble acquiring field space. Mr. Lombardi advised that schools have priority, then the youth associations. After these, there is limited field choice for the club. In order to plan the spring/summer/fall outdoor season, Mr. Lombardi meets mid-February with school officials. He will discuss schedules and give the schools a permit. Following the schools, athletic associations have priority. He added that fall football will also impact the use of soccer fields. Ultimate frisbee has been using Minikahda Vista.

Mr. Lombardi advised once the blanket permit is given to the schools, field use is determined by school hierarchy. Since Ultimate is a SLP high school club sport, they need to work with Andy Ewald the Athletic Director for field space. Mr. Lombardi advised the city is working with the Crush Ultimate Frisbee Club on space needs. Commissioner Hollingsworth requested clarification if ultimate frisbee is a sanctioned Minnesota high school sport or a club. Ms. Raatz advised the Crush organization is a club sport through the high school and not a MSHSL sport.

Commissioner Hollingsworth asked if all the City and school fields are being used. Mr. Lombardi advised, although there is some field availability, specific locations are much more desirable than others. Ms. Walsh noted Andy Ewald, the High School Athletic Director, controls the final decision for school facility use. Any indoor request must be submitted to the High School. Mr. Lombardi suggested a discussion between schools and teams.

b. Friends of the Arts

Jamie Marshall, Executive Director of Friends of the Arts (FOTA), was introduced. He provided handouts to the attendees with information on current and future programs and initiatives of FOTA. He advised the commission he has several questions for them but would begin with an update.

FOTA received a $10,000 grant to hire a facilitator who will assist with community development in arts and culture. A steering committee was formed and includes representatives from the city, school district, Discover St. Louis Park, Park Nicollet and
other organizations. FOTA would like to grow the arts and culture sector in St. Louis Park. In order to make sure FOTA is achieving their goals, they are currently in the listening phase and will present a plan to the city council by the 2nd quarter of 2020.

He referred to the handout and listed several current FOTA initiatives beginning with public art and place making. He mentioned they are in the process of selecting the artist for the public art area at Westwood Hills Nature Center. He also mentioned the Historic Walker Lake area which has current and future projects planned.

He advised FOTA continues to support local artists by providing fiscal sponsorship for programs that showcase artists. The St. Louis Park Art Fair and Arts and Culture grant are some examples of sponsorship. There are many more programs and resources sponsored by FOTA that help build community through the arts. FOTA helps support arts in the Elementary Schools, they also provide musical instruments to St. Louis Park students who do not otherwise have resources to obtain an instrument. The St. Louis Park Unity Sing began in the amphitheater and is a growing community partnership. FOTA is currently reviewing applications for Arts and Culture grants for next year. They are a resource for artists who want to bring their creative ideas to life.

In response to a question from Councilmember Cantor, Mr. Marshall further clarified fiscal sponsorships. Mr. Marshall advised FOTA will cover financial responsibility for various events, projects or activities. With this assistance the artists do not have to personally cover the cost (and underlying costs) of the event. In doing so, FOTA provides administrative security for local artists.

Mr. Marshall requested the commission members fill out the demographic cards he handed out. He then asked for feedback from the commission as he presented several questions.

In terms of creativity, culture and art (both formal and informal) he requested the commission members name some current or past things that come to mind in St Louis Park. Commissioner May commented that throughout the recent film festival, the mosaics at the theater were noteworthy. Commissioner Cantor mentioned the sculpture at Excelsior and Grand. Commissioner Bluma commented the phones on the sound barrier wall by Carpenter Park. He added even though it is not necessarily supported by the city, it is impressive. Commissioner Griffin mentioned nature art at Westwood Hills Nature Center. Commissioner Hollingsworth added the Tia event and events at Bethel. The Sukkahs all around St. Louis Park during Sukkot were also mentioned along with the lights on Highway 7 as it crosses Louisiana, which was noted by Commissioner Bluma.

Mr. Marshall requested the commission members name cultural amenities that make them most proud of St. Louis Park. Commissioner Griffin mentioned the Peter Hobart mural where each child made a tile. The mural provides connection to the children in
the school, she added. Commissioner Bluma mentioned a fundraiser concert and ability to walk to the area. Commissioner May noted the Tower Light sculpture.

