

WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 14, 2021

Parks & Rec. Members Present: Kirsten Mulraney, Sara Blair, Kelly Gibbons, Kelly Hagler, Dave Lynch

Non-voting Members Present: Sharon G. Hatfield, Parks and Public Works Administrative Specialist; Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks & Recreation Director

1. ROLL CALL

2. REVIEW/APPROVE MINUTES

Chair protem Lynch called the meeting to order at 5:29 pm. The Committee approved the minutes from the July 13, 2021 meeting.

3. NEW BUSINESS-NA

4. OLD BUSINESS

a. Marthaler Redevelopment Update

Assistant Park and Recreation Director Schletty reviewed the Master Plan for improvements to Marthaler Park scheduled for 2022, 2023 and 2024. The plan has been updated. The plan must be completed and approved. The City will take public input at the September 20 Project Open House in Council Chambers. The public will also give input at the City Open House on September 23. With this information, the City will bring the plan to Council in October to adopt. After the plan is adopted, Phase I, (parking lot improvements and clearing of the site) will begin.

Schletty “walked through” the refined plan with Committee Members. During Phase I, the driveway entrance will be moved to the south about 20 feet. There will be 20 feet of buffer between the park and the private properties to the south. The City plans to meet with the property owners to discuss possible buffers (vegetation, trees, shrubs or even private fencing). All parking will be angled in the new parking lot. The lot will house 60 stalls. The angled parking will stop headlights from shining into the neighboring residents’ yards. Parking lot lighting will also be angled away from resident homes. Trail will be added coming from the Humboldt Avenue sidewalk and around the tennis court. A pier will be built on the pond near the parking lot. Shoreline restoration is planned around the pond to get rid of the buckthorn and to create a nice view around the pond from all angles. Lynch asked if the pond restoration was part of the budget. Schletty answered that the restoration is part of the budget. Additionally, there is grant money allotted to the City for the shoreline and prairie restoration along the trail.

Schletty continued to say that the new trail would lead the park goer into the middle of the park and the new focal point: the centralized playground. The design will be discussed in 2023. There will be picnic areas and benches around the new playground area. The new shelter area will be near (but separated from) the playground. There are many possibilities for the shelter: an open sided shelter or a partially enclosed one. It could feature a giant fire pit. It is a 2023 project. The new trailhead (info kiosk and restroom) will be located north of the playground. The current picnic shelter area may be repurposed into a performance space or alternative use. To the west on the sledding hill, some prairie restoration will be done. Some undergrowth and the overgrowth aspen trees will be cleared out for the sledding hill. On the top of the hill, the City has discussed having a small picnic shelter, observation deck or lookout tower. This will be part of the last phase in 2024. Lynch asked about the three-year plan. Schletty said each year has been budgeted to each phase directive: Phase I (2022) the parking area, Phase II (2023) the playground, picnic shelter, restroom, pond restoration, and Phase III (2024) the sledding hill. Lynch asked if it were possible to have the parking lot gated after park hours like Kaposia Park. He would have to check out this option with the Police Department. Schletty asked Committee Members to help support the process on September 20 at the Marthaler Project Open House with questions regarding the reconstruction. He also asked Members to attend the September 23 West St. Paul Open house as well.

b. 2022 Playground Replacement Discussion

Schletty said that \$110K has been budgeted next year for playground replacement. The Parks Maintenance staff said Kennedy Park, the Pool Park and Weschcke Park are in most need of replacement. The Committee needs to decide what parks should have new playground equipment and then have Open Houses to get nearby resident feedback. Schletty showed a video of a net climber playground that was inclusive to all abilities. Schletty explained that this type of playground has a transfer platform. It is out

of the price range at \$60K for the equipment alone and \$20-25K for installation. Member Mulraney remarked that City should have more options for different abilities. Schletty said that Thompson County Park has this kind of park. Mulraney said that Kennedy Park and the Pool Park were the priorities for the Committee. Member Hagler asked about natural playground options that the Committee could investigate. Mulraney mentioned different sized boulders for children to climb or sensory gardens as examples of natural playgrounds. She would like to see a natural playground in Kennedy Park. The residents near Kennedy Park are interested in this type of park. Member Blair said a natural playground would make the park a destination park. Lynch said that a destination park would be ideal at the Pool Park. Kennedy Park is hard to reach and surrounded only by houses. If the destination playground were built at the pool, the City may increase pool usage. The pool also has a big green area leading up to Moreland. The space could be used as well.

c. Art Park Update- Lynch said he attended the free donut event last Saturday. It was a great event. They did quite well for Neighbors Inc. Schletty added that Kevin Hendricks sent him a summary report about events. About 22 people attended the Friday mini concert program; over 100 people attended the Saturday donut event. Twenty-five bags of groceries and \$371 were collected for Neighbor's Inc. Carolyn Swizz appeared on Fox 9 with a story for the Art Park. The free Little Library project is still on track. The library will be installed by October.

d. Skate Park Update-Mulraney asked Schletty for an update from the City. Schletty said that with re prioritizing, the City now has funding (\$250K) slated for 2025 for the skate park. Depending on what the City wants to do, the funding may not be enough. The City could look at outside sources, grants etc. It is too early to get down to "nitty gritty" plans.

5. OTHER

a. Council Updates-NA

- i. **Staff Updates-Naming of Parks-**Clpn. Berry spoke with Schletty about the Art Park and the Pool Park and the naming of unnamed park spaces. Currently there is no formal procedure for the naming of parks and facilities. Schletty will be working on this policy. It will be reviewed heavily by the Parks Committee before going on to Council.
- ii. **Fall programs-** Programs (PeeWee Sports, Gymnastics) started tonight. A good number of children are registered for programs. It is the first time in a while that the City has been able to offer these types of programs in the fall.
- iii. **Halloween-**The Halloween Extravaganza is planned again for October 31. It will be similar to the program from 2 years ago.
- iv. **Glow Dash-** The Glow Dash program will be this Saturday.
- v. **Garlough Disc Golf Course-** Lynch announced that the first sanctioned PDGA sanctioned tournament last Saturday. It was the largest junior tournament ever in Minnesota. Lynch asked if it were possible to have more benches placed in Garlough for the disc golf course.

6. ADJOURN

The committee members adjourned at 6:21 pm. The next Parks and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 12 10, 2021 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield