

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 2009  
RECREATION & PARKS ADVISORY COMMISSION

A publicized neighborhood meeting was held beginning at 6:30 p.m. On display were four playground equipment choices for Bass Creek Park. Those in attendance voted on their top three choices and marked the displays accordingly.

Attendees:

Lloyd, Tessman, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Debra Welch, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Chad Riesohl, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Sarah Riesohl, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Kim Schulte, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Karin Pudenz, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Greg Spoden, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Jeanette Meyer, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Terry Gearin, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Chris Damsgard, Brooklyn Park Resident  
Lacinda Damsgard, Brooklyn Park Resident

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

Commission Members present:

Ashley Anderson, Student Representative  
James Brekke, At-Large  
Matthew Cooklock, At-Large  
Reubenna Cooley, At-Large  
James Driste, At-Large  
Deborah Everson, At-Large  
Dean Heng, City Council Liaison  
Rob Jacobs, At-Large  
John Holm, Planning Commission Liaison  
Seyon Nyanwleh, At-Large  
Jeanne Qualley, At-Large  
Andrew Reinhardt, At-Large  
Brian Rogers, At-Large  
Kimberley Sundry, At-Large

Commission Members absent:

Paul Hartzell, At-Large

Staff Members present:

Jon Oyanagi, Recreation & Parks Director  
Steve Gulenchyn, Program Supervisor  
Pat Busch, Senior Coordinator  
Barb Stewart, Secretary

2. **APPROVAL OF MAY 20, 2009 RPAC AGENDA**

**Motion, Reubenna Cooley; Second, Ashley Anderson, to approve the May 20, 2009 RPAC agenda. Motion unanimously approved.**

3. **APPROVAL OF APRIL 15, 2009 RPAC MEETING MINUTES**

**Motion, Brian Rogers; Second, Rob Jacobs, to approve the April 25, 2009 RPAC minutes. Motion unanimously approved.**

4. **OLD BUSINESS**

 **BASS CREEK PARK PLAYGROUND**

Director, Jon Oyanagi reviewed discussion at the April RPAC meeting wherein Commissioners voted on their top three choices of playground equipment from the various proposals staff received from manufacturers. Tonight 18 residents, including young children, voted on their top three choices in the new playground equipment to be installed in the park. Jon stated there was some discussion questioning the need to replace the equipment at this time. Jon responded replacement of the playground equipment has reached beyond the 15 year CIP plan and was scheduled to be replaced in 2008. In addition, installation of playground equipment in Bass Creek Park is the last item to be rectified in a prior ADA lawsuit. The new playground equipment will be installed using improved materials than those offered in past years and will be placed on a 20 year replacement CIP plan.

Following a tally of those choices, the Burke playground equipment design rated first place. Staff will make a recommendation that Clearwater Recreation, LLC. be awarded their bid for the project to the City Council at a future meeting.

City Councilmember, Dean Heng stated a general comment was made relative to the designs lack of play equipment for little kids. Jon stated playground equipment for little kids is typically installed in the larger community parks. Bass Creek Park is constrained by the area the equipment will be installed in. Staff will contact Clearwater Recreation, LLC. to see if we can negotiate for some 'stand alone' pieces.

Commissioner, Rob Jacobs asked if it is worth considering having the playground equipment designed in colors that would brand them as Brooklyn Park parks. Jon stated staff can look at that but in the past, we have chosen a variety of colors throughout the park system in order to provide different looks to provide something for everybody.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt asked if the swing sets would they be in violation of the ADA guidelines if they remain Jon stated that technically the ADA requires the entire playground be accessible. If the swing set stays, they too would have to be accessible.

Following further discussion and input, the following motion was brought forward:

**Motion, James Driste; Second, Reubenna Cooley, to recommend City Council accept the proposal for the top voted park design (Burke/Clearwater Recreation, LLC.) for replacement of the current playground equipment at Bass Creek Park in order to bring the site up to ADA standards. Motion unanimously approved.**

 **BROOKLYN HISTORICAL SOCIETY LEASE**

Director, Jon Oyanagi, stated that the RPAC Commissioners has previously discussed the possible lease of space at the Community Activity Center (CAC) to the Brooklyn Historical Society (BHS) at their April 15 meeting. Following that discussion, the proposed lease was brought to the City Council at their April 27 meeting for further discussion. A minor technical change to the lease was suggested; staff made that change and the City Council Members approved the final lease at their May 4 meeting. The BHS staff will begin moving into their new quarters at the end of June and take official possession on July 1. The agreed upon rental fee is \$700 per month and both staffs of the Recreation & Parks Department and BHS are excited about this new partnership and pooling of resources.

### **TENNIS COURT MASTER PLAN**

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated the RPAC Commissioners have previously made a motion to remove the tennis courts at both Norwood and Lakeland parks and discussed the idea of creating a Tennis Court Master plan. Included in Commissioner and staff packets is a copy of the city's tennis court location map. Tonight's discussion will move forward in establishing greater definition in creating that plan and to assist with that, Jon referenced the City of St. Paul Parks and Recreation vision plan. Their plan portrays an idea of how they are approaching facilities and services throughout different areas of St. Paul and can be used as a guideline in establishing recreation facility standards in Brooklyn Park. Jon suggested starting with a tennis courts master plan and then move on to other facilities, standards, rationale, etc.

Commissioner, Jeanne Qualley stated St. Paul has a good master plan document that appears can be easily adjusted as the city changes demographics, boundaries, etc.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt stated St. Paul trends are following along the same lines as Brooklyn Park in that they depict a decline in baseball, a need for additional soccer fields, dog parks and ideally each residence should have reasonable access to a park, basketball court, tennis court, etc. It is interesting that their plan displays the industry trends and outlines some of the same items that the RPAC has discussed.

Commissioner, Deborah Everson asked how St. Paul arrived at their plan. Jon stated a task forced developed the plan.

Commissioner, Matthew Cooklock asked what the plan are in place to remove the tennis courts at Noorwood Park noting that it would be beneficial to install a full basketball court in its place. The existing half court is in bad shape and he has seen kids trying to use the court. Jon stated the tennis court is considered a hazard and would be removed. It would be very helpful for staff to go through all of the city's parks and develop a master plan for each.

Commissioner, Kimberly Sundy stated the St. Paul plan reveals good access to parks for their residents. It is an easy report to review and immediately shows where there are too many or too little amenities within their city. Kim noted the plan does not show the amount of usage in each park; light, moderate or heavy. That criteria should be included in Brooklyn Park's master plan. Jon stated a survey of park usage can be obtained in the same manner it is done on the regional park trails.

Commissioner, Rob Jacobs stated one thing missing from the report is a need for sound barriers. For example, there would be a need to install a sound wall along Hwy. 694. Although Rob doesn't know the process to install one and it is not a responsibility of the Recreation & Parks Department, it is important to ask that question when developing a master plan.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked how staff determines what is needed in any one park. Jon stated it is not a calculated formula and depends upon what the need is. The need can be determined via a direct request, increased demand on fields, input from residents, organizations, volunteers, etc. Once determined, staff presents a case for the need and carries that forward to the City Council along with solutions that are discussed and debated. When potential changes to a park may make an impact to residents surrounding it, staff schedules a meeting and notifies those residents who may be impacted. A perfect example of that is with the recent change in Bass Creek Park wherein postcards notifying residents of tonight's meeting were sent out to residents surrounding the park. It is then the resident's choice whether to attend the meeting or not.

Commissioner, Brian Rogers supported the idea of holding neighborhood meetings for each park that is included in the master plan. Jon stated neighborhood meetings could be incorporated as a part of the process in developing individual park master plans. For example, when staff creates standards, staff could hold a community meeting and ask people who are interested in tennis courts to attend and discuss what they would like to see in parks.

Councilmember, Dean Heng stated when developing a master plan staff should also include school tennis courts. Jon agreed stating school ballfields should be included also and are indicated on the map provided.

Following further discussion and input from Commissioners and staff, Jon stated staff will begin gathering information and putting a plan of action together to bring back to the RPAC at a future meeting.

## 5. **NEW BUSINESS**

### RECREATION – SUMMER PREVIEW

Program Supervisor, Steve Gulenchyn and Senior Coordinator, Pat Busch provided Commissioners with a summer recreation preview. Staff is in the preparation phase for summer programs which is the busiest time of year for the department. The following bullet areas were highlighted:

- The department maintains over a 90% retention rate in returning staff. This is unheard of in the industry and says a lot about our staff mentoring and guiding skills. A great example is State Representative Linda Scheid who returns each summer to work in the Recreation & Parks Department.
- Meeting the changing demographics by hiring over 25% diverse staff.
- Implemented a new Leaders in Training program for youth ages 13-15 years who have shown a passion to lead. This new program is specific and has a nominal fee attached to it.
- Five summer camp opportunities will be held this summer: Camp Zanewood, Camp Willowstone, Camp Northwoods, Camp Hamilton and Camp Fridays.
- Two new camps will be held at the end of the summer: The Great Outdoors (at Coon Rapids Dam held in cooperation with Three Rivers Park District) and One Last Blast (held at several parks throughout Brooklyn Park).
- Lil Critter Camp and Safety Camp will be held once again this summer.
- Youth Sports Programs offered this summer includes opportunities for Preschool (ages 3-5: Tiny Tot Sports, Kids in Motion, Gymnastics and Pee Wee Sports); All Star

Sports (ages 6-8: Baseball and Soccer); Superstars Intramural (ages 9-12: Basketball & Soccer); Gymnastics (ages 5-14); Tennis (ages 5-adult); Sport Camps (ages 5-18); and Youth Athletic Associations (ages 5-19).