Mr. Marshall inquired if these amenities add to the unique identity of St. Louis Park. Commissioner Hollingsworth commented she does not feel well enough informed about all the amenities available in St. Louis Park. Commissioner Griffin added she probably would not know about Friends of the Arts if not for commission connections. She inquired if there are places in town like cafes or other public businesses to partner with.

Mr. Marshall requested the commission members define how a strong sense of partnership can help the partnership. Commissioner Cantor suggested it is like a change from black and white to color. Commissioner Hollingsworth commented our community is extremely diverse. Commissioner Cantor added it helps to clarify who you are. Commissioner Hollingsworth stated the combination of venues will draw others in.

Mr. Marshall requested the commission members name ways the city has made it easy for an artist to thrive. Commissioner Cantor stated there is an easy way to access city resources. Commissioner Griffin commented even though we are not a small town, we feel like a small town. Commissioner Bluma advised events are easy to access. Commissioner May added he likes the connections that occur at National Night Out events.

In response to a question from Mr. Marshall about barriers in St. Louis Park, Commissioner May identified the physical barriers of Highway 100 and the railroad. Commissioner Griffin mentioned many artists simply cannot afford to live in St. Louis Park. Commissioner Krebs advised art is not highly encouraged in the schools. She added most students simply take art classes for the credits. Commissioner Griffin commented the middle school has a good theater program. Commissioner Krebs agreed and added the high school has many good shows as well. Commissioner Cantor included the JCC as having a good theater program.

Mr. Marshall reminded the commission about the on-line survey and asked them to refer others to it. Commissioner Cantor mentioned many neighborhood groups also have Facebook pages. He indicated perhaps FOTA can access neighborhoods through their pages.

3. Approval of minutes

a. September 18, 2019

*It was moved by Commissioner Griffin, seconded by Commissioner Cantor, to approve the minutes of September 18, 2019. The motion passed 6–0.*
4. Business

a. Park and Trail dedication for Parkway Residences Development

Jennifer Monson, Planner for the Community Development Department, introduced herself to the Commission. She provided design plans and discussed the Sela Investments proposed development, Parkway Residences, at West 31st Street between Glenhurst Avenue and Inglewood Avenue. The plan proposal is to build four new buildings and rehabilitate three existing buildings on the east side of St. Louis Park. This development will require four phases over a period of four or five years.

The area currently consists of a combination of single family and multi-family buildings. There is a total of 247 dwellings, of which 164 are future new units. Ms. Monson advised when there are new developments within the city, the city collects dedication fees or land from the developer. There are no new parks dedicated for this area, therefore, city staff recommends cash-in-lieu of land. Ms. Monson advised she is requesting the commission’s approval of cash-in-lieu of land for the development.

The estimated fees would be as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Park fees} &= 1,500 \times 164 = 246,000 \\
\text{Trail fees} &= 225 \times 164 = 36,900 \\
\text{Total amount as currently proposed} &= 282,900
\end{align*}
\]

Ms. Monson said the developer would like to begin next spring. The proposal includes a mix of affordable development. The area is well served by transit and the council is not opposed to increased population in the area. The development depends on market conditions.

Ms. Walsh advised the multi-level project will generate funds for future park and trail improvements. She advised the fees go into the city’s Park Improvement Fund.

Commissioner Cantor inquired if the green space will be open to everyone. Ms. Monson advised the sidewalk is currently private, however, the city is working on an easement.

Ms. Monson advised this plan will go to the planning commission December 4 and then to council.

Commissioner Hollingsworth requested clarification about green space in the area of the development. She inquired if there could be more plantings to recreate the environmental magic of the Cedar Lake Regional LRT trail that is located nearby that has been lost as part of the Southwest LRT Project. Ms. Monson advised that the city cannot require landscaping along the regional trail as part of this development, however, there
is not much room to plant all required landscaping and the developer will likely need to contribute to the city’s tree fund for planting trees in other areas of the city.

