

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19, 2008
PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMISSION

1. The Parks & Recreation Advisory Commission was called to order by Vice Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt.

Commission Members present:

Maria Boeder, At-Large
James Brekke, West
Reubenna Cooley, At-Large
Rich Gates, City Council Liaison
Mark Hanna, West District
Dean Heng, Planning Commission Liaison
Jim Hubert, Central District
Danielle Nelson, Youth Liaison
Andrew Reinhardt, West District
Brian Rogers, Central District

Absent:

Tina Carstens, East District
Brad Giesbrecht, East District
Paul Hartzell, East District
Rob Jacobs, Central District
Abdullah Kiatamba, At-Large

Staff Members present:

Jon Oyanagi, Recreation & Parks Director
Jan Ficken, Recreation Programs & Services Manager
Barb Stewart, Secretary

Others:

Lisa Greene, Coordinator, Zanewood Recreation Center
Rachel Fang, Coordinator, NW Hennepin Services Council
Susan Blood, Executive Director, NW Hennepin Services Council
Steve Carlson, T-Mobile Representative
Amy Brengmann, Coordinator of Marketing Enrichment, District 279 Community Education

2. **APPROVAL OF MARCH 19, 2008 PRAC AGENDA**

Motion, Jim Hubert; Second, Mark Hanna, to approve the March 19, 2008 PRAC agenda. Motion unanimously approved.

3. **APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 20, 2008 PRAC MEETING MINUTES**

Motion, Reubenna Cooley; Second, Brian Rogers, to approve the February 20, 2008 PRAC minutes. Motion unanimously approved.

4. OLD BUSINESS

 STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

Director, Jon Oyanagi, stated the Strategic Planning members held their first meeting on Thursday, March 13. The planning team consists of staff members, community leaders,

members of the Brooklyn Park Senior Club, teens, representatives from the local athletic associations, and RPAC commission members Andrew Reinhardt and Reubenna Cooley. Agenda discussion items included the Recreation & Parks Department missions, values, vision, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Participants broke off into groups to brainstorm in developing strategies to address these topics and meet department goals. The next step is for staff to gather this input, expand upon it, and set up specific department goals, evaluations and objectives in preparation for a second meeting in May. Jon stated this 'fast track strategic plan' will guide the department in decision making, planning for the 2009 budget and will take the department through 2010.

Vice Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt, stated the meeting was filled with good discussion and provided an opportunity to look at the 'big picture' through the eyes of other departments and people within the community. Brooklyn Park is a city of changing demographics and needs that the Recreation & Parks Department can provide to its residents.

5. NEW BUSINESS

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION/NW HENNEPIN HUMAN SERVICES

Executive Director, Susan Blood, gave an overview of services and resources offered through NW Hennepin Human Services Council (NWHHSC) including Education, Emergency Assistance, Health Care, Employment and Financial resources, Family and Youth services, Housing and Legal resources, multicultural services, Senior services, Head Start, Tobacco Free Community, Youth Prevention, Domestic Violence Prevention and Special Needs. The NWHHS has been in existence for 30 years and was originally formed in recognition that people have a right to identify their own issues, concerns and needs specific to their communities. Staff works to coordinate and network services available to northern suburban residents in need, and doing so without sending them to Minneapolis to obtain those services. Brooklyn Park is currently undergoing great change in demographics, cultures, and diversity within its borders, which increases the demand for services in the community.

Coordinator, Rachel Fang, provided handouts of the community profile for Brooklyn Park and showed a Power Point Presentation depicting Brooklyn Park demographics through 2007.

Dialogue and questions followed the presentation:

Commissioner, Mark Hanna, stated there are 54 different dialects spoken in the Zanewood Elementary School and has the highest percentage of children living in homes where the primary language is something other than English. This presents a real challenge to the teachers.

