

**City of Inver Grove Heights Minutes of the Proceedings
Of the Park and Recreation Advisory Commission
City Council Chambers - 8150 Barbara Avenue
Wednesday, September 14, 2022: 7:15 p.m.**

Televised on Town Square Television

1. CALL TO ORDER:

Chair Cook called the September 14, 2022 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission Meeting to order at 7:15 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL:

Present: Chair Steve Cook; Commissioner's: Bill Skar, Ben Stone, Willie Krech, Curt Ellingboe, Sandra Christensen, Elaine Prickel, Kari Miller.

Parks and Recreation Director Adam Lares, Recreation Coordinator Al Vandehoef, Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak, Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda

Absent: Vice Chair Niki Barker (excused)

3. PRESENTATIONS:

A. Active Older Adult Programs Update - Al Vandehoef, Recreation Coordinator

Recreation Coordinator Al Vandehoef presented an update on Active Older Adults:

Over the last year more and more people have started coming back to the Community Center after the Pandemic.

- Today there was a day trip to Chanhassen Dinner Theatre. The trip filled up right away and were able to provide a second Coach bus.
 - All active older adult day trips have been going well, filling up, and waitlisting before the deadline.

Chair Cook asked how people found out if there were extra tickets.

Coordinator Vandehoef replied they are put on a waiting list. Tickets are also sold to other communities that also participate.

- Over the summer there was a 3 day/2-night trip to Lake Geneva in Wisconsin. This was the first time a trip like this was offered. It filled up.

Senior Club. This is a standalone entity the department provides support to at the Community Center. The club has their own Officers.

- It was determined awhile back the city could no longer be a money agent. Staff helped develop a system and have a drop box/lock box for registration. This began September 1st.
- They play cards and bridge.
- Cribbage was changed from Fridays to Tuesdays.

Active Aging Week is coming up the first week in October. There will be activities and fitness classes.

The Healthy Living Fair was held in the spring with a great turnout.

- Held a discussion about volunteering opportunities.

Speakers:

- In partnership with Dakota County about Senior Scams and how to be aware.
- IT (Information Technology) and Mobile Technology help.
 - The City IT Department will be helping with upcoming two additional sessions.

Book Clubs are starting to see more members:

- Meet once a month. Have both Fiction and Non-Fiction clubs.

NEW: Sleeping mats for the homeless.

- This group meets once a month crocheting plastic bags into sleeping mats that are donated to the homeless.
- At their August meeting it was announced that they made and donated their 100th mat.

Reintroducing the Fall Fashion Show.

- This is a mobile boutique that comes and does a fashion show on a Saturday morning.

Pickleball has shown a lot of interest and growth.

- There will be open times at the Community Center.
- North Valley Park has been packed full.

Staff is putting together the Winter/Spring Brochure.

Commissioner Prickel asked if there were numbers on residents/participants taking part in activities.

Coordinator Vandehoef replied with sign in sheets and the club membership information its likely 80% are residents of the city. Senior Club membership has about 150 people. Year-end reports would have better numbers. He felt there were about 200-300 people.

Commissioner Prickel asked if there was capacity to have more people.

Coordinator Vandehoef replied daytime programs have more openings.

Chair Cook requested the definition of an Active Older Adult and if it includes people that are physically active or restricted.

Coordinator Vandehoef replied they see all abilities. Accommodations are made for trips. The age is 55 and older.

Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak shared that Coordinator Vandehoef's time and the program are completely sponsored in part/collaboration with the School District/Community Education.

Coordinator Vandehoef shared that he is working with Barb from the School District regarding having intergenerational things to do with the high school kids. For the senior luncheon he is hoping to get the choir group to sing.

Commissioner Skar mentioned in the past the Musical has invited seniors over to watch the show. There will be a dress rehearsal taking place during the school day. He mentioned they would be happy to invite a group there. He directs the high school program. The date is Wednesday, November 2nd at 1:00 p.m. Barb's email is PierceB@isd199.org.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The October PRAC Meeting has been moved to Wednesday, October 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m.

5. CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2022

Motion by Commissioner Prickel, second by Commissioner Ellingboe, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0 Motion carried.

