

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

APRIL 6, 2023

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 6th day of April, 2023 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Howarth called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Abruzzese, Delong Miller, Hipp, Horwath, Mui, Schletty, Williams, and Youth Commissioner Churcher.

ALSO PRESENT: Parks & Rec/Community Services Director Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Sierra Heitala.

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Commissioner Williams made a motion to approve the March 2, 2023 Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Hipp seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

LABORE ROAD SIDEWALK STUDY

The Parks & Rec Director stated that this study was approved by the City Council at its March meeting and explained the intent of the study to determine if any amenities should be added along Labore Road. He noted that there will be a public engagement session on March 23rd at the Montreal Courts community room. He also provided details on the public engagement tool that is available online. He stated that the goal would be gather feedback from the community and have a potential plan by September. He noted that funds are not currently budgeted for a trail, sidewalk, or another amenity along Labore Road. He stated that once the plan is completed, they would more appropriately begin to budget and apply for grants.

Chair Horwath asked if the intention would be for a sidewalk versus a trail.

The Parks & Rec Director noted that is not yet determined. He noted that it could be a combination of amenities and that would be determined through this study process. He provided more details on the difference between a sidewalk and trail. He believed that the side of the road

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the amenity would be located would be more heavily discussed as this moves forward, along with cost.

Chair Horwath stated that he is surprised that this was not driven by, or more involving, the Parks & Recreation Commission.

The Parks & Rec Director stated that was discussed but it was determined that it should remain high level with engagement from the commissions through public involvement. He explained that it was determined that a subcommittee was not necessary but encourage the Commission to provide feedback through the engagement process.

Chair Horwath noted that is a part of his regular running route and the road is pretty rough with fast-moving vehicles.

Commissioner Hipp hoped that the safety of Labore and Arcade would be considered. The Commission agreed that intersection experiences many accidents.

UPDATE TO DAVID BEHLES SCHOLARSHIP

The Parks & Rec Director stated that the City received the David Behles scholarship in 2015 through a donation in honor of a former resident. He stated that in 2017 the Commission discussed the topic, and a form was created which allows subsidizing of youth programming. He noted that all youth activities are also subsidized by 25 percent through contributions from LCRA. He commented that the scholarship has not been well used and the Commission has had discussions about whether to make funds available for adult and senior programming. He stated that he reached out to Ms. Behles to gain her input on opening up the funds to other age groups and Ms. Behles agreed that the funds could be used for any family or individual of any age needing financial assistance. He stated that there are also ideas the group could consider for fundraising or replenishment of this fund if the balance were to be used more. He noted that within the packet is written confirmation from Ms. Behles specifying her support for expansion of the use of these funds.

Chair Horwath appreciated the quick turnaround from the discussion at the last meeting. He commended staff for those efforts.

Commissioner Schletty recognized that only \$1,000 has been used since 2015 and commented that it would be good to receive an update on the fund balance going forward. He stated that perhaps it would be appropriate to review other methods for replenishing that balance in the future.

The Parks & Rec Director noted that he intends to provide an annual report and will provide a copy to Ms. Behles. He reviewed the upcoming marketing that staff has planned for the scholarship.

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Schletty introduced the following motion:

***IN SUPPORT OF UPDATING THE DAVID BEHLES SCHOLARSHIP TO
INCLUDE SUPPORT FOR ALL LITTLE CANADA FAMILIES WHO SUBMIT FOR
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN LITTLE CANADA PARKS AND RECREATION
PROGRAMS OR ACTIVITIES***

The foregoing motion was duly seconded by Williams.
Ayes (7). Nays (0). Motion passed.

RECREATION COORDINATOR UPDATE

The Recreation Coordinator provided an update on recently held events and activities and noted that the City received an award from the MRPA for the new initiatives to create a more equitable and inclusive Farmers Market.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that while the programs implemented in the City's Farmers Market are not new, it is new to Little Canada. He provided more details on the MRPA and the award the City will be receiving at an upcoming City Council meeting. He thanked the Recreation Coordinator for her hard work.

The Parks & Rec Director provided details on a new baseball basics program the City will be offering at no cost and how it was developed based on a resident and former youth coach that offered to volunteer and a contribution from LCRA.

Chair Horwath commented that it is great to see the skills offered at this level as it could build interest in the sport going forward.

The Recreation Coordinator provided additional details on upcoming programming, activities, and events. She noted that the updated website is now live and reminded everyone that shelter rentals can be booked on the City website.

Commissioner Mui asked about the timeline for the youth field trips.

The Recreation Coordinator replied that the times vary but that information can be found on the website.

Commissioner Williams asked about the average attendance for the outdoor farmers market.

The Recreation Coordinator estimated between 100 and 200 people per market.

MRPA ARTICLE

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The Parks & Rec Director stated that the MRPA holds an annual conference, and he had the opportunity to meet with the MRPA President at the last conference. He noted that he received a follow-up call, and an article was written based on those conversations.

Chair Horwath commented that the article was great and highlighted what the City has going on. He commended both the Commission and staff for the work they have done.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that the new improvements at Gervais Mill are great, and she looks forward to seeing that in the spring.

Commissioner Mui commented that the City has been great at clearing the trails after snow events.

Commissioner Williams commented that she frequently visits the Gervais Mill Pond and there are early migrants because of the aeration.

Chair Horwath asked if a charging station has been considered for incorporation with the Pioneer Parks improvements.

The Parks & Rec Director commented that the Public Works Director is working on developing EV charging policies. He confirmed that community parks and City Hall have been identified as potential locations. He did not believe anything would be implemented until the policies are in place.

Commissioner Schletty referenced recent legislation related to Emerald Ash Borer tree removal. He asked if the City handled the removal of those trees last year or whether that would continue this year.

The Parks & Rec Director confirmed that activity would most likely continue into the next five years. He provided details on the grant the City received from the State and the tree planting that would continue. He noted that the City's shade tree budget has been increased as well and would likely continue to do so.

Commissioner Hipp commented that she regularly does the Pioneer, Spooner, and Gervais loop and notices others doing it as well. She commented that it has been great to see the bike racks emerging after the snow and agreed that the entrance to Gervais looks great.

Commissioner Delong Miller hoped to visit the parks and trails more in the next weeks.

Commissioner Churcher replied that she recently visited Nadeau Nature Center and enjoyed the park.

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There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.