Commissioner, Reubenna Cooley, asked if that means they are not speaking English at home or would they be considered bilingual. Zanewood Recreation Center Coordinator, Lisa Greene, stated the parents are non-English speaking while the children would be considered bilingual.

Vice Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt, stated the RPAC receives demographic information from several different areas throughout the year and it is helpful to receive consistent information regarding the ever changing diversity within the community.

Susan invited Commissioners and staff to attend the “Building Safe Communities” forum to be held on Saturday, April 19, noon – 4:30 p.m. at the Brooklyn Center Community Center, 6301 Shingle Creek Parkway.

T-MOBILE PROPOSAL

T-Mobile Representative, Steve Carlson, stated T-Mobile would like to propose to the City to lease space for a communication facility located on Edinbrook Parkway. The tower, facility and lease would be similar to the one which was proposed in 2007 within Sunnyside Park. The new facility would be built to mimic the look of the shelter currently on site; the portable restroom would be moved into an upgraded brick surround constructed adjacent to the building.

Steve provided background history on T-Mobile stating that the company has worked with the City for the past 12 years and has progressed from installing simple car phones to an all purpose telecommunication provider. T-Mobile currently services 233 million subscribers. 14% of them have no land telephone and rely totally on their wireless service. As this transition to wireless-only service evolves, T-Mobile is having a difficult time providing service in the suburban areas and continues to search for creative ways to provide quality and dependable service without disrupting the land.

Steve provided Commissioners with a packet of information and stated that currently, there is a gap in coverage approximately one mile in size surrounding Edinbrook Park, north of Hwy. 610 and east to the Mississippi River. T-Mobile is proposing installing a telecommunication pole 90 feet in elevation which is similar to the one in Sunnyside Park. Currently, there is a lit ice skating rink and they propose to remove the rink lights to the northern section of the park and closer to Hwy 610.

Lengthy discussion followed with input and questions from commissioners:

City Council Liaison, Rich Gates, stated the lights currently face the sound wall and questioned if by moving them, would they be facing the residential homes and shine into their homes. If so, that would be a big concern for residents and himself. Director, Jon Oyanagi, stated the lights would still shine on the rinks and would not spill into residential yards. Vice Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt, asked if it is possible to shield the lights. Steve responded in the affirmative and that in addition, the lights could be pointed down rather than fanning out.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers, asked if there are radio frequency problems when constructing a telecommunication tower; and is it possible to get landscaping installed around the building. Steve responded that T-Mobile is governed by the FCC and purchases a frequency that only T-Mobile can use. This prevents overlapping or interference with other frequencies; One of the plans does show landscaping with evergreen and spruce trees.

Director, Jon Oyanagi, asked if anyone has tried to ‘art up’ the tower since it is so visible, especially to the Hwy 610 traffic.

Steve responded that T-Mobile tries to make them as invisible as possible with subtle coloring rather than making them a focal point.

Planning Commission Liaison, Dean Heng, stated if this tower is shared with someone else, that would necessitate an additional building be constructed which makes another impact on the park. Dean asked if security cameras could be installed on the towers.

Rich stated cameras could be installed if a park is having issues but cameras were not warranted in Sunnyside Park and would probably not be warranted in this case either.

Andrew asked if the building could be constructed even further towards Hwy. 610 so as to be as unobtrusive as possible; is there a public notification.

Steve responded that it is possible to look at a site plan pushing the building back more; Yes, after application is made through the Planning Department, a formal publication will be made and a public meeting would be held.

Commissioner, James Brekke, stated the agreement with the City includes an annual lease payment and asked if this would go before the Finance Department for renewal on an additional basis; does the money go into the OSLAD Fund.

Steve responded that a lease could be prepared when a formal application is made with the City. Jon stated the lease payments are deposited into the OSLAD fund and staff would research whether dedication of the money could specifically be made to Eidem Homestead or the Youth Coalition programs.

