

December 2012 Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2012
Como Park Golf Course Clubhouse

MEMBERS PRESENT: Susan Bishop, Erick Goodlow, Dave Haley, Dan Marckel, John Mountain, Betsy Mowry, Emily Shively, Andrew Trcka, and Salina Vang

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT: Michael Hahm, Brenda Ullrich, Michelle Furrer, Mark Granlund, Tom Hagel, Susie Odegard

GUESTS: Pete Bolstad

1. AGENDA, MINUTES, INTRODUCTIONS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

- a. The meeting was called to order by Chair Trcka at 6:30 p.m.
- b. A motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Haley and seconded by Commissioner Mountain. The vote was 8 to 0 in favor with one commissioner arriving after the vote.
- c. Commissioner Shively moved to approve the November 2012 Meeting minutes. Commissioner Vang seconded the motion. The vote was 8 to 0 in favor with one commissioner arriving after the vote.

2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

a. Energy Conversions and Sustainability

Tom Hagel, Parks Maintenance Supervisor with the Building Trades section, gave an update on what the Parks and Recreation Department has been doing over the past year to work on energy conversions and sustainability. He explained that most of the work that has been done has been completed in the area of automation controls. This involves upgrades to how Parks and Recreation building climates are controlled, heating and cooling are now controlled from a central location rather than within the building itself. This allows for better tracking of our building temperatures; resolution of problems faster and easier remotely as well as onsite when necessary; setting heating and cooling parameters for each building instead of having it set within the building itself. Our larger facilities, which consume the greatest amounts of energy, have shown the best results. Much of the funding for these projects came from Federal stimulus monies, Xcel Energy rebates, and other capital funds. Project costs averaged from \$10,000 to \$40,000 with an expected payback within three and one half to five years.



CAPRA Accreditation

An Affirmative Action Equal
Opportunity Employer



National Gold Medal Award

b. Como Zoo and Conservatory: Ordway Gardens; Gorilla Forest; and the Next Phase of Planning

Michelle Furrer, the Como Campus Manager, updated the Commission on two major projects at Como: The Ordway Gardens and the Gorilla Forest. The Ordway Gardens was a \$2.8 million project for which construction began during the spring of 2012 and will be complete by April of 2013. This project will enable the year round display of bonsai and the Japanese gardens at rest over the winter. The Gorilla Forest is an \$11 million project which will open to the public on June 6th of 2013. The Gorilla Forest project includes the acquisition of six new gorillas. The next phase of planning for the Como Zoo and Conservatory will build on the 2003 campus concept plan. During 2013, a review of the concept plan will be conducted to determine what has been accomplished and what should be next. Seals and sea lions (due to new regulations which will affect their current environment) and a transportation improvement plan which will include parking in and around the park, are two of the possible projects to come.

c. Golf Performance Plan

Susie Odegard, Special Services Manager, provided an update to the Golf Performance Plan. The Golf Performance Plan was established two years ago to assess Parks and Recreation Golf operations, prior to considering alternate management models. She reviewed the October performance numbers, indicating that the total number of rounds is up by 8,000 and total revenue has increased by 8.9% from last summer. She spoke about the numerous contributing factors, such as the weather which allowed courses to open 26 days earlier this year than last year.

d. Community Garden Policy

Mark Granlund, Arts and Gardens Coordinator, brought a preliminary draft of the Parks and Recreation Community Garden Policy for review. Community Gardening is increasing in popularity and the Parks and Recreation Department is receiving more requests to allow community gardens on Park property. Due to this increase, there is a need to create a uniform policy for community gardening. Mark explained there are four main issues needing to be addressed: land use and park diversion policy; public purpose; the scale of community plot gardens; and the distribution of plot gardens. Parks and Recreation currently has seven plot gardens and four youth food production gardens which are also used educational programming at the recreation centers at which they are located. The policy will return to the Commission in February for action.

e. Review Plans for Annual Retreat

Elected officials have been notified of the meeting. The location has been moved from North Dale Recreation Center to Battle Creek Recreation Center.



3. DIRECTOR'S REPORT

a. Budget Update

Director Hahm updated the Commissioners on the Capital Improvement Budget (CIB) process. There are 25 projects on the CIB list, not all of which will be funded.

The City Council adopted the proposed budget for next year's operating budget. In this budget, there is more time allowed for Conway and McDonough recreation centers. Half of the cut has been restored to allow conversations with the communities affected to determine a solution.

Director Hahm also spoke about the hockey rink at Phalen from which the copper was stolen. There has been a solution without copper put in place and the rink is open for use.

5. SUBCOMMITTEE AND TASK FORCE REPORTS

a. Como Regional Park Committee – Commissioner Marckel

Commissioner Marckel spoke about the play area that is getting built and the continued work underway for way finding. He advised the Commission that PutterThere mini golf will be continued at the City. There is also a new project being looked at: how to stabilize and interpret the pedestrian bridge by the streetcar house. A laser scan of the bridge itself is being looked at as part of that process.

b. Blooming Saint Paul – Commissioner Mountain

Commissioner Mountain explained the Blooming Saint Paul awards will be given out in January. The committee will be changing to quarterly meeting with the next meeting occurring in March of 2013.

c. Transportation Committee of the Planning Commission – Commissioner Trcka

Chair Trcka advised that the last meeting was cancelled and that there is nothing related to Parks and Recreation on the agenda for the next meeting on December 17th.

d. Trees Advisory Committee – Commissioner Goodlow

Commissioner Goodlow was not able to attend the last meeting and the next meeting is coming soon.



e. Victoria Park – Commissioner Shively

Commissioner Shively explained that the committee revised its goals and objectives at its December 4th meeting as well as a presentation on the history of the site which may inform recommendations for design and use of the site in the future. Other things that were talked about included the train bridge pedestrian underpass, access to which is not owned, but is critical for connecting areas of Victoria Park as well as view sheds, migratory flyway, and the Victoria Park website. The next meeting will include a snow shoe hike around the park on December 28th.

f. Other Reports

Commissioner Mountain told the Commission about the Highland District Council meeting about the Ford Plant site. Ford seems to be partnering with the community well and appear to be thoughtful about the process.

6. ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Marckel and seconded by Commissioner Bishop. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