6. PUBLIC COMMENT:

There were no public comments.

7. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

8. REGULAR AGENDA:

A. Subcommittee discussion and assignments

Chair Cook requested volunteers for Commission subcommittees. The following selected:

- Vice Chair Barker requested Heritage Village Park and the Comprehensive Park Plan.
- Chair Cook chose Heritage Village Park Future Phases and the Comprehensive Park Plan.
- Commissioner Ellingboe chose South Valley Park.
- Commissioner Miller chose South Valley Park and the Northwest Area.
- Commissioner Krech chose Heritage Village Park and South Valley Park.
- Commissioner Prickel chose the Northwest Area.
- Commissioner Christensen chose the Northwest Area and South Valley Park.
- Commissioner Stone chose the Northwest Area and the Comprehensive Park Plan.
- Commissioner Skar chose Heritage Village Park and the Comprehensive Park Plan.

Collectively the Commission felt it was best for subcommittees to meet prior to regularly scheduled Commission meetings.

Parks and Recreation Director Adam Lares mentioned there may be times they may have to work outside of that timeframe.

Commissioner Prickel asked if it was possible to have it via Zoom if needed.

Director Lares responded that could be an option.

B. Tennis court reconstruction discussion

Parks and Recreation Director Lares presented information on the tennis court reconstruction for Skyview Park.

Park Capital Replacement Fund 444:

- Funds assets/park amenities that are larger in stature. For example: Basketball or tennis courts, ice arena, playground equipment, trail repair, parking lots.
- Annually: \$275,000 deposit into the fund.
 - Requesting this be increased by \$25,000 for 2023, 2024, and beyond.
 - More money is needed to replace and repair playgrounds.
- Current balance of \$2 million dollars.
 - Earmarked for the South Valley improvement project.
- Replace failing infrastructure, safety issues, current assets, beyond the life cycle.
- Not for new amenities.
- Scheduled replacement plan includes priorities based on failing infrastructure and assets beyond their life cycle.

Chair Cook questioned if the life cycle was known for equipment in the parks such as a bench.

Director Lares replied Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda and his team have inventories for all assets and records for life cycles.

Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda replied the typical playground has a warranty for about 15 years, after that they can't get parts. Staff tries to get 20-25 years out of a playground. A tennis court is similar with about 20 years. Maintenance is done every 5th or 6th year filling cracks, recoating, cleaning, and fence repairs. Fencing could last 40 years with good maintenance practices.

Director Lares shared if the bidding process doesn't come in as staff estimates, they may need to tap into the \$275,000. If the money is needed to finalize the project the item would come before this Commission. If going above and beyond what is currently estimated, they may need to look into deferring the project again.

Commissioner Krech asked what the project budget was.

Director Lares replied the South Valley project has a base budget of \$2.5 million dollars, including construction. Additional funding would come from the Pavement Management Fund, Water and Sewer Funds, and a DNR Grant. A contingency fund has also been placed.

Director Lares continued with the Tennis Court Inventory:

- 1 single court - Groveland Park
- 0 - at North Valley Park
- 2 single courts - Oakwood Park
- 1 single court - Rich Valley Park
- 1 single court - Salem Hills
- 2 double courts - Skyview Parks

At Oakwood and Skyview Parks, (mainly Oakwood) is where most recreation programming is done.

- 8 single courts - School District, Simley High School.

These are open to the general public once the school and community education isn't using them. His understanding is on the weekends they are busy and full.

Pickleball Specific Court Inventory:

- North Valley - 6 dedicated
- Salem Hills - 2 single courts (this location has 1 single tennis, 2 single pickleball)
- Groveland, Oakwood, Rich Valley, Skyview - 0

Courts Lined for Tennis/Pickleball Inventory:

For courts lined for both tennis/pickleball, the net stays at the tennis level. Pickleball usually has a lower net. Neither sport can host tournaments on these courts because they cannot be dually lined. He has received multiple communications regarding the expansion of courts at North Valley Park.

