



# CITY OF WEST ST. PAUL

1616 HUMBOLDT AVENUE, WEST ST. PAUL, MN 55118

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PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2018 AT 5:30PM  
HARMON PARK WARMING HOUSE

1. Roll Call
  
2. Adopt Minutes
  - 2.A. Approve August 21, 2018 Minutes  
Documents:  
  
[AUG 21.PDF](#)
  
3. New Business
  
4. Old Business
  - 4.A. Mud Lake Meeting Recap
  
  - 4.B. Discussion On Halloween Extravaganza
  
5. Other
  - 5.A. City Council Updates
  
  - 5.B. Staff Updates
    - 5.B.1. Update On Pickleball
  
    - 5.B.2. Warming House Update
  
6. Adjourn

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**MINUTES**  
**WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**August 21, 2018**

**Park & Rec. Members Present:** Bonnie Bellows, Jay DeLaRosby, Brad Erickson, Bob Gausman, Dave Lynch, Mike Petrasek

**Non-voting Members Present:** Sharon G. Hatfield, Parks and Public Works Secretary; Dave Napier, Councilman; Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

**Guest:** Doug Fromm

1. **REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES**

Chair Petrasek called the meeting to order at 5:29 pm.

The meeting minutes from June 12, 2018 were approved. Member Bellows commented that a “fabulous job” was done on the minutes, and wished to clarify what she said at the June 21 meeting. She said, “People seemed to feel that they could not criticize anyone in public.” They are allowed to do that; they just cannot engage in personal attacks or use abusive language. The word “attack” needs to be clarified. Schletty added that council members would like committee meetings not to be used to criticize Council members.

2. **NEW BUSINESS**

a. **Halloween Extravaganza**

Parks and Recreation Assistant Director Schletty said that the plan is to mimic the same program as last year. The event will be on October 31, 2018 at Harmon Park. There will be a trick or treat trail with local business sponsorship. At the next committee meeting, Parks and Recreation Coordinator Alisha McGraw will “sketch out” the trail. The warming house will host the costume contest. Schletty would like to avoid using the Neighborhood Center to curtail “muddy” tracks. He will purchase more hot dogs (400-500) for this year’s event.

Member DeLaRosby asked about having more fire pits at the event. (The fire pits were donated by the North Robert Street Business Association.) Schletty will talk with staff about the fire pits and perhaps, hay bales.

The photo booth will be moved outside to the fields. Having the photo booth inside (last year) was a “mess.” Member Gausman said that the [Harmon] park is just right. Member Lynch talked about having marshmallows for the event. Schletty said that it would cause overcrowding at the fire pits and the sticks may poke people.

b. **Review of Basketball Courts in West St. Paul**

Schletty showed the committee a map of West St. Paul with the public basketball courts highlighted. There are seven full courts and three half courts. [The number includes the school district’s courts.] There are two full courts behind Heritage School. Emerson Park has a small full court and Moreland has a small full court. Weschcke has two half courts. Marthaler has a full court. Behind Garlough School is a full court. Bellows asked about the usage in the school districts courts. Schletty said that he did not know. Southview Park has a full court and a small halt court.

The committee talked about reinstalling basketball hoops in the parks or using the courts for another purpose. There are currently [abandoned] poles in Haskell and Oakdale

Parks. Member Erickson asked about police calls. Schletty said that the calls mainly come from Emerson Park; people are using the park late, being loud, and climbing the fence to get balls out of people's yards.

Schletty said that Haskell Park has been restored. It looks very different with the cleaned fence lines. With the trees trimmed up in Haskell Park, people can see through the park especially after the discovery of an abandoned city alley easement. Oakdale Park has been similarly restored.

Lynch asked there was any word from Chief Bud Shaver about the basketball courts. Schletty said that there is only an "occasional call" regarding Emerson Park and there have been no other calls. Calls regarding the courts subsided after the hoops were removed from the smaller neighborhood parks. Lynch said that perhaps the City should keep the basketball courts out of the small neighborhood parks.

DeLaRosby said he did research and said that it looks like the City has sufficient hoops. The committee, however, has to look at how the map looks and how the courts are being policed. Ward I, which DeLaRosby represents, has a large section that does not have the amenity. Basketball courts are not evenly distributed through the city. Ward I has the largest number of renters. Socioeconomic concerns affect them more. Many of them do not have the resources to buy [sports] equipment. DeLaRosby is "a little troubled" by removal of the hoops. It has been a decade since the removal. The [empty poles] are an eyesore; the city can put the hoops back up and if they are a problem, they can be taken down again. The City is responding to negative aspects of basketball courts and not to the positive aspects. The courts add value with low to no cost to the parks. Parks are an area dedicated for people to congregate. DeLaRosby advocates putting the hoops back up and monitoring the use.

Gausman remembers that there were complaints at Weschcke Park of swearing and guns. It is very important to get the neighbors support of the [hoops.] DeLaRosby asked if basketball attracts guns and swearing and criminal activity. Petrasek does not recall criminal activity; there were just complaints of disrespect to neighbors. Bellows agreed; she remembered that there were complaints of swearing and noise at Oakdale Park.

