

MINUTES
WEST ST. PAUL PARKS & RECREATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
April 9, 2019

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

Non-voting Members Present: Wendy Berry, Councilperson, Alisha McGraw, Recreation Coordinator, Dave Schletty, Assistant Parks and Recreation Director

1. **ROLL CALL**
2. **ADOPT MINUTES**

Chair Petrasek called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Two corrections were made to the minutes:

On page five, first paragraph, the word “convocating” should be “**congregating.**”

On page three, paragraph two, Jon Englin’s should be to “**Jim Englin.**”

The committee approved the minutes from the March 12, 2019 meeting with the corrections.

3. **NEW BUSINESS- NA**
4. **OLD BUSINESS**

- a. **Haskell & Oakdale Basketball Discussion**

Assistant Parks Director Schletty presented a report to the committee with the list of all calls made from April 1- November 18, 2018 to the police regarding Emerson (full court basketball), Weschcke (half court basketball) and Southview (full court basketball), Oakdale and Haskell Parks. Most calls were made regarding Emerson Park. They were made from the neighbor next door to the park and the calls were about fights, dogs off leash, [etc.] Schletty asked for reports for all five parks to form a baseline. Emerson is the only park with basketball complaints. Schletty did not ask for Marthaler because there are no nearby residents to the park. He did request information from other cities that had public basketball courts: Mendota Heights, South St. Paul, St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights. Mendota Heights and South St. Paul did not have many issues. St. Paul and Inver Grove Heights did not return Schletty’s request for information.

Schletty received a call from Jim Ekholm regarding basketball in Haskell Park. Ekholm said there were many problems with basketball in Haskell Park. There were too many cars driving into the park. Ekholm is worried about small children being hit by cars. He said that once basketball was taken away, the problems went away. An unnamed resident called about Oakdale Park. The residents are both against basketball in the Haskell and Oakdale Parks.

Petrasek said that he visited both Oakdale and Haskell Parks before coming to the meeting. There was a family making use of the picnic area in Oakdale Park. The asphalt is in terrible shape in Oakdale Park. There were children making use of the playground in Haskell Park. The full court in Haskell Park is very small and the asphalt is in rough shape. The court is not marked for basketball. Petrasek cannot believe the city will attract crowds with these courts. He asked about Emerson Park and the complaints. Schletty replied it was the “same crowd of older teenagers,” and complaints of swearing, marijuana and urination. The police had a neighborhood meeting and the conditions got

better for a while. The two closest neighbors have the most issues. Many calls are not related to basketball.

Lynch commented that the city could choose not to fix the asphalt to discourage older children from playing. Schletty brought up the hoops at St. Stephens and said that the city has not received any calls about that court. He suggested taking one of the hoops away from Emerson to evaluate what happens and see if there is a decline in calls. DeLaRosby said that it would be the antithesis of the purpose of the committee. The problems with the parks are police issues. The committee has heard from residents from both sides [of the issue] in the town hall meeting. The strategic initiative is to have recreational opportunities for all ages and abilities. The basketball hoops are low to no cost. [The city] owes this to all 20,000 residents not to just the eighteen households that surround the parks, especially if they live in apartments and in Ward I.

Bellows commented that Weschcke Park has had few complaints. Schletty said that any issues the park had were addressed by new fencing. The neighbors were instructed to call the police so that problems could be recorded. Either the problems went away or the neighbors got used to them.

Petrasek talked about the recommendations to forward to Council. DeLaRosby said that it is not necessary to vote on more than one option; he would put forth one hoop in Oakdale and in Haskell. Lynch asked Berry what kind of recommendation Council would want. Berry said that the Park Committee should do what they want. Petrasek said that it would behoove the committee to be specific. Lynch made a motion to add one hoop in Oakdale and Haskell Parks, emphasizing the committee is not replicating conditions from previous years and is not improving the asphalt in order to discourage “back and forth” basketball play. Bellows amended the motion to remove one hoop in Emerson Park. (The amendment died.) DeLaRosby restated the motion recommending that the city to put up one hoop in Oakdale and Haskell Park and that the city will not maintain the asphalt; not have full court basketball; and will clearly post the hours for basketball play. The motion carried. All Ayes.

Schletty said he would forward the motion to Council along with data he has collected and the costs including for signage and the courts resurfacing in the future.

b. Easter Celebration Update/Egg Filling

Alisha McGraw gave an overview of the event to the committee. The event will take place on April 20, 9:30-10:30 am. The egg hunt will be occur at 10 am sharp. There is an Australian outback themed petting zoo this year. There will be a raffle for two big stuffed animals and a raffle for sports themed Easter Baskets (non-gender specific.) The drawing will take place during the egg hunt. Dr. Jennifer Einsenhuth will have a concession stand and will donate to the event. Lynch and Petrasek volunteered for the event. Lynch said that his wife is willing to be the Easter Bunny if there are no other volunteers. McGraw said that she might have help from “Teens Who Care.” Volunteers will wear clearly marked “volunteer” vests.

5. OTHER

a. City Council Updates-NA

b. Staff Updates

i. Sports Complex- Schletty said that work on the storage garage started today. It is located where the old playground was located. Maintenance staff decided on not

changing the brown trim to save on costs, and to paint the walls gray. They will experiment with the upper building and paint one wall blue to see if it looks all right. Damage was done last weekend to the soccer fields. Someone made “donuts” in the field and left ruts in the low ground that is used for water collection. There is an estimated \$4,000 worth of damage, (staff time and reseeding and water sprinkler heads.)

- ii. **Marthaler Park-** Schletty talked about the playground in the park. It is 25-years old and has “outlived” its life. It needs to be removed. There is rusty metal grating on the equipment that a child could fall through. The playground is unsafe. A slide that was removed cannot be replaced. There are ADA fixes that need to be done to the equipment. However, the city does not want to invest in a new playground because of the future renovation of the park. Schletty said there are a few options. The city can remove the equipment and wait for the renovation to replace the equipment. The city can build a new “tot” playground in the lower park lot. The city would salvage a playground from Haskell Park to do this. The reinstallation would be a lot of work.

The committee talked about the options. Bellows said that it was nice to have the playground next to the shelter in order for the parents to watch their children. DeLaRosby said that the safety aspect is most important. He is in favor of transplanting the equipment from Haskell Park. There may be less revenue generated from the park shelter with the removal of the playground equipment. Schletty said that removing the playground would make use of the shelter more “friendly” because of the diminished playground traffic. DeLaRosby asked about the Trailhead project and if Dakota County could help pay for new equipment.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

The committee members adjourned at 6:07 pm. The next Park and Recreation Committee meeting will take place on Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 5:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon G. Hatfield