- Groveland - 1 court lined for tennis/pickleball
- Oakwood - 2 single tennis courts lined for single pickleball
- Rich Valley - 1 court lined for both tennis/pickleball
- Skyview - 2 courts for tennis, both lined for pickleball
- North Valley and Salem Hills do not have dual courts

Trends show more and more requests for pickleball only courts.

Councilmember Miller asked what the difference in net height was between pickleball and tennis.

Director Lares and Superintendent Swoboda both responded about 3-4 inches.

Commissioner Skar asked if there were more communities that have gone all in with pickleball and what the results were.

Director Lares replied results have been mixed.

All Court Inventory:

- Total of 15 tennis only courts
- 8 pickleball only courts
- 6 Lined for both pickleball and tennis

Commissioner Krech mentioned people are happy to come to Inver Grove Heights to play pickleball due to the 6 lined courts. He has not heard complaints. He was unsure how tennis was doing.

Director Lares mentioned that pickleball is also offered in the indoor gymnasium at the VMCC. This program continues to grow.

Superintendent Dorshak stated pickleball at the Community Center have been very well attended from November on. Times are offered 2-3 times per day nearly everyday of the week.

Commissioner Krech felt there was a good mix at this time.

Director Lares said there could be opportunities to invite tournaments in at some point, if they expand pickleball opportunities.

Commissioner Skar asked if the school tennis courts were lit.

Response was no.

Director Lares stated that not all the city tennis courts are lit.

Superintendent Swoboda replied Skyview and Groveland are. Salem and Rich Valley are not.

Director Lares addressed the Skyview Park location:

- Limited residents to the south
- Playing pickleball does create sounds
 - Residents have a lot to say about what is in their community.

Skyview Current Conditions:

- 20+ years old (1999)
- Deterioration, cracking
- Concrete curbing and fencing are still in good condition and do not need to be replaced
- Parking lot and street parking
- Push button lights that stay on for 45 minutes. Hard stop at 10:00 p.m.

Skyview is the next scheduled capital replacement project for the tennis courts for 2023:

- Potential for more or less funding depending on how the South Valley Park project comes in
- Potential to fold in Oakwood Parks tennis courts depending on available funding in 2023.
 - This would provide cost savings in constructing both at the same time
- Oakwood is scheduled for replacement in 2024 depending on funding and need.

Skyview Replacement Options:

- Keep tennis courts as they exist
- Recreate/reimagine the pickleball system courts
 - Take tennis courts out, replace with pickleball
 - Combination tennis/pickleball

Chair Cook asked if it was possible to have one tennis court and one pickleball court.

Director Lares replied they would be separate. One for tennis/one for pickleball.

Director Lares continued with Skyview Replacement Options:

- With any of the options presented, a sidewalk could be placed to the west. \$30,000 add on
- Any shade structure. \$40,000
- Keeping as is, 1/1:
 - Estimated cost of \$160,000
 - With the add on of the shade structure and side walk, estimated cost \$230,000

Commissioner Miller asked if the sidewalk was necessary.

Director Lares replied at times the parking lot is completely full. When parking on the street to the south, a sidewalk would create a hard access with ADA accessibility.

- If replacing the two tennis courts currently there, the current site allows for 6 pickleball courts. \$190,000 estimated cost.
 - Potential of sidewalk and shade structure estimated cost \$260,000

Commissioner Skar asked what is requested if having a pickleball tournament.

Director Lares replied if having a decent sized tournament, 12 courts. With the 6 here and 6 at North Valley, it could be managed.

Director Lares referred to a diagram of Skyview Park and stated if adding the 6 pickleball courts, there is room across the parking lot to add another 6 courts making for 12 courts. There is potential to extend the parking lot. There are residents in the area.

Commissioner Skar asked if there have been studies on natural sound barriers.

Director Lares replied there are sound/wind barriers. With North Valley, the courts were there first. Homes are being built in the area. There is potential for noise concerns.

Commissioner Stone asked if residents in the Skyview Park area would hear pickleball.

Director Lares replied it would be heard by residents to the south. If moving forward, it would be residents on the north.

Commissioner Prickel mentioned that converting Skyview to 6 courts creates the opportunity to have a tournament. She agreed it's noisy. She felt the sport was growing and social. She shared that there wasn't a lot of opportunities to put 6 courts in. It opens options for tournaments.