- Swim lessons for beginners through adults will be held at Jackson Pool this summer. The Recreation & Parks Swim program stands up to any other swim programs throughout the Twin Cities and is offered at a reasonable cost. Swim Coordinator, Jenny Kordon does an awesome job in heading up this program.
- Adult Sports offered this summer include Softball, Hockey Leagues/Open Hockey, Co-Rec Soccer, Baseball, Tennis, Wiffle Ball, and Ultimate Frisbee.
- Senior Coordinator, Pat Busch encouraged Commissioners to take a Step to it Challenge bag following the meeting. This is the second year for the program with 11 cities participating. Participants register online at [www.steptoit.org](http://www.steptoit.org) and record their pedometer steps over a four week period, May 18 – June 14. The Twins are sponsoring the program this year and the winners will receive tickets to their games. Brooklyn Park was the winner amongst five cities last year.
- Concerts - Several concerts will be held in the city parks over the summer including Brookdale Park in conjunction with the Police Community Officers, Bluegrass Band, Teddy Bear Band, Community Band, Rock'N on the River, The Metros, Edgewater 8, African Gospel Safari, Classic Car Show and Concert, Tribute to Elvis, Bob & the Beachcombers, Music that Tickles, and Ms. Catherine.
- National Night Out has changed its format this year replacing their typical event at Noble Sports Park with a movie at Central Park on Saturday evening. Saturday evening and Sunday afternoon a Classic Car Show and Concert with the AM Transistors will be held.
- Silver Sneakers program kicked off last August. This national program is growing in popularity with seniors and we have 50 seniors registered through Medica or Humana. New this year beginning in June is a pilot program, CardioFit targeted towards people with high mobility. This program runs for 12 weeks and staff will perform both a pre and post testing on participants and analyze the final results.
- Programming for the Boomers (ages 50-65) is still evolving. Pat reported that she is working with advisory groups to create more enticing and physically active programs and trips to meet their needs.
- The Zanewood Recreation Center (ZRC) has hired a new Coordinator, Michelle Margo. Michelle is diligently working to make known to the area residents that the ZRC is a high quality community center located right within their community. Staff anticipates that it will take a couple of years to fully develop and see the results of the ZRC.

Following the presentation, Steve opened the floor to discussion.

Commissioner, Kimberley Sundy asked if the camp registrations are down due to the economy. Steve stated the summer camps are very popular and although registrations are slightly down as anticipated, registration for them is steady. Afternoon camps are filling quickly. Staff will have a better idea of registration numbers over the next two weeks.

Planning Commission Liaison, John Holm asked if we offer Frisbee golf. Director, Jon Oyanagi responded that Frisbee golf is very popular at both Orchard Trail and Central parks.

City Council Liaison, Dean Heng asked if staff has considered that parks may be the one area selected for reductions via budget cuts. Steve responded that programs offered are always based upon demand. Staff is analyzing, preparing and prioritizing programs keeping in mind

that the economy is slow right now and designing programs that will hold steady until the economy picks back up. Steve stated a positive is that with the current economy, people are choosing to stay close to home and when we look at numbers, the reality is that the numbers are increasing not dwindling. As participants are choosing to spend their dollars more wisely, we are confident this will continue to be the trend. Jon stated while department staff has been proactive in analyzing the economy and it's possible impact on programs, it makes no sense to cut programs that are covering their costs. Last year the department developed and introduced to the City Council a revenue philosophy that includes a three-tiered concept which will help in selection if program cuts become necessary.

#### PARK PROJECTS UPDATE

Director, Jon Oyanagi gave an update of the city's park projects stating that the city's capital fund is dwindling and projects will be put on hold.

- The bathroom installation at Central Park is anticipated to be completed and opened this upcoming weekend. The building will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and will automatically lock at that time.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked what the cost was to complete the bathroom. Jon stated cost for the bathroom project was part of a bigger project. Bids for the entire project came in lower than projected.

- The new dog park opened at Brookdale Park.
- Fencing be removed from the new Bethany Russian Church development and installed at the Community Garden located at Eidem Homestead to be used as a deer fence protecting the gardens. Part of the fence has already been delivered to the farm.
- Reconstruction of 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue from Winnetka and Brittany avenues will impact summer programming at Northwoods Park. This project will connect two lots and provide over 40 parking stalls. We still have the ability to get into the parking lot. Cost for the lots is \$30,000 and will be paid out of the OSLAD fund.

