

**OSSEO PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING
April 5, 2016**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Osseo Parks & Recreation Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Kerstin Schulz at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 5, 2016.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Committee members Dee Bonn, Brittney Quant, Kerstin Schulz, Larry Stelmach, Alden Webster, and Anne Zelenak.

Absent: Sloan Wallgren.

Others present: Jennifer DeJournett, Ed Columbus, Joan Columbus, Public Works Supervisor Rick Haas, City Planner Nancy Smebak Abts.

3. APPROVE AGENDA

A motion was made by Anne Zelenak, seconded by Brittney Quant, to approve the meeting's agenda as written. The motion passed 6-0.

4. APPROVE MINUTES

A motion was made by Dee Bonn, seconded by Alden Webster, to approve the March 10, 2016 meeting minutes as written. The motion passed 6-0.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were offered.

6. SPECIAL BUSINESS

The Committee welcomed a presentation from Jennifer DeJournett, Three Rivers Park District Commissioner representing Maple Grove, Brooklyn Park, Osseo, Dayton, and Champlin. The presentation provided background information on the entire Park District as well as two recent projects in Osseo's vicinity. The District governs parks and trails with a model that is similar to a municipal government.

Facility types in the Three Rivers Park District include Park Reserves, which are required to maintain 80% of their land in an undeveloped state, and Regional Parks, which are intended to attract residents from more than one city. Special Recreation Facilities offer specific educational and recreational opportunities. Trails provide connections between and within facilities, and can provide more access to Three Rivers facilities to residents of inner-ring suburbs. As trails are expanded, the District works with cities to determine the best strategies to maintain facilities.

A "Parks on the Go" van provides outreach to communities far from some of the District's larger parks.

The Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park recently received a new master plan, emphasizing year round operations, expanding educational opportunities, = and introducing parks to those who are new to Minnesota and its parks and outdoor recreation facilities. Planning emphasized extensive community outreach. The park may be renamed to clarify its location.

The Mississippi River Regional Trail is another project, coinciding with National Parks System plans for the area and cities' comprehensive plan updates.

Elm Creek Park Reserve is one of the largest facilities in the District, located in Maple Grove, Brooklyn Park, and Dayton. A new play area has recently opened there. The park's winter recreation area and Eastman Nature Center are important features. The Committee will be informed as Elm Creek Park Reserve's master plan is updated in coming years. Partnerships with other organizations and adaptive recreation are other features of the District.

Larry Stelmach asked about the timeline for improvements at the Coon Rapids Dam Park and details about trail expansion. Commissioner DeJournett described funding strategies that will help to enact the improvements in an expedient fashion, compared to what might otherwise be a protracted timeline, and elaborated on the advantages of coordinating trail plans with the National Park Service and cities.

Dee Bonn asked for more information on the "Parks on the Go" van. Commissioner DeJournett said that educational programs vary and can include animals from various facilities. The van visits community festivals, classes, assisted living facilities, and other groups at no charge. It has been well received.

Chair Schulz asked about the proposed Crystal Lake Regional Trail extension that will pass through Osseo. Commissioner DeJournett offered to follow up with more information on those plans. Hennepin County recently completed a regional trail assessment that identified trail gaps. Commissioner DeJournett discussed a volunteer trail walker program that provides benefits to participants.

7. OLD BUSINESS

A. NONPROFIT VENDORS & FEEDBACK FOR MOVIES & MUSIC IN THE PARK

Nancy Abts noted that the Committee had discussed allowing nonprofit concession vendors at the summer events and had expressed interest in soliciting feedback from attendees, but had not identified any strategies or specific people responsible for these tasks.

Larry Stelmach recommended a two-body group make a recommendation of the schedule, and distribute the proposal to group members via email before forwarding a recommendation to Council. Dee Bonn asked if the Committee should place an ad in the paper. Nancy Abts noted that there would be limited availability for vendor groups. Dee was concerned that no groups would be interested, and suggested the concessions be limited to one event per month. She advocated letting groups approach the Committee with requests to sell concessions. Larry Stelmach thought that subcommittee members could contact likely groups and then make a recommendation to Council to approve the vendors.

