

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings
Of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission
Wednesday, October 10, 2018**

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Sethre called the October 10, 2018 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Kevin Sethre; Vice Chair Kathryn Bauer; Commissioners: Deb Tix, Nikki Barker, Steve Cook, and Mark Freer.

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson, Recreation Superintendent Tracy Petersen, and Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda.

Absent: Commissioners Willie Krech, Al Eiden, and Mary Gerhardt; Recording Clerk Sheri Yourczek

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Overview of Recreation Program – Tracy Petersen

Recreation Superintendent Tracy Petersen gave a quick overview on the following key areas in Recreation:

- Facilities:
 - North Valley Disc Golf Course: Finishing their fourth year with the management company. This course has a pay to play system, which the management company runs. Users pay either a daily admission or buy an annual pass. The revenue accrual is about \$5,500 this year. They went from a 70/30 split back to a 50/50 split.
 - Picnic Shelters: 85 rentals with South Valley Park and Rich Valley Park being the top picks for those groups, but they did see an uptick with Swing Bridge Park. She stated that one of the issues they have noticed is that some groups are booking parties saying they have 50 people and ending up with 150 or 200. She commented that this is something they will have to keep an eye on in the coming years. Rates were increased significantly last year, but will be kept constant for 2019.
 - Rich Valley Athletic Complex: In 2018 it was used by the Baseball, Softball, and Soccer Associations. Football was played at Skyview Park. They have about 35-40 regular users of the facility using it for soccer, baseball, or softball. They hosted 11 youth tournaments. They made small improvements to the facility including:
 - o Bathroom and Concession stand floors were redone.
 - o Protective backstop fencing was added on all of the fields.
- She commended the Park Staff saying that they get compliments from people who come from out of town or out of State and enjoy the conditions of the fields.
- She stated that they are operating in their second year without concessions. They did not receive any negative feedback. She commented that they are continuing to let those that are running the tournaments have concessions if they want to, and can do those as a Fundraiser, which has worked out really well.
- Mountain Bike Course: They continue to work with their partner group, Minnesota Off-Road Cyclists. This year they assisted in getting signage and a few new trail obstacles. She commented that they have a memorandum of understanding with them as they assist with trail maintenance when needed. This partnership makes sure the trails are cleared and safe. She stated that this is the site they use for the National Trails Day Event and the Harmon Farms Trail Run. It is also open to the public for walking or biking.
- She commented that the Community Gardens have 28 plots at this site. Next year they will be raising the rates up to \$5.00. This is the first time they have raised the rates since the inception of

the gardens in 2011. They have made some small improvements and feel that the \$5.00 increase is warranted for the plot.

- Community Center:
 - Shortened turf season due to the west rink arena project. They will resume back with the indoor turf next spring. They are trying to promote using it in the summer and the fall.
 - Aquatics. Remodeled the Water Park in 2018 which has provided an uptick in both daily admissions and Birthday Parties. They will continue to try to grow and build those as they are outgrowing some of their spaces for Birthday Parties.
 - Position Replacement. They hired a Communications Specialist. She stated that Stephanie will be coming to a future meeting to introduce herself. She will be working to promote Parks and Recreation through Social Media, doing all of their internal documents such as Brochures, City Newsletter, and the Website. She will also be assisting the new Communications Manager with other promotional items for the City.
 - Pickleball. This has shown continued growth at the Community Center. In two years, they have gone from three days a week and one level of play, to six days a week and two levels of play.
 - Innovative Programming. Continue to try to find good uses for the space at the Community Center. They held Member Appreciation events this week and did their first ever indoor Stand Up Paddleboarding this fall.
 - Held over 50 High School Swimming and Hockey meets and games. This is the time of year for those events.
 - Looking into how they can attract more families and people that they are not reaching at the Community Center. The Active Adults has seen an uptick, but they need to try to reach other demographics.
 - Active Adults. Continue to try to develop services and programs. In 2019 they will be enhancing the newsletter that goes out for the group. They hope to broaden the base that it is delivered to and increase programming with that.
 - Continue to partner with other Communities such as West St. Paul, Burnsville, South St. Paul, and Mendota Heights on programs.
 - Continue to support the Senior Club's activities. This group is separate from the Park and Recreation Program.
- Sponsorships, Partnerships, and Grants: They will be working on a partnership program for the active adult program. This will help them with sponsoring events and enhance marketing opportunity.
 - Work with 75-100 agencies with the Park and Recreation programs which could be anything from sports programming to a partnership with Dakota County on a class. They utilize other agencies to help provide services that they may not be able to do in-house.
 - In 2018 they took in \$13,000 in cash sponsorships and another \$10,000 with in-kind services. Those support a lot of their free family events such as Touch a Truck, the Penny Carnival, Terrific Tuesdays, and Inver Grove Heights Days.
 - In 2018 they had two Grants, the MN Twins Coaching Grant, which helped with the Little Spartan Program and a Walk with Ease Training Grant which provided training to the Fitness Staff for the Walk with Ease class.
- Trends in Recreation:
 - Youth Sports: They are keeping an eye on this as the numbers here are still flat and still declining.
 - Family Events: These remain strong. They are seeing a trend for more passive, non-structured activities such as painting classes, walking, birdwatching, etc. Those are held more in the parks, which uses our park amenities.
 - Active Adults: Still working with this population to see what they want and how they can meet their programming demands.
- Community Engagement Events:
 - She stated that they visited the Northwest Area and door knocked the new neighborhoods on 70th Street. They handed out information about the Community Center, Golf Course, and all of the parks. Those that were home received a range token for the Golf Course. They will revisit the