Commissioner, Seyon Nyanwleh asked if all parks have portable restrooms and do picnic users pay for those restrooms. Jon stated there should be at least one portable restroom in all of the parks where activities are scheduled.

#### JOINT GOAL-SETTING WITH CITY COUNCIL

Director, Jon Oyanagi reminded Commissioners that the annual Joint Goal-Setting Meeting with City Council will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, June 1 in the City Hall Council Chambers. All Commissioners are encouraged to attend this important meeting where goals are set by both Commissioners and City Council members. Commissioners Brian Rogers, Andrew Reinhardt, Matthew Cooklock, Seyon Nyanwleh and Reubenna Cooley stated they will be attending the meeting. Jon asked if other Commissioners wish to attend to please notify him directly. Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt asked Commissioners to read through the 2008 goals and forward ideas and changes for 2009 to him via email prior to the June 1 meeting.

#### ARTIFICIAL TURF

Director, Jon Oyanagi stated staff has begun initial discussions with North Hennepin Community College (NHCC) and Brooklyn Park Athletic Association (BPAA) as potential

partners to install an artificial turf within the City of Brooklyn Park. The location preference for NHCC is the existing softball fields on West Broadway. Discussion of funding opportunities available have begun including the National Football League grant (approximately \$200,000); the USA Soccer Program (approximately \$200,000); and Hennepin County will be granting capital funding through the sales tax funding the Twin's new stadium (approximately \$190,000). If all three grants were awarded it would bring in \$590,000 towards the \$1 million cost to install an artificial turf. The City's CIP does include installation of artificial turf in 2012 but the money needs to be in the OSLAD fund in order to complete it. Jon stated the main benefit in installing artificial turf versus natural turf is that artificial turf can be scheduled and played on 24 hours a day every day of the year if need be. Natural turf is solely dependent upon weather conditions and cannot be used during inclement weather. Jon encouraged Commissioners to go online and research artificial turf versus natural turf.

Commissioner, Deborah Everson asked if any stimulus money would be going towards this project. Jon stated that yes, some of it will indirectly. Staff is pursuing some possible energy efficiency funding, make improvements to the building and wrap the entire building in an energy pod.

Commissioner, Kimberley Sundy asked what the environmental impact is when installing artificial turf. Jon stated there is no impact to the environment although there is the issue of disposing of the turf after its lifespan has been met.

Planning Commission Liaison, John Holm asked if artificial turf is safe and what it is installed on. Jon stated it is typically installed on a multi-layered base and ground up tire or sand is used as in-fill within the actual turf. There are differing opinions within the industry on whether it is safe or not.

Chairperson, Andrew Reinhardt stated although he supports City staff pursuing these projects, he is concerned that due to the downturn in economy the general public and City Council may view this particular project as a luxury item. The schools or a private party installing them is one thing while the city contributing towards installing one is another. In addition public interest groups will rally asking how we can afford to install an artificial turf when we are laying off City staff. Andrew understood this is just a preliminary discussion and suggested staff contact the YMCA as a possible partner in this project. Jon stated we are fortunate that the school system has already gone through a similar battle. Jon will keep the RPAC updated as this project continues.

## 6. OTHER ITEMS

### Tater Daze

City Council Liaison, Dean Heng stated the Tater Daze board is looking for volunteers and encouraged those interested to contact him directly. There is a kick off Auto Show event scheduled for Saturday, June 13 at the old Knox site in Brooklyn Park. Volunteers are needed for this event.

### Village Creek Grand Opening

Director, Jon Oyanagi reminded Commissioners that the Village Creek Grand Opening will be held at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday June 17, on Zane just south of Brooklyn Blvd. Following the Grand Opening, the regularly scheduled RPAC meeting will be held at the Zanewood

Recreation Center (ZRC) beginning at 7:00 p.m. The ZRC is located at 7100 Zane Avenue North.

 **Upcoming RPAC Meetings**

Director, Jon Oyanagi reminded Commissioners that the annual Parks Tour is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15. The tour bus will depart from the CAC at 6:30 p.m. The August RPAC meeting will not be held as typically summer vacation schedules conflict with the meeting date.

 **Dog Park**

Commissioner, Brian Rogers asked if staff has received any feedback on the new dog park. Commissioner, James Brekke stated he has noticed less dogs walking on the park trails since the new dog park opened.

**7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion, James Driste; Second, Seyon Nyanwleh, to adjourn. Motion unanimously approved.**