Director Lares replied it would be marketed that way. Staff could work with surrounding communities to create tournaments and partnerships. Those using North Valley's courts would like to see 12 courts there now. He did not feel they were at that point yet.

To note: Fund 402, park dedication fees, are for new investments and park dedication fees.

This would be the funding source. Funds are currently earmarked.

Commissioner Skar said that tennis courts would be used early morning and evening hours.

Adding more pickleball courts for use during the day seems to even out in terms of time.

Director Lares added that converting Skyview Courts to pickleball would open the option of having lit courts. North Valley courts are not lit.

Commissioner Stone asked if there was a pickleball mecca.

Director Lares was unsure. He has noticed it becoming more privatized. Inver Grove Heights would be unique to having 14 dedicated pickleball courts within the Twin Cities.

Director Lares discussed Combination Courts as a Skyview Park Replacement Option:

- Combo Courts. Dedicated single tennis court and dedicated pickleball courts.
 - \$210,000 conversion estimated cost
 - \$240,000 estimated cost with sidewalk (option already has shade built in) Similar to Salem Hills

Chair Cook asked how Salem Hills courts have been doing.

Director Lares replied based off feedback, the pickleball courts are heavily used. The tennis court becomes a waiting/warm up area. Requests have been received asking for more pickleball there, and why there is a tennis court.

Chair Cook asked what would take place if pickleball phases out and tennis comes back in.

Superintendent Swoboda replied every 5-7 years there is maintenance done that includes resurfacing. Anchors where the net posts go would have to be re-situated. It can be done.

Director Lares discussed Oakwood Park:

- The double court sits at the northeast side of the park.
- The parking lot is located to the west, there is also on street parking.
- Trail connection from the parking lot and Conroy Way.

Oakwood Current Condition:

- 20+ years old (2000).
- Two single courts.
- Cracks, deterioration.
- Lights, on street parking, parking lot.
- Recreational programming occurs on this court.

No estimates have been requested for this park at this time.

General Next Steps:

- Evaluate the funding balance after South Valley Park bids and approval for the project by the Council.
- Community Engagement would be done around the entire rehab/replacement. - Nov/Dec.
 - Work with the Parks Commission throughout the process
 - Notify all perimeter residents
 - Provide a social media/Website campaign to provide input
 - In person community meetings
- Information would be gathered and brought back to the PRAC with a recommendation to send to the Council - Dec/Jan
- Bring to Council to seek bid
- Construction - Spring/Summer 2023

Chair Cook questioned if kids were getting into pickleball. His thoughts were on balance in terms of tennis and pickleball.

Director Lares replied some programs are starting pickleball instead of tennis. It's intergenerational. When the community engagement process begins, more direction will be known in terms of which courts they would be doing. He said he would be concerned with having 6 pickleball courts at Skyview because it becomes access, fairness, and opportunity. This would eliminate tennis access. They want to build tennis access to the younger age to learn the sport of tennis.

Director Lares did not recommend doing any type of conversion at Oakwood due to surrounding homes. He looks to keep Oakwood as it is, 1/1.

Commissioner Miller said someone had mentioned to her if changing both Oakwood and Skyview's lit courts to pickleball, there would be no lit tennis courts in the city. She asked if there have been any discussions with the school regarding lit tennis courts for programming.

Director Lares replied they have not engaged the School District on this.

Director Lares stated once funding is known, he would be back before the Commission with options.

Commissioner Krech felt Oakwood was an ideal location to have two tennis courts painted for pickleball. There are different ages of people in the area.

Director Lares replied some tennis courts are already dually lined for pickleball. The noise of pickleball has already been introduced within some communities. This would be the first

time some may hear pickleball in the community. He was unsure about recommending the taping of pickleball at this location. People can go north a mile to play on dedicated courts. Commissioner Christensen asked about benches and if marketing could be considered to dedicate a bench similar to what is done at the State Fair.

Director Lares replied there is a park and tree dedication policy for trees and benches.