Motion, Jim Hubert; Second, Maria Boeder, that the Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission recommends approval of the construction of a T-Mobile tower at Edinbrook Park with special recommendation that the tower and equipment building include light shielding and be located as close to the wall and designed as aesthetically pleasing as possible. Motion approved.

DISTRICT 279 COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Coordinator of Marketing & Adult/Youth Enrichment, Amy Brengmann, provided handouts and gave an overview to the Commissioners on the District 279 Community Education Department.

Community Education is a vital part of the district with a variety of program offerings including Early Childhood & Family Education (ECFE), programming for parents, infants, and toddlers, developmental classes, and early childhood screening. Amy highlighted the following program areas:

Youth After School Programs – are offered in collaboration with the Recreation & Parks Department to provide non-duplicating programs. The Fifth Annual Chess Tournament is coming up with over 100 students participating. This is a nice opportunity for them to be involved and then branch out for other tournaments.

Four Star Express Program – is a four year old program that offers children the opportunity to attend classes to learn the necessary skills to begin school.

21st Century Programs – are offered and target those families in the city who are experiencing a variety of concerns and issues. The funding provides free (or low cost) programs at Zanewood Recreation Center, Brooklyn Jr. High, Northview Jr. High, Parkbrook, Fair Oaks and Crestview elementary schools.

Teen Programs – target a difficult segment to engage within the city. Teens want to be independent, have a place to 'hang out' yet, do not always have the transportation to participate. Community Education and Recreation & Parks work collaboratively in offering an excellent teen program at Brooklyn Jr. High School and during the summer. In addition, they work with the cities of Maple Grove and Brooklyn Center to share in activities offered, maximize transportation, bring programs together, team marketing, and accessible programming so that teens can easily access all of the programs offered. Also, ACT prep classes are popular and fill up quickly at Park Center High School.

My Space – is used extensively by teens as a mode in communication. District 279 has a space under construction and near readiness to launch in targeting grades 6 through 9.

Adult enrichment – classes is offered in collaboration with the Recreation & Parks Department. These classes offer art, computer training and health programs. In addition, opportunities in travel, trips, and art programs are cross marketed with Brooklyn Park and North Hennepin Community College.

Dial A Story – is a new program that is very popular with the youth wherein they can call over the telephone and have a nighttime story read to them. Jr. High students are hired and can earn volunteer hours. They fill out an application, are interviewed, and then trained by a professional story teller and practice at Zanewood and Garden City elementary schools. Dial A Story is offered at no cost to students throughout the district.

Amy stated the solid relationship between the Recreation & Parks Department and Community Education is something everyone can be proud of and is always spoken highly of throughout the community. It really takes the people in both departments to make it happen and Brooklyn Park has a great Recreation & Parks Department team.

Although in the past Community Education has mailed catalogs out to all residents, they have found that it is expensive and not everyone reads them. They now create flyers which are shorter in length, mail them out to everyone, and mail the catalogs only to those requesting it or to targeted demographic areas. They have found that they are able to cut back 20,000 in catalog mailings, receive more calls and questions from the flyer rather than the catalog, and have not lost any registrations by making this change in marketing.

Recreation Services Manager, Jan Ficken, stated Community Education and Recreation & Parks Department staff meet monthly to coordinate programs. Staff shares a variety of information and is an important part in making the collaboration successfully. Amy also serves on the current Strategic Planning Team efforts underway in the Recreation & Parks Department.

Planning Commission Liaison, Dean Heng, asked what the status is on the new children's theater being built in the previous Furniture Manor location in Osseo. Both Jan and Amy stated they were not aware of this new program, and would research.

Director, Jon Oyanagi thanked Amy for attending this evening's meeting.