Lynch said when you take away the full court aspect, issues go away. If you give residents a half court, they would still have the ability to play. DeLaRosby said people do not want a half court to play hockey; it is undesirable. The infrastructure is there for a full court. He feels that just because it did not work once, does not mean it will never work again. Lynch said that we need a compromise. Bellows said the committee would need to get the public involved and talk to the residents around the parks. Bellows also referenced the apartment dwellers near Weschcke Park; noise was a factor in Weschcke Park. Clpn. Napier said that full courts attract games and hence, bad language, pot and beer drinking. However, it may be a completely different community now, and the rough people may have found another court.

Resident and former committee member Doug Fromm commented about the history of the basketball hoop removal at Haskell Park. Fromm and Petrasek talked to the neighbors around Haskell Park. Fromm said, "It was pretty bad." There were many complaints about the basketball courts. What had happened is that St. Paul started to take down their basketball hoops in their city. The players started coming down to West St. Paul. They were from Minneapolis. No one was from West St. Paul. There was a "big bust" at Haskell and the people using the courts were identified. The solution back then

was to remove the hoops for six months. It was not supposed to be this long. Fromm also commented, "So much was cut away" at Haskell Park. There is no privacy. It may need a "taller fence." Fromm did watch the basketball games at Oakdale Park. He said, "It was pretty bad." The basketball hoops were taken down for a while so that people could get a message. He would like to see them come back. Fromm, however, added that if someone buys a house near the park, he/she should expect noise. Signage, with "Absolutely No Playing" and "Absolutely No Boom Boxes or Stereos" would be [helpful.] DeLaRosby commented that some full courts are not actually full [sized] courts. He does not advocate building full courts. He advocates putting back the full courts if they are already in place. Fromm said that the City should be strategic and put the hoops away from the neighbor's homes.

Erickson asked if the committee needs Council approval. Napier said that the committee should present its case. Schletty said that the City does not have the backboards and the rims anymore; they will need to be purchased. Someone at Weschcke Park had been cutting down the hoops at night. It was probably one of the residents nearby. The backboards were very old and had to be replaced. Schletty explained that at Weschcke Park, one of the residents had park noise echoing in their house. The residents wanted the City to mitigate the noise. The City did not; the residents put up their own fence. One of the hoops was also removed at Weschcke. DeLaRosby was not aware that equipment needed to be purchased. He would still like to have hoops near to all the residents of West St. Paul. Bellows suggested that the City get input from neighbors to see what they would like to see in the park. Schletty added that signage would be key.

**A motion was made to recommend reinstalling basketball boards on a trial basis (one at Haskell Park and one at Oakdale Park); along with the backboards, proper signage should also be added to ensure observance of parks hours.**

Discussion ensued after the recommendation. Schletty suggested adding signage at other basketball courts like Emerson Park and maybe Weschcke Park. Schletty said that it should be proposed for spring 2019. He would present this recommendation at a Council Work session. Schletty will obtain an estimate for the costs, and if expensive, the City can split the work over two years.

**The motion was amended to recommend reinstalling basketball boards on a trial basis (one at Haskell Park and one at Oakdale Park); along with the backboards, proper signage should also be added to all park basketball courts to ensure observance of parks hours and to reduce noise problems. The reinstallation would be scheduled for spring of 2019. The motion carried. All Ayes.**

Petrasek would like to see the "flavor" of the Council for the basketball courts initially. If there is positive feedback, the committee could move forward. Schletty said the adjustable pole model would be \$3,200; the non-adjustable is about \$1,000. Erickson offered his driveway pole; his children are "long gone."

### **3. OLD BUSINESS**

- a. Update on Mud Lake Cleanup-** Schletty said that the City received DNR approval to treat the lily pads in Mud Lake. The City did move forward and treated the lily pads; There is a meeting at Mud Lake on August 28, 2018 with the DNR and the residents. They will come up with a maintenance plan and perhaps a long-range Park Improvement plan. For follow up, Schletty will invite residents to the September committee meeting. Schletty said the City is allowed to treat a certain percentage of lily pads and cattails in

the pond, and, because of DNR criteria, the City is not allowed to dredge this pond. Long-range improvements for Mud Lake include a permanent trail and possibly a dock or pier or observation deck.

4. **Other**

a. **City Council**

Napier asked committee members to brainstorm ideas to protect Harmon Park from vandalism, especially in the public restrooms. Committee members asked what the problems were. There was an incident where [excrement] was spread all over the floor of the restroom. A fire has also been set in the restroom. Park maintenance has had many complaints about the City closing the restrooms closing early to prevent evening vandalism. An older gentleman has been spotted at the park who may be responsible for the [excrement] vandalism. Petrasek said that law enforcement must get involved. Lynch suggested forming a volunteer group to watch the park. Bellows suggested that the vandalism be publicized to raise awareness. Gausman said that if there is an “individual slob” doing it, the City needs to deal with person directly. Lynch suggested tabling the discussion until next month. Schletty is working with Diane Erickson to form a group of three volunteers to check the park. If anyone is interested, he/she should volunteer through the city website. Petrasek would like to know what the police suggest for the park.

- b. **West St. Paul Greenway**-Lynch thanked the volunteers for adopting Garlough Park and the disc golf course. He talked about possibly building a bridge at hole three and four. Napier said that it would be a good Eagle Scout project. Schletty said that the committee would need to see a plan. It was mentioned that Lowes would probably donate most of the building supplies.

5. **ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:55 pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, September 11, 2018 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon G. Hatfield