9. ADMINISTRATIVE PRESENTATIONS:

A. Park Project Updates

1. Vista Pines Grand Opening Review

Director Lares stated the Grand Opening was a major success. There were about 600 residents in attendance. He thanked all those who attended and the Parks and Recreation Staff for making this event happen. Communication and Marketing did some great campaigning. A video was done of the bike course.

2. Northwest Area Parks Community Engagement Plan

Director Lares presented the current Community Engagement for Northwest Parks, for the Peltier and Highlands Developments.

- Current community engagement would go from September to October 2022
- Concept designs for the parks
 - Amenities, needs
- Kick off took place at the Inver Grove Heights Days Food Fest
 - 70 people engaged in comments
- Community Events
 - In the area of the park: September 29, 2022 from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. at the dead end of Auburn Lane near the intersection of Autumn Way (front of where the park would go)
 - Online engagement platform
 - PRAC subcommittee engagement
 - Targeted locations will be given a doorhanger with information about the neighborhood event
- Social Pinpointing
 - Located at www.ighmn.gov/nwaparks
 - Interactive project map allows residents to get involved virtually
 - Map can be accessed through the website and will soon be introduced on social media
 - Website will also have a QR Code
- Next Steps:
 - Take community and staff feedback and incorporate into the initial design efforts with WSB landscape designers
 - Work with the PRAC subcommittee through the design process
 - Bring design options back to PRAC and to the community for additional engagement

Commissioner Miller liked the idea of the door hangers. She asked if they could put signs up in the parks with information.

Director Lares replied they are planning on doing signs with the QR code at entry points and trails.

Director Lares said per comprehensive classification, a neighborhood park is technically within a ½ mile radius of a development, for walking distance. Trail connections are meant to be in between these parks. There is a community park, Heritage Village Park, this type of park is meant for the entire community.

3. South Valley Park Update

Director Lares stated tomorrow at 10:00 a.m. bids will be opened to look at who competitively bid for the project. There are 26 holds on the plans. Look at doing demolition this fall (early October) with construction early spring.

Commissioner Miller asked if this meant the sliding hill would be closed this winter.

Director Lares replied that they have not been able to determine this yet. It depends on whether the contractors have been able to put equipment on site.

B. Department Happenings

1. Parks Superintendent Update

Parks Superintendent Brian Swoboda updated the Commission on Parks Maintenance:

- The Lions Park fishing pier was removed. The new one was installed today. The DNR provided half the cost
- A local resident reached out about the donation of a large pumpkin, as they have done yearly.
 - A "Guess the Weight" is done. He has been told it is twice as big as last years.
 - Last years weighed 350 pounds.
 - This will be picked up at the end of September/early October.
- Working with IT (Information Technology) and Communications on the newly renovated Disc Golf Course. They plan to fly a drone overhead for advertising.
 - Plan to have this on the city website in November/December.
- Last Friday was the last day for residents to call about the removal of Ash trees in the right of way due to the Emerald Ash Borer.
 - 79 trees have been requested for removal
 - 50 have already been removed (previous to the 79 already mentioned)
- Staff was busy with Inver Grove Heights Days last week and Food truck days with picnic tables, trash cans, and set up.
- Staff also helped with the Essential Workers picnic down at Heritage Village Park.
- There have been disc golf and pickleball tournaments, and a tournament at Rich Valley. There are two tournaments left at Rich Valley.
- Family Fun Night at Oakwood.
- Doing typical fall maintenance on turf, aerating, broadleaf seeding, overseeding, painting soccer lines, prepping fields, and mowing grass.
- Chad, who built the Skills Course at Vista Pines, is doing a small project at Harmon Park with a skills spur off the existing trail. This wraps up this week.
 - Chad mentioned there has been a lot of interest. A few days ago, a group of more than 100 went through.
- Rich Valley fields #7 and #8 will have infield work done and be closed for the remainder of the season.

Commissioner Stone mentioned he was at Harmon Park when Chad was there going over the jump for the first time. He was able to go over them as well and felt it was amazing. He suggested getting drone or helmet cam footage there for advertising.

2. Recreation Superintendent Update

a. Fitness Center Equipment Install

Recreation Superintendent Julie Dorshak estimates that the equipment will be delivered and installed October 6th & 7th.