ZANEWOOD RECREATION CENTER UPDATE

Recreation Services Manager, Jan Ficken, introduced Community Education Coordinator, Lisa Greene, who offices out of the Zanewood Recreation Center (ZRC). Lisa has worked at the facility for five years and employs a customer service assistant, Kim Sturdy, while Recreation Program Supervisor, Michelle Margo, spends some of her schedule between the ZRC and CAC. Jan stated Lisa also manages the 21st Century Learning Grant which pays for programming within the Zane Avenue Corridor including Northview and Brooklyn Jr. High schools, and Parkbrook, Fair Oaks, and Crestview elementary schools. With the elimination of this critical grant, Camp Zanewood has lost a major piece of its funding and staff is working diligently in seeking out alternative funding. Without outside funding and support, the local area families could not afford to enroll their children into the Camp or School Vacation Days off.

During the evenings, Community Education staffs a building attendant with that cost shared between the District and the Recreation & Parks Department.

Jan handed out a master spreadsheet that provides a glance at what happens at the ZRC during the school year. The Recreation & Parks Department programs offer a multi-faceted approach in design with classes offered in basketball, fitness, safety awareness/self defense, children's dance, after school offerings, Cheer America, and teen programs. During the summer months, Camp Zanewood is held throughout the entire facility. In addition, the teen program will be expanded this year to four nights per week.

Director, Jon Oyanagi, stated a department goal is to increase its presence at the ZRC over the long term. Staff will bring a proposal back to the RPAC to staff the ZRC on a regular basis. Jon stated the ZRC would serve as a community center capable in serving the Zane Avenue Corridor which has a big need for outreach programming and the Recreation & Parks Department can be a part of filling that need.

Commissioner, Maria Boeder, stated she sees an increased need for recreational programming as the junior high schools drop their sports program. Lisa stated several of the junior high school sports programs have already merged with the high school sports to offer sport programs to youth. Lisa stated it is not the intention of the school district to drop sports programs, rather, to offer them in different and alternative ways.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers, stated he wouldn't want to see kids not being able to participate in programs due to the prohibitive cost and sees this problem increasing due to the poor state in the general economy. Councilmember, Rich Gates, stated the city has allocated \$10,000 from the CDBG fund to provide scholarships for those in need.

2009 BUDGET OPERATING AND CAPITAL PROPOSALS

Director, Jon Oyanagi, provided handouts to the Commissioners and stated staff has started the CIP planning process. This spring staff will be working on planning for larger expenditures along with the CEP. Jon opened the floor to questions regarding the CIP, CEP or General Fund. Rich provided background information on a splash park stating one was originally included in the 2008 CIP, and that Councilmembers asked that additional information be provided by the Recreation & Parks Department before the City Council would approve construction of a splash pad. Jon stated staff will be bringing this information back to the City Council in the spring and researching Zanewood Recreation Center as a location. Jon stated there is an appeal in constructing a splash pad in that it is a more affordable option than building aquatics facility.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers, asked if a dog park was being considered and asked the specific location for reconstruction of the pedestrian bridge. Rich responded that a dog park has been discussed and he and Jon would be working on this, and returning to the RPAC with suggestions. Jon stated location for reconstruction of the pedestrian bridge is Brookdale Park although this project is currently on hold and dependent upon the Oak Grove Park land sale.

CLEAN UP THE PARK PREVIEW

Director, Jon Oyanagi, handed out the 2008 Clean Up the Park flyer. This annual event will be held April 27 – May 3 with Steve Gulenchyn coordinating the event. Jon encouraged Commissioners to join in and volunteer for this event.