area again when there is further development. Other areas that they took part in are as follows:

- Night to Unite
- Inver Grove Heights Days
- School PTSA Visits
- Moms Groups
- Lawn of the Week program was held over the summer
- Random Acts of Fitness

She stated that they partnered with the Police Department on a program called Safe Summer Nights, which was an outreach program to reach areas that may not be able to take part in their programs or facilities. This year they went to Emerald Hills and Rolling Meadows. They had a great turnout and was a fun night to provide food, games, and activities. They hope to continue this program.

- Social Media and Technology continue to be strong with Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
 - They will continue to use these methods to provide information, programs, and contests, and will use the new Communications Specialist to enhance this further.
 - They are in their third year of having a Cyber Monday deal for personal training. They have had a great turnout with this and is an example of technology that they utilize with their software system.
- Seasonal Staffing: They employ 300 to 400 seasonal staff per year. They have found that finding and retaining quality staff is a challenge so they are continuing to find creative methods and ways to hire and keep them, and provide quality programs.
- New Initiatives in 2019:
 - New Dog Park and Dog Licensing
 - Safe Summer Nights. They hope to continue to reach some of the underserved populations in the Community. They will be working with the Police, Community Education and other Organizations.
 - Use of Facilities: How to better utilize the Parks and space at the Community Center.
 - Internal Master Plan: Where they see programming and services in the next three to five years and how to meet the needs to be proactively planning and not reacting to things that come up.

Commissioner Cook asked what they see as the demographics going forward and what the trend may be.

Superintendent Petersen responded that there is a trend of older adults at the Community Center. Age 50 and up is the group they need to continue to focus on. There are also cycles of youth. She commented that they need to figure out the pockets of age groups they are missing. She commented that at the Community Center they are not seeing the memberships for Households or Families that they used to, but with the renovations and additions coming forward, they hope to find some creative ways to draw more families back in.

Commissioner Cook commented that he appreciated the active older adult piece that he has received about programming. He commented that he is involved in a few classes and groups at the Community Center and has never been approached, but asked if there was a way to be approached about what more they may want, or other interesting things for the age group.

Superintendent Petersen responded that was something they will be working on.

Commissioner Freer commented that programs where food is involved seem to be popular.

Superintendent Petersen agreed. The program they held the evening before had a lot more families involved. She commented that the free swag and free food do help. The posters of members they put around who have been there for 5, 10, and 15 years, was nice to see as well.

Commissioner Barker asked if there has ever been a consideration for a sliding scale fee when it comes to attracting more families, or for low-income families. She commented that the fees were the one thing she has heard about when she has been out in the Community.

Superintendent Petersen responded that they do have a scholarship program for recreation programs. They have not used that for memberships. She commented that as demographics change, those may be things they will have to address and how to make it work. She commented that when they do the fees for 2019 they are on that threshold and need to be cognizant so they can evaluate that in the future.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. You can find information regarding the City of Inver Grove Heights by visiting our Website at: www.invergroveheights.org**
- B. Find us on Facebook at Inver Grove Heights Parks & Recreation**
- C. Follow us on Twitter at @IGHParks**
- D. Next Meeting: November 14, 2018. Regular Meeting 7:00 p.m.**

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

- A. Approval of Agenda**
- B. Approval of Minutes of September 12, 2018**

Motion by Commissioner Tix, second by Commissioner Barker to approve the Consent Agenda.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments this evening.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

None

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Consider Approval of Replacing Seidls Lake Park Playground

Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda stated that this item is for the consideration of approval for replacing Seidls Lake Park Playground. The playground is 23 years old and at or past the life expectancy. He stated that on September 12th he provided a timeline for the playground, which was approved. He received proposals from four different vendors and the vendors were asked to provide the following items:

- A swing bay
- Play structure for ages 2-5
- Play structure for ages 5-12

He stated that proposals were to fit inside a maximum perimeter container of 5,000 square feet, which comes from the average size of what is located in our neighborhood sized playgrounds. An internal ranking committee was formed to review the proposals and St. Croix Recreational Playground scored the highest. He commented that they took the playground proposal to a neighborhood meeting on September 25th where 40+ people showed up to help choose colors, pick different play structures, and ask questions about the Master Plan. He commented that the most common comments heard was wanting a half basketball court, adding a shelter, picnic tables, portable toilets, lights, park rules sign, and also leaving open fields for play. He stated that the equipment and mulch for this project would cost \$75,000 to be taken out of the 444 Fund. They are requesting another \$25,000 for new curb and sidewalk to go around it as the Master Plan shows to relocate the playground that used to exist.

Commissioner Cook asked if that included returning the area that is currently where the playground is to a natural state. He asked what the plans were for that area.

Superintendent Swoboda responded that the playground and the sidewalk/blacktop up to the playground has been removed. It has been filled with dirt and seeded. They left the curb cut in for a possible trail as shown in the Master Plan.

Commissioner Cook asked about the Master Plan and if a trail went in, if there could be a collaboration with South St. Paul. He asked if there were any projections to develop that further.

Superintendent Swoboda responded that there was no timetable yet. He commented that the pond was a concern, but there has been talks with South St. Paul to partner once those issues are resolved.

Parks and Recreation Director Eric Carlson mentioned that there are conversations with the City of South St. Paul to make necessary improvements to the pond so the elevations of the pond are more consistent. At that point, they would look at installing trails along with South St. Paul.

He responded about the Master Plan stating that it comes down to a resource question and being able to have enough resources to be able to implement all of the elements shown in the Master Plan. He commented that they do not have enough resources to be able to institute all of those and address the other things they are working on such as Heritage Village Park and the northwest area. He stated that they are starting with a phased approach and beginning with the playground equipment, connective trails, and a half basketball court.

Superintendent Swoboda stated that anything besides the playground would be brought back before this Commission.

Motion by Commissioner Cook, second by Commissioner Freer to authorize \$100,000 from Fund 444 to cover expenses relating to replacing Seidls Lake Park Playground.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

B. Consider Approval of Heritage Village Park – Phase II Contract with WSB

Parks and Recreation Director Carlson stated that this item is to consider a recommendation going before the City Council to hire WSB to do work for the City in relation to Phase II improvements at Heritage Village Park in 2019. He stated that the City received a few Grants from the State of Minnesota, one for \$1 million dollars, and the other for 1.5 million dollars. Some of the money went towards making improvements to Swing Bridge Park and some to make improvements to Heritage Village Park in relation to the Dog Park, which is currently under construction. He stated that in 2018 the City acquired three of the four remaining properties along Doffing Avenue and that some of the Grant money was used to acquire those. He stated that they have approximately \$1.7 million dollars to utilize in 2019 that has to be used in that year or the Grant expires. They are proposing, from Phase II, to do some grading of the whole area along Doffing Avenue on the properties that they have acquired over the last 20 years. They also plan on building parking lots, building an inclusive playground, lighting, picnic shelters, trails, landscaping, and other park amenities. There would also be a Regional Trail connection made along Doffing Avenue between Heritage Village Park and Swing Bridge Park. He stated that they have received a proposal from WSB in an amount not to exceed \$114,900. He commented that this is a type of Master Plan re-do, as they do not own one of the lots. He commented that all of the design work and the details to be able to put together bid specs, to go out to bid in the Spring, and then construction would be sometime in 2019. He stated that funding in the amount of \$850,000 would come from the Grant from the State of MN, and the other half would come from the 402 Fund and other City funds that have been dedicated or set aside for this project.

Vice Chair Bauer mentioned that this is the same contractor they are working with for the Dog Park.

Chair Sethre asked if this was the same contractor they are using for North Valley and South Valley.

Director Carlson responded that WSB is the same firm that they have been using for all of the iterations of the Master Plan for Heritage Village Park. He stated that the group used to be called Brauer and Associates and they have merged with WSB. They have been using WSB for all of the Dog Park planning and are recommending them for the Phase II Heritage Village Park improvements.

