

**WORKSHOP MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
LITTLE CANADA, MINNESOTA**

**January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

Chair Dave Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and the following members of the commission were present:

MEMBERS PRESENT:                   Ms. Anna Abruzzese  
  Ms. Rose Chu  
  Ms. Sharen Darling  
  Mr. Dave Miller  
  Mr. Peter Schletty

MEMBERS ABSENT:                   Mr. Ron Horwath  
  Mr. Tom Ray

ALSO PRESENT:                    Mr. Bryce Shearen, Parks and Recreation  
  Community Services Manager  
  Mr. Derek Anderson, Parks Maintenance  
  Supervisor  
  Mr. Tom Fischer, City Council Member  
  Mr. Bob Kost, SEH Landscape Architect  
  Ms. Anna Springer, SEH Landscape Arc.  
  Ms. Anna Leibel, Recording Secretary

**PARK THEME  
DISCUSSION**

Kost reported the Commission had held a workshop in December to discuss the theme for Pioneer Park, and from that he created a worksheet of items the Commission wanted incorporated into the theme of the park. He explained the topics helped him and Springer create two concept themes for Pioneer Park. Kost stated the group had focused a lot on a theme that included a sense of adventure or journey throughout the park. He explained the Commission had also discussed a voyageur concept.

Kost discussed the layout of Pioneer Park including the ponding area, active recreation spaces like the baseball and soccer fields, playground, small shelter, central pavilion, and parking lot. He thought these components could all incorporate natural materials and features that would help give the park a theme. Kost noted the Commission would have to decide whether they want to make long term enhancements to the park or change the entire face of the park. He explained the improvements could be made slowly over time. Kost suggested the Commission consider how

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to improve the central pavilion and address the ADA compliance challenges.

Springer presented the first Pioneer Park concept called “Into the Wild Country”. She explained this theme highlighted the City’s past through French immigration to this area. Springer noted the Desoto side of the park is a natural area that could provide a sense of curiosity by creating an urban forest. Springer also suggested the playground include a natural play area. She proposed moving the tennis and basketball courts to the new parcel, if the land is purchased for the park. This would provide space for an additional full size basketball court. Springer explained the Into the Wild Concept focused on addressing the needs of nearby residents including Montreal Courts and Patrina Ponds. The concept emphasized the social nature of the park through small picnic shelters, a community garden, solar trees, ice-skating on the ponding area, a warming house, boardwalk and dock pavilion. Springer explained all of the concept elements were options the Commission could choose to include. She noted there was also open space to continue the City parks’ character of open space turf areas.

Kost and Springer also presented several of the park elements with pictures to help visualize the ideas. The pictures included a natural playground, rubberized surfaces molded as mounds, a castle playground, several splash pad ideas, public art concepts, and water features including a boardwalk, naturalized ponding, and fire bowls.

Schletty asked about the new elements around the ponding shown in the first concept. Kost explained the first concept showed a warming house or community gathering space near the stormwater pond. He suggested community education classes could be held here, or skates could be rented during the winter. Darling explained the Commission should be careful to incorporate new elements across all parks. She asked if the theme, once decided, would be incorporated throughout all of the City’s park. The Commission agreed the theme should be unique to Pioneer Park. Kost agreed the Commission should evaluate the concepts and decide which ones would be best in Pioneer Park. He encouraged the Commission to consider what could be done in the short term and also over a long term.

It was asked how much was budgeted for the Pioneer Park playground. The Community Services Manager stated there is \$250,000 budgeted for the playground, but explained the Commission should think big and then projects can be staged or scaled back as necessary. Chu asked the distance around the walking path. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor stated three laps equaled one mile. Councilman Fischer stated he liked the concepts, but wanted the Commission to consider the amount of people these elements would bring to the park. He explained Pioneer Park is short on

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parking and suggested the tennis and basketball courts be kept where they are, so that the space near the edge could be utilized for parking. Others suggested adding parking to the Desoto Street side instead of the Centerville Street side. Springer noted the first concept plan had about 45 additional parking spaces.

Springer presented the second concept "New France". She reminded the Commission the park elements could be added or removed from both concepts. Springer stated this concept resembles a French Garden or Versailles. She explained this concept featured more formal geometry, and took out one of the baseball fields to put in an additional multipurpose field. This concept also included a dog park, splash pad or fountain plaza, gateway, new central pavilion, fitness course along the trail with nine different nodes for exercise, and expanded parking. Kost explained the exercise nodes were open spaces that could have a posted exercise activity, or even fitness equipment. Springer stated the plaza could serve as a gathering space, and the play equipment could have different sections around the fountain. Kost explained the central pavilion was a redesigned open air concept with closed bathroom, concession, and storage areas on all four sides. He stated the playground area in concept two also incorporated rubberized surfacing instead of wood chips or sand, for ADA purposes. Springer explained this concept also added a multipurpose court. Another feature, Kost stated, was a hardened edge around the stormwater ponding so people could sit and enjoy the natural area. Springer explained more vegetation or a pollinator garden could be added to some of the turf spaces.