PARTNERSHIP PLAN REVIEW

Recreation Services Manager, Jan Ficken, stated a Youth Opportunities Coalition (YOC) Partnership summit was held on Saturday, March 15, at North Hennepin Community College. Jan provided Commissioners with a YOC packet of information including the E-Newsletter evaluation/comments on the summit. Youth Planner, Matt Norris, planned and facilitated the summit for 100 people including 30 adults and 60 youth. Jan stated the summit was very hopeful and positive with input from a diverse group including representatives from Tree House, Councilmembers from Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center, Brooklyn Park Police Chief Davis, and area youth and adults. Several discussions were held with all encouraged to be open and honest in their dialogue. Several messages were heard from the youth:

Adults have a negative perception of kids and that is a problem to be worked on

Youth want a safe place to go with no bullying or intimidation from other kids

Youth want to take their community back and make it better

Youth want to be engaged and accepted by adults

Youth have limited transportation to get around the city

7. DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW

ASTRA VILLAGE

Director, Jon Oyanagi, presented the Astra Village proposal stating the plan was first proposed in April, 2007 and has since been revised. The development is located south of Hwy. 610, along both sides of Zane Avenue (east to Regent, west to Hampshire). The first phase includes development of the area east of Zane Avenue and would be a business park, with retail constructed on the NW corner of Zane Avenue and 93rd.

This parkland dedication is a part of the Seed Investment Co. who donated property for Edinburgh Golf Course and will exhaust what they have on the books for credits. It amounts of a park dedication of .3 acres in land or \$48,000 in cash. This evening Commissioners will determine whether the park dedication requirement should go for land or cash. Staff recommends accepting cash.

Motion, James Brekke; Second, Brian Rogers, to accept cash in lieu of land for phase one of the Astra Village Development. Motion approved.

8. OTHER ITEMS BY COMMISSION

New Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission Members

Co-Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt, stated several people of quality have applied for the open seats on the Recreation & Parks Advisory Commission and followed with City Council appointment of Jim Driste and Jeanne Qualley. Both Commissioners will begin their new positions April 1, 2008.

Outgoing Recreation & Parks Advisory Commissioner Members

Director, Jon Oyanagi, recognized and congratulated outgoing Commissioner, Maria Boeder, for her service to the city as a Recreation & Parks Advisory Commissioner stating she has brought a great deal to the Commission. Maria stated she will miss serving on the RPAC, has learned a great deal, and has enjoyed the camaraderie amongst the group. Maria thanked the Commissioners for the opportunity to serve and stated this is a good time for her to transition into spending more time with her family.

◆ Silver Sneakers

Director, Jon Oyanagi, stated staff has been met with Healthways, the parent company operating the Silver Sneaks program. Silver Sneakers offers members free access to more than 2,500 health facilities and allows members to take signature exercise programs. Members are Medicare-eligible people that are within the appropriate Humana or Medica plans. Brooklyn Park Recreation and Parks already utilizes instructors that are certified through the Silver Sneakers program and the classes would bring in additional participants to these and other programs. The Community Activity Center would be the main location and would include the fitness classes, walking track, weight room, and future fitness room which would be available to Silver Sneaker members free of charge. In return, Silver Sneakers would provide the department with chairs, exercise equipment, membership registration hardware, training, and promotion. In addition, they would provide \$3.00 per member visit up to \$30.00 per month.

Jon stated this proposal and contract will be presented to the City Council for discussion and approval at their Monday, April 7, 2008 meeting.

◆ MRPA Board and Symposium

Director, Jon Oyanagi, handed out a flyer for the MRPA Board and Symposium scheduled for April 22, 6:30 – 9 p.m. at the Roseville Skating Center. Jon stated the Symposium would provide helpful information on how boards and commissions work. Registration is due by April 15 and Jon asked those Commissioners who would like to attend to contact him and the Department would cover the cost to attend. Commissioner, Brian Rogers, indicated he would like to attend.

◆ Tater Daze

Vice Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt, stated the next Tater Daze meeting will be held on April 1 and invited Commissioners to attend if they are interested in volunteering for this annual event.

◆ Summer Recreation Brochure

Recreation Services Manager, Jan Ficken, asked Commissioners to watch for their new summer Recreation Brochure to be arriving in mailboxes over the next few days. Watch for the new brochure design, "Get Up & Go".

9. ADJOURNMENT

Motion, Mark Hanna; Second, Jim Hubert, to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.