

**RAMSEY COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

April 13, 2022 – 6:00 PM  
VIRTUAL ZOOM MEETING

**Commission Members in Attendance:** Chair - Gregory Williams (AL), Leah Shepard (AL), Michael Berger (1), Jordan Nelson (2), Metric Giles (4), Snowden Herr (6), Candy Petersen (7)

**Not in Attendance:** Vice chair - Brian Tempas (3), Savannah Lane (5)

**Others in Attendance:** Mark McCabe, Scott Yonke, Liz Flinn

**Notice:** Due to the ongoing health pandemic, particularly because of the delta variant, as Chair of the Ramsey County Parks & Recreation Commission, I have determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent. In compliance with Minnesota Statutes Section 13D.021, subdivision 1, as the Commission meets via Zoom, we state for the record that all members of the Commission are able to hear one another and all discussion and testimony, as can members of the public. Also, because of the ongoing health pandemic, it is unfeasible for at least one Commission member, chief legal counsel, or County staff to be physically present in the regular meeting room. All votes by Commission members will be conducted by roll call.

*The meeting was called to order by Chair, Greg Williams at 6:04pm. Michael Berger motioned to approve the March 9, 2022, Meeting Minutes and to accept the April 13, 2022, Agenda; Snowden Herr seconded, and Motion carried.*

**Parks Commission Appointment Process Update**

- Metric Giles turned in resignation and that seat will be up for appointment during the current round of appointments that the County Board will make in May
  - Applications are Due April 15, 2022 with appointments to happen in May, effective June 1<sup>st</sup>
- Both Mark McCabe and Gregory Williams convey their heartfelt thanks for all the work, Metric has done especially in the area of Racial Equity and accountability

**Hiring Updates**

- Tamarack Nature Center Office Manager
  - There were 2 top candidates, the position was originally offered to a diverse candidate, but the career track was not what the candidate desired and declined the position
  - Kristy Rockford, our other top candidate did accept and begins shortly
  - Currently interviewing for Tamarack Nature Center Outdoor Education Manager (Director of Tamarack Nature Center)
- Seasonal Temp Hiring is underway for Aquatics, Golf Courses, Parks Maintenance Workers and Naturalist Aides
- Welcome, Director of Operations Arenas and Golf - Liz Flinn
  - Liz's background is with the YMCA Red Wing, Social services in Juvenile Corrections and the Public Defender's office
  - Liz has been impressed with the level of customer focus from the Parks staff working in our arenas and golf courses
  - The Commission members introduced themselves and their ties to the community

**Beaver Lake Project Update: Scott Yonke, Director of Planning and Development**

Scott reviewed the history of the redevelopment project that started in 2020 with a 2-phase community engagement. The second phase targeted under-represented communities and use that feedback in combination to create conceptual designs. Some of the proposed concepts are: new playground, multi-use open turf area, restroom and picnic facilities, improved connections to the water, safety lighting, wayfinding, community garden, improved trail connections.

To view the full presentation and project updates visit: <https://www.ramseycounty.us/residents/parks-recreation/planning-construction-restoration/beaver-lake-county-park-master-plan>

*Feedback: Greg asked if Beaver Lake is stocked and what with? The lake is aerated and stocked annually, unsure of what type but panfish and bass are commonly caught. Leah Shepard asked whom we anticipate managing the community gardens and recommended reaching out to Al Singer with Dakota County. Parks is partnering with Ramsey County Public Health and seeking information from other Districts on the best way to manage this amenity. Greg expressed interest in assisting with this topic at the Parks Engagement subcommittee.*

### Community Engagement & Happenings: Mark McCabe

- **West Side Arena Project, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks Initiative:** Mark summarized the 4 themes resulting from the current engagements, the survey is open online, struggling with community participation but focusing on specific groups after the Easter holiday and will circulate the survey, now have a Spanish Language version available
- **Highland/Aldrich Arena Community Engagement:** Parks is looking to hire a consultant to assist with engaging users and non-users in the exploration of needs and other uses of these facilities.
- **Bruce Vento Regional Trail Extension, Phase 2 (Whitaker Street to County J)** is in its third round of public engagement
  - Meeting planned for April 21, 2022, from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm at White Bear Lake City Hall
    - Very good attendance is expected since October had 130 people
  - *Greg asked if there are any plans for a site visit for the proposed alignment?* Nothing planned, but the preferred route is already a very heavily used route, and the public is welcome to use the info online for a self-guided visit.
  - Working on launching an online survey as well for those unable to attend <https://www.ramseycounty.us/content/bruce-vento-phase-2-survey>
  - Received a \$1.3 million dollar Community Project Partners grant with the assistance of Representative Betty McCollum to bring this project to “shovel ready” status
  - *Candy Petersen asked about the level of resistance.* Scott confirmed that there some resistance, however with the extensive feasibility studies the best options have been determined and there is as much support as resistance for these options
- **Earth Day cleanups:** The Scouts cleaned up Vadnais Sucker Lake Regional Park, Northwestern University is cleaning up Tony Schmidt Regional Park on April 28th, 3M Battle Creek Regional Park on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### Commission Chair Update: Greg Williams

- Met with Thony Thao on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks work specifically on barrier identification with non-user as well as an update on the phases of the project.
- Continued work with Scott Yonke in regard to outreach efforts and the Community engagements subcommittee’s role
- Greg reviewed ideas that the sub-committee can begin with such as defined use the layers of roles that those parks provide in that, alignment with the County vision, mission and goals, Communication with the County Commissioners, budgetary and operational constraints
- Did a winter site tour at Como golf course and witnessed a very high level of community engagement in the park and using the amenities

- Subcommittee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm

#### Commission Member Update

#### Director Update:

- Currently the County Board and some Advisory bodies now read this statement before each meeting and Mark would like to bring this to Parks Commission for consideration as a part of integrating equity into all we do.

Land Acknowledgement Statement:

*“Every community owes its existence and vitality to generations from around the world who contribute their hopes, dreams, and energy to making the history that led to this moment.*

*Some were brought here against their will, some were drawn to leave their distant homes in hope for a better life, and some have lived on this land since time immemorial. Truth and acknowledgement are critical to building mutual respect and connection across barriers of heritage and difference.*

*Ramsey County is located on the ancestral lands of the Dakota People. We acknowledge the Ojibwe, the Ho Chunk, and the other nations of people who also called this place home. We pay respects to their elders, past and present, and consider their treaties made by the tribal nations that entitle non-Native people to live and work on traditional Native lands. We also consider the many legacies of violence, displacement, migration, and settlement that influence us to this day.”*

- Leah would be supportive of reading this if there were actionable items that go along with this otherwise it’s just hallow reading it especially with Parks being a Land Management Agency
  - Another idea from a legislator’s office was the idea of also including the indigenous name on all signage/references along with the currently used name
- The May Parks Commission meeting will resume in person to hold to the open meeting law
    - Reminder that there is no meeting in July and August is the Annual Parks Tour meeting

*A motion for adjournment was made by Snowden, **meeting adjourned at 7:30pm***

**Next Meeting In-person: May 11, 2022**