The Committee has the ability to make recommendations for approximately \$1,400 unallocated "Other Recreation" funds. Anne Zelenak recommended not paying for any advertising, and then volunteered to assist staff with recruiting volunteer groups.

Kerstin Schulz asked for clarification on what types of feedback volunteers would ask for from event attendees. Nancy responded that many strategies could work, and the volunteers selected to work on this could figure out the best approach. Anne Zelenak suggested committee members divide responsibility for actually attending events. Sloan Wallgren might be willing to help.

Larry Stelmach recommended providing an email address where attendees could submit feedback, identified on a sign. An emcee could also announce opportunities for feedback.

B. HIRING SUMMER RECREATION LEADERS

Nancy Abts outlined a process for hiring summer recreation leader, involving Committee members in initial review of applications and on an interview panel, and City Council approving the program leaders' hire. Both members of the Council HR Committee would need to be present on the interview panel. Kerstin Schulz volunteered to be involved in the initial vetting and serve on the interview panel. Dee Bonn and Brittney Quant also agreed to assist with vetting initial applicants.

C. DONATIONS

A donation request was submitted to the Osseo Lions, and plans were in place to approach the American Legion with a request. Kerstin Schulz remarked that she had shared information about the donation opportunities with Osseo businesses. Nancy Abts noted that no specific form was needed for donations, and a schedule of events including information about donations would be included in the upcoming utility mailings. Alden Webster noted that he had been approached by folks interested in donating to various causes. Information could be published in the newspaper. Donors who support specific causes can be recognized for their support.

Anne Zelenak agreed to submit a donation request to the Osseo Fire Relief Association. Larry Stelmach asked why staff did not submit those requests. Nancy Abts agreed that complex grant applications were more appropriately handled by staff, but that simple donation requests could be handled by willing volunteers, if the volunteers would like to have a hand in soliciting donations. She suggested that donors may be more sympathetic to requests from Osseo community members, rather than City staff who are being paid to ask them for money. (58:52)

8. NEW BUSINESS

A. CENTRAL AVENUE LANDSCAPING

Rick Hass explained that the flowers along Central Avenue and in Boerboom Park have been maintained by Designing Nature in the recent past. The firm provided an estimate to the city detailing the total hours spent on maintaining the plants and the plant quantities. He then shared this quote, with prices removed, with other landscaping firms to determine what others would charge for the same task. Lyndes Greenhouse submitted a quote specifying fewer flowers and a higher hourly rate than Designing Nature. Although Lyndes Greenhouse bid was lower overall, staff recommended awarding the contract to Designing Nature as their quote provided more flowers, and in the instance that Lyndes required more time for the project, the charges could quickly increase.

Larry Stelmach noted that Designing Nature had split their quote between different areas of the city. Rick noted that the Designing Nature's quote was similar to what was spent last

year. Lyndes Greenhouse based their numbers of lower plants on the total square footage of the beds. The maintenance company has been asked to maintain plants, clean up beds, and trim shrubs. Larry Stelmach remarked that it would be nice to have the firms on hand to answer questions and asked that they be available for a future Council meeting.

Rick Hass discussed concerns about Lyndes exceeding their estimated hours. The documents provided were estimates, not bids, so the company would not be held to a maximum number of hours. Because it is important to have the plantings in good condition throughout the season, including during Lions Roar, setting a maximum number of hours in advance is not advised in case an issue comes up.

Alden Webster made a motion, seconded by Brittney Quant, to recommend the Osseo City Council award the contract to Designing Nature. The motion passed, 6-0.

B. PARKS EVALUATION EXERCISE

Nancy Abts summarized a Parks Evaluation Exercise first discussed at the Committee's January meeting. The information collected will help direct an RFP for future park planning. General observations included that Sipe Park may seem to be underused; that many parks, in Osseo and beyond, may be underused in winter and over-used in summer; older park goers may prefer less active recreation opportunities. She asked the committee to discuss the evaluation and acknowledged that a less formal work session meeting might be more appropriate for future discussions.

Larry Stelmach noted that Three Rivers Parks plan their improvements 15-20 years in advance. He does not think that "quiet" portions of the park would necessarily serve Osseo's residents in the future. A lot of couples are buying houses in Osseo, and changes to parks should reflect the future presentation.