*It was moved by Commissioner Hollingsworth, seconded by Commissioner Cantor to approve the cash-in-lieu of land for Parkway Residences on West 31st Street between Glenhurst Avenue and Inglewood Avenue at an estimated fee of $246,000 for park dedication and $36,900 for trail dedication. The motion unanimously passed 6-0.*

b. 2019 Commission work plan and initiatives

i. Commission By-Laws

Ms. Walsh requested a motion for approval of the Commission By-laws. *It was moved by Commissioner Bluma, seconded by Commissioner May to approve the Commission By-Laws. The motion passed 6-0.*

c. Westwood Hills Nature Center Construction Update

Jason West, Recreation Superintendent, updated the Commission on the progress of the new interpretive center since the September 18 commission tour. He provided photographs of the construction progression. The floor was completed with one single continuous cement pour with 10 – 12 people spreading it out to level it. Some staff were able to attend a tour of the facility in Albert Lea and observe how the glue laminated beams are created. He advised the wood is Yellow Alaskan Cedar. He also provided photographs of the Split Rock exhibit fabrication.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cantor, Mr. West commented one rain day can create a three-day setback for construction. The estimated completion date is now May 1, 2020. In response to a question from Commissioner Bluma, Ms. Walsh and Mr. West confirmed the new interpretive center is the first zero energy public building in the state. Mr. West mentioned it is scheduled for an off-site sustainability tour as part of the Minnesota Recreation and Park Association conference. Ms. Walsh added once opened there will likely be a lot more requests for tours. A wedding is already scheduled for October 3, 2020. In response to a question from Commissioner Bluma, Mr. West advised the new venue will be able to accommodate groups for family reunions, weddings and multiple other large events. It can also be divided into smaller rooms where multiple programs can happen simultaneously. Ms. Walsh mentioned in addition to the multi-purpose rooms there is a separate conference room. In response to a question from Commissioner May, Ms. Walsh confirmed there is a catering room, however, the renters will need to provide their own catering service.
5. **Staff communication**

Jim Lombardi, Recreation Supervisor, reviewed recreation programs from summer and fall. He advised adult fall softball, football, kickball and other athletic programs are currently wrapping up. The wet season created many scheduling challenges. Much of the schedule is now headed into late October. In addition to associations, the scheduling also includes clubs, town teams and other outside groups. Scheduling required creative planning and juggling to finish the season before the snow falls.

Broomball will be starting soon in the ROC and, as weather permits, at Nelson Park. Volleyball and basketball are also starting.

Pickleball was a new summer highlight. The courts were completed and provided a fresh new venue for the growing sport. He provided handouts for commission members which depicted a summary of pickleball in St. Louis Park. He mentioned weather was outstanding in the beginning of the season but declined at the end. There were lessons offered in May and then a ladder league in June and July. Open pickleball times were offered as well. Mr. Lombardi advised courts can be reserved by the same process as tennis courts. Mr. Lombardi mentioned city programs will have priority. Next summer he would like to hold a pickleball tournament during Parktacular weekend. In response to a question from Commissioner Bluma, Mr. Lombardi commented he found a highly qualified instructor who is also a great pickleball resource. Mr. Lombardi advised the nets will come down after November 1.

Mr. Lombardi advised the city is now in the process of closing park buildings for the season.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cantor, Mr. Lombardi advised most of the pickleball players are retired so mornings are a desirable time to schedule the organized games. He added, mornings are generally cooler. He advised evenings are certainly a possibility for future scheduling. Commissioner Cantor commented interest among children could begin to grow. Commissioner Bluma mentioned there is access for drop in play when the courts are not in use. Commissioner Cantor commented the equipment is easy to carry. Mr. Lombardi added pickleball equipment is becoming more main-stream.

Commissioner Griffin thanked Mr. Lombardi for all the schedule juggling and added all his hard work is appreciated. Mr. Lombardi acknowledged the people are great and easy to work with.

6. **Member communication**

None.

7. **Other / future agenda items**

Next Meeting: December 4, 2019
Ms. Walsh encouraged the commission to think of goals and initiatives for 2020 to be discussed at the next meeting.

8. **Adjournment**

*It was moved by Commissioner May, seconded by Commissioner Cantor, to adjourn the meeting at 8:44 p.m. The motion unanimously passed 4-0.*

Respectfully submitted,

*CARRIE MANDLER*

Recording Secretary