- Certain types of equipment will be reduced based off research in the past year.

b. Pool Project Update

Superintendent Dorshak stated the lap, dive, and hot tub are all functioning.

- The girls swim team is back for their season.
- The waterpark is currently closed. The contractors are doing a great job. Look to open by October 21st as scheduled/planned.

Superintendent Dorshak gave the following update on fall programming:

- Ball fields schedule has been very busy.
- Staff was out during Inver Grove Heights Days.
 - Participated in the parade
 - Business Expo
 - Bike the Bridges had about 70 participants
 - During the pickleball and disc golf tournaments
 - City wide Garage Sale
- Walktober Challenge. Participants walk two miles a day and earn a t-shirt for participation.
- Membership Drive until the middle of October. Join the facility for .1cent
- Adaptive Bowling. There was not enough participation to start this fall. Pushing the start to January.
- Let's Paw-ty Halloween Dog Park Event coming up on October 1st at Heritage Village Park from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
- The last Farmers Market will take place on Sunday, October 9th.
- Night Hike takes place on Friday, October 14th.
- Converting the turf to ice on Tuesday, October 4th. Will function as an ice rink on October 23rd.
- Renovating the three community rooms at the Community Center beginning in October.
 - The carpeting and paint are about 10 years old
 - The ceiling tiles, lighting, and windowsills are original to the building
 - Will be getting improved AV equipment
- Additional improvements:
 - Converting the aquatics area into office space
 - Moving lifeguards and the first aid station to the storage area near the waterpark
 - This item goes before the Council on September 26th
- Starting to work on January through April programming

Chair Cook asked if participation has increased.

Superintendent Dorshak replied August was slightly lower because of the pool project. Noticed an approximate reduction of about 20 memberships.

Budget reports came in and projected at 60% of memberships, benchmark is 66%.

Commissioner Christensen mentioned she has had a couple of members mention they would like to see a treadmill upstairs.

Director Lares responded that the area was never intended to be for working out. The noise those types of machines make for rooms underneath is one of the reasons they haven't had those there. Staff can evaluate and see if that could be an option.

10. COMMISSION COMMENTS:

A. Commission Questions and Comments

Commissioner Ellingboe had no comment.

Commissioner Miller learned a lot about pickleball.

Commissioner Krech thanked Parks and Recreation Director Lares for the presentation. He thanked Staff for the job they do.

Chair Cook thanked Vice Chair Barker for chairing the Commission during last month's meeting. He thought she did a great job.

Commissioner Prickel had no comment.

Commissioner Christensen had no comment.

Commissioner Stone referenced the mountain bike trails constructed in the northwest area. He asked if there was a way to have a spur from Lebanon Hills, Vikings Lakes, then to St. Paul. He shared that he felt Harmon Park and Vista Pines has a lot more elevation changes than Minneapolis.

Chair Cook asked how this course compares to Lebanon Hills.

Commissioner Stone replied it wasn't as big but holds its own.

Director Lares referenced the potential greenway system coming through stating that Dakota County would be doing a broad overview presentation on conceptual ideas for that trail/greenway system at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Skar stated he is a teacher at the high school. At the beginning of the year there was discussion about connecting the school with Parks and Recreation in terms of programming. The school is working hard to find alternative programming for the kids, especially with some grant funds received on an anti-vaping campaign. He mentioned he would be happy to serve as a liaison between the two entities. He shared that when he was on the Commission in the City of Shakopee, there was a teen program with community education that was successful.

Superintendent Dorshak replied she is a part of the committee as well. There is a meeting tomorrow at the Community Center. They are hoping to create young adult and teen programming. It's a targeted population that Staff struggles to capture and participate in after school, evening, and out of school time programming.

Chair Cook asked if Commissioner Skar could bring that information back to the Commission.

Commissioner Skar replied he could. He would be unable to meet at the timeframe due to teaching.

11. ADJOURN:

Motion by Commissioner Christensen to adjourn the meeting at 9:22 p.m.

Ayes: 8

Nays: 0

Minutes prepared by Recording Secretary Sheri Yourczek