Alden Webster noted that some people may not visit parks if they seem crowded, but that heavy use of the parks is also desirable. Winter recreation activities like skating cannot always take place if the weather is mild, he acknowledged.

Anne Zelenak appreciated the approach taken by Three Rivers Parks District when planning Coon Rapids Dam Park. Community meetings are important. Having these meetings before a work session would be helpful. Kerstin Schulz noted that these "meetings" could also take place at existing events. Larry Stelmach said that the summer programs may also provide information for planning Boerboom Park.

C. ADOPT-A-PARK

Nancy Abts noted that Osseo volunteers have an opportunity to adopt a park and remove litter and/or weeds from the area, though not many residents have recently participated in such a program. The City Clerk asked the Committee to consider strategies for encouraging residents to adopt a park. The opportunity is listed on the city's website and is promoted in the Osseo Outlook newsletter, and will be posted on Social Media.

Committee members discussed "Adopted By" signs to recognize volunteers taking care of various parts of town. Perhaps the unallocated \$1,400 "Other Recreation" funding could cover the costs of some of these signs. This would provide an incentive for volunteering. An enclosure in the utility bills could also promote the opportunity. Alden Webster noted that he thought people were already volunteering to clean up the parks.

D. COMMUNITY CENTER RENTAL POLICY

The Committee suggested several ideas for improving rentals at the Community Center at its January meeting. Nancy Abts reminded the Committee of questions about food service, rental fees, and monitoring use of the facility. Committee members submitted ideas for different groups that could use the Center. Nancy said that she thought the uses proposed by Committee members fit well within the existing policy and rental classifications.

She stated that during March, the Center was used only about 50% of the time it was available. Changing the “Exclusive Caterer” requirement for weekend rentals, adding security cameras, and separating access to the Community Center from the City Hall could allow the center to be used more frequently on weekends. Liability for events held in the center is currently covered under the city’s insurance policy, so supplemental event insurance, like the TULIP insurance provided through League of Minnesota Cities is likely not necessary unless alcohol service is allowed.

Nancy suggested that users of the center be most responsible for paying the costs of maintaining the center. In March, the majority of rental groups did not pay a rental fee. From April 2015 through March 2016, all rental fees totaled just over \$1,000 while the cost of providing the center was somewhere around \$44,000. She suggested that the City Council be responsible for approving free use of the Community Center. Based on cost calculations, she presented an increase of \$10 to the base rental fee. A weekend rental fee could help recoup the cost of cameras and other “weekend” infrastructure. Strengthening enforcement of damage deposit collection.

Kerstin Schulz agreed that removing the Exclusive Caterers was an appropriate approach. The system had not provided the expected outcomes. Approved caterers could still be accommodated for food service. Anne Zelenak asked for a list of who had used the center over the past year, and Nancy agreed to provide one. Increasing fees might not improve utilization. Kerstin also noted that users might be allowed to make a reservation for regular use without having to pay all fees upfront. Dee Bonn said that allowing more caterers to use the center might increase use. Larry Stelmach liked the idea of security cameras.

More information will be provided, and the topic will be considered at a future meeting.

E. RESCHEDULE JULY MEETING

Dee Bonn made a motion to reschedule the July meeting to Thursday, July 14. The motion was seconded by Alden Webster and passed 6-0.

9. ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

10. STAFF & COMMITTEE MEMBER REPORTS

Nancy Abts reported that she attended a valuable American Planning Association webinar on parks that transform cities. She will share a link to the presentation with Committee members if it is made available online. The suggestions on thinking about the broad parks and trail system and considering experiences of parks rather than specific facilities were instructive.

Dee Bonn said the senior fitness program was still going strong and recently had its best day ever.

Larry Stelmach said that he had met residents of the Five Central Apartments who were looking for a house to buy in Osseo and was pleased that the new development had brought potential homebuyers to the city.

Kerstin Schulz said that the form for the May 14 craft and vendor fair would be available online. The event was looking to meet or increase last year's participation level of 22 vendors.

Alden Webster encouraged donations to the city.

11. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made Alden Webster, seconded by Brittney Quant, to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. The motion carried 7-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Smebak Abts
City Planner