Motion by Commissioner Tix, second by Commissioner Cook to approve a contract with WSB to provide planning, final design, and bidding services for the Phase II development at Heritage Village Park.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Director Carlson suggested they consider having three or four Commissioners serve on a Subcommittee to help guide the planning process for the Phase II improvements. He asked if any were to participate, it would consist of three to five meetings taking place between now and March or April. They would be meeting with Staff and the Consultant to help guide some of the planning.

Chair Sethre commented that Commissioner Eiden has asked to be on that Subcommittee.

Commissioner's Barker, Cook, and Freer offered to be on the Subcommittee.

C. Consider Recommendation for North/South Valley Master Plan

Parks and Recreation Director Carlson stated that the next item is to consider a recommendation for the North/South Valley Master Plan. They have been working on the Master Plan for the area for the last year. Last August they had a pop-up park event where they invited neighbors of the park, and people from the Community, to speak about their vision for North and South Valley Park. He stated that a lot of the amenities within the park now are nearing or past the end of their useful life. It is time to think about replacing them as is, or repurposing them, or replacing them with something else. He stated that they have been gaining feedback from various methods and have developed a written portion of the Master Plan and a graphical representation of some of the more active areas within the Master Plan. He displayed a map of South Valley Park for the Commission to view and highlighted the following items that could take place if the Master Plan were adopted:

- Relocating four of the Disc Golf holes from South Valley Park to North Valley Park.
- Considering the addition of Community Gardens to the area.
- A look-out tower high enough to see up and down the valley.
- Addition of parking stalls between the existing parking lot and the well house.
- Replacing the playground equipment that has reached the end of its useful life. They are discussing the concept of a nature-based playground facility to offer more creativity and involvement with play.
- The building and shelter are also near the end of its useful life. Replacing with something slightly larger, but not too large to have to increase parking demands.
- Addition of a small archery range.
- Look into constructing a natural trail area located around the pond.

He stated that there are a lot of natural trails within South Valley Park itself. They would mark some of them and make sure they are advertised to the public and that they are passable and safe for the public to use.

He proposed the following on North Valley Park:

- Moving the four above mentioned Disc Golf holes to North Valley Park from South Valley Park.

- Tennis Courts. They currently have two sets of four tennis courts. The Master Plan depicts eight pickleball courts. They would re-purpose the tennis courts into pickleball only courts which would serve that interest within the Community.

He stated that there would be no other significant changes to North Valley Park. The softball fields and the Disc Golf Course would stay as is.

Commissioner Cook asked if they were still talking about removing the baseball diamond that is currently there.

Director Carlson responded that South Valley Park has a ball field with a backstop. They would remove that and turn it into a green lawn area to be used for different recreation and fitness programs in the future.

Commissioner Cook mentioned that he noticed some comments about working on the signage so that people driving by can notice the parks are there. He suggested maybe adding a pickleball sign so they know it is there. He finds those to be rather hidden and asked if they will be changing at all.

Director Carlson responded that there are a number of smaller scale items that are a part of the Master Plan, and signage is one of them. As they move different pieces of the Master Plan forward they will look into trying to incorporate other ideas and concepts as well.

Chair Sethre asked Commissioner Freer about the sizes of the Archery Range.

Commissioner Freer responded that there would be a few sizes located out there. Park and Recreation could move/adjust them, but users would not be able to. He stated that most sites have about six lanes.

Chair Sethre asked Parks Superintendent Swoboda a question about the unimproved trails. He commented that some of the elevation in the park is quite steep and asked if they would do those hills.

Parks Superintendent Swoboda responded that they do not do any maintenance on those at all. The neighborhood and users have changed over the years, and that every time he ventures off of the bituminous trails, he finds that a new trail has popped up. He commented that they would only recognize the natural trails they can maintain and get equipment down.

Commissioner Cook asked if there were plans for Community Gardens at the top of the hill.

Director Carlson pointed out the location of the Community Gardens on a map.

Commissioner Cook asked if there would be additional parking down by the pickleball area.

Director Carlson responded that parking along the curb would be a cost-effective way to park more vehicles close to what will be the pickleball courts. He referenced a diagram of another option for pickleball courts and described other options of the layout. He stated that the drawings shown are just concepts at this point, not actually what they are going to do.

Commissioner Barker asked if anything would change with the large sledding hill at South Valley.

Director Carlson responded that nothing would change. It is something they want to continue to provide to residents.