Darling asked if there was a high liability risk for a splash pad. Kost stated it is the same as any other park feature. He explained no lifeguard is needed but sanitation and water quality must be checked. Kost stated there are two types of splash pads, some use water once and others recirculate water using chlorination. He explained recirculated systems must be checked twice daily, require a small shower area, and add significant maintenance. Kost stated single use systems are more expensive in terms of water use, but require less maintenance. He noted that both systems require additional park maintenance especially to winterize the splash pad. Chu stated she was in favor of a recirculating splash pad. Abruzzese asked if a water feature was necessary. Springer stated the survey results had shown residents really want a splash pad or pool amenity. Councilman Fischer noted a splash pad would be popular at Pioneer Park especially due to the amount of people and ball games during the summer. Schletty asked how the splash pad would be regulated. Kost explained the system can be put on a time sequence. The Community Services Manager noted how important it is to be cognizant of the parks surroundings, like woodchips should not be placed near a splash pad because it would create a mess. He stated a rubberized surface would be needed for the

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playground area, if a splash pad was put in. Kost stated some rubberized surface would be needed to meet ADA requirements. It was mentioned that all of these ideas would be expensive. Councilman Fischer suggested the Commission consider what elements would better the park, and consider the cost as the actual process began to play out. He explained items could always be scaled back, but this plan should illustrate the best vision for the park. Darling stated the splash pad could be put in a different park. Councilman Fisher noted parking would be an issue in other parks. It was suggested the splash pad be put in Spooner Park. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor explained there are a significant number of trees in Spooner Park and falling leaves would add additional maintenance. Kost noted the two concept themes were not mutually exclusive and elements could be combined or changed. Councilman Fischer noted he was happy to have the two contrasting themes which allowed the Commission to visualize their ideas. Schletty asked if this plan should include a water fountain near the basketball courts as discussed in previous Commission meetings. The Community Services Manager stated that location was difficult because water lines would have to be connected from the street. He explained walking to the central pavilion was more economical than building a water fountain. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor noted the concepts include a lot of new park shelters which would require a lot more parking. He suggested more open space would be a better option. Schletty wondered if these concepts over programmed the park. He suggested more space be left open. Kost noted the City wouldn't likely be able to build additional parks, because it is developed. He asked the Commission to consider what amenities would be important, because there may not be other spaces to incorporate them.

Kost asked the Commission which theme they liked better and what features they liked best. He explained Springer and himself could create a hybrid plan to showcase at the open house. Abruzzese stated she was in favor of the Into the Wild theme because it incorporates the needs of the community, but it doesn't have a splash pad. She explained she would like to see a splash pad in the final plan. Abruzzese stated the natural elements would be intriguing for park goers. Darling stated she preferred the Into the Wild Theme, and the community garden and splash pad features. She suggested the exercise stations be incorporated into a different park and the ice rink be skipped. Schletty stated he preferred the Into the Wild theme as well. He noted the character of the community doesn't align with the sharp angles of the New France theme. Schletty explained he did like all of the extra elements of the New France theme including the additional multipurpose field, exercise stations and dog park. Kost stated the park should be looked at in terms of layers. He explained kids want to go to a park to play on the playground, but other age groups should also be considered. Chair Miller stated he like the Into the Wild theme because the trail wasn't being moved as much. He also liked Into the Wild because the

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basketball and tennis courts stayed in the same location. Kost noted this would leave the new park parcel unplanned, or open for parking. He explained if the parcel is purchased for the park it should be fully incorporated into the park. Kost stated using the parcel as parking would be a very expensive parking lot. Chair Miller suggested the new plan have less shelters. Chair Miller also liked the idea of a splash pad. Abruzzese noted she was not in favor of moving the basketball and tennis courts. Chair Miller stated he was not in favor of moving or changing the stormwater ponding. Kost and Springer stated the stormwater ponding could be greatly improved with better vegetation and was seen to them as a missed opportunity. Chu stated she was in favor of the New France theme. She explained she liked the wooded area shown in the Into the Wild Plan, but also liked having a gateway to the park, formalized entrance, and she really wanted to emphasize the edges and entrances. Chu stated she was also in favor of a splash pad. Kost stated everyone was in favor of a splash pad. Chu stated she also liked the community plaza shown in the New France Concept. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor asked if this would be the best space for performances, considering Spooner Park has a bandshell. Kost stated the formality of New France could be captured through the Into the Wild Concept, without completely redoing the trails. He explained he didn't want the Commission to lose sight of the wow park, due to a concern over parking. Kost stated the central pavilion should also be enhanced to better serve the needs of the park. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor stated the maintenance garage in the pavilion was very important for the park.

Kost stated there were three options for the central pavilion. It could be remodeled, rebuilt, or removed. Kost explained the amount of baseball and softball activity wouldn't necessarily require a shelter be in place. Councilman Fisher stated the restrooms and concessions do need to be centrally located. He added maintenance equipment for irrigation purposes is also already located there. Kost explained it would cost between \$200,000 and \$300,000 to remodel, and \$300,000 and \$600,000 to rebuild. He noted ensuring durable quality for the bathrooms would also cost more. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor stated he would like to see the facility remodeled. Chu stated she would like to see a cost analysis before making a decision. It was mentioned that the upstairs space could be used or rented as a meeting space if it was ADA compliant. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor stated it would be inconvenient because it is in the middle of the park and there is no vehicle access.

Chair Miller asked how the Commission felt about adding a second multipurpose field. Artificial turf was also discussed. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor stated artificial turf would have to be fenced to limit unwanted activity on the field and to maintain it for varsity games. Kost suggested a hybrid artificial and real grass field. The Parks

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Maintenance Supervisor explained the field could be reconstructed with a layer of sand to correct the drainage issues.

Kost asked how the Commission felt about having a community garden in Pioneer Park. Councilman Fischer suggested the Commission survey the