Motion by Commissioner Freer, second by Commissioner Barker to approve the previously discussed and/or presented North/South Valley Master Plan to the City Council for approval.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Director Carlson stated that the City Council will review this at their Work Study Session on Monday, November 5th. They will not be adopting it that evening, they will be reviewing it and may have questions or comments that could come back before this Commission. If the City Council likes it as it is, it would be in front of them at their next regular City Council Meeting to approve it as the Master Plan. They can then move forward with potential changes and improvements to the park.

Chair Sethre commented that there was mention of a meeting in August. He commented that there was another meeting in September where he counted at least 32 in attendance.

Director Carlson agreed that there were about 40 people in attendance over the course of the evening.

D. Consider Recommendation for 2040 Comprehensive Plan – Park & Recreation Section

Parks and Recreation Director Carlson stated that there were two things to address with this item. The first is the 2040 Comprehensive Plan. He stated that the Commission reviewed the Park and Recreation section of the plan back in April. There were discussions about what they wanted to see and not see about that section and those questions were addressed in what they are reviewing this evening. He requested that the Commission recommend to the Council that you are comfortable with what you see with regards to the Park and Recreation section of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

Motion by Commissioner Cook, second by Commissioner Tix to approve the Park and Recreation section of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan as presented.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

Director Carlson stated that there is a second portion of this Agenda item. In June they held a joint meeting with the Planning Commission and spoke about the southwest area park issue. He displayed a map of the location and stated that there is a piece of property in the southwest area that is guided for parks and open space. It is not a City park. He commented that this was not a similar issue to that of River Heights Park, which is a park. He stated that the area they are speaking about is currently not a park but guided to be open space. He showed other park locations that also serve that part of the Community on a map and stated that Southern Lakes is a four-acre park, Broadmoor is a seven-acre park, and Woodlawn is a ten-acre park. The Staff perspective is that there is not a need for more parks in the area and that they believe the land would be best served as single family large lot developed, like most of the surrounding lots. He stated that they are asking the Commission that this be guided for large lot single family development in the future.

Commissioner Freer asked if that would include any type of townhome.

Director Carlson responded that it would be a 2 1/2 to 5-acre lot with a single-family home on it.

Commissioner Freer asked why they have chosen large lot versus having a mix to have higher density in the area.

Director Carlson responded that it is because of the density in the area. It is predominately large lot single family residential that is not currently served by water and sewer with septic system lots. He noted that it is incorrectly recorded as a subdivision.

Commissioner Barker commented that it is to be sold individually.

Director Carlson responded that someone would have to buy all of that area and clean up the Title work. Then they would turn it into single family large lot development with 2 to 5 acre lots. He estimated six to eight lots.

Chair Sethre asked about the property ownership.

Director Carlson responded that some of it is owned by the City, and some is owned by private individuals.

Commissioner Cook asked what portions were privately owned.

Director Carlson pointed out the area on the map and stated that the portion in blue is owned by the City. The darker blue was privately owned with the remainder described in the map legend. He commented that the map was dated 2008 so it may have changed since then.

Chair Sethre asked why the Parks Commission was addressing this issue.

Director Carlson responded that the Planning Commission was interested in the Park Commission's recommendation because of the open space element to what it is currently zoned. They want to bring it to large lot single family zoning.

Commissioner Freer asked if they have any amenities in Woodlawn.

Director Carlson responded that there is a trail around it. It is wooded open space.

Commissioner Barker asked if the parks in the area would still be enough if the area filled up with homes.

Director Carlson responded that in their estimation there are plenty of parks serving the area and they do not need any more.

Motion by Commissioner Tix, second by Vice Chair Bauer to move forward as proposed to recommend to the Planning Commission to designate the subject properties for development however they deem necessary to rezone it or develop it.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

E. Consider Approval of 2019 Park and Recreation Department Fees

Director Carlson stated that every year the Commission reviews the proposed fees for Parks and Recreation for the coming year. This also includes the Community Center and the Golf Course. They highlighted in red those that they are recommending adjustments to as shown in the Commission packets.

Motion by Commissioner Freer, second by Commissioner Cook to accept the 2019 Park and Recreation Department Fees as presented.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:

A. Department Happenings

Chair Sethre commented that this information is posted on the City Website for those interested.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

Commissioner Barker had no comment.

Commissioner Cook had no comment.

Vice Chair Bauer had no comment.

Commissioner Tix had no comment.

Commissioner Freer had no comment.

Chair Sethre commented that November 6th is Election Day and encouraged everyone to go out and Vote.

11. ADJOURN:

Motion by Commissioner Freer, second by Commissioner Barker to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 p.m.

Ayes: 6

Nays: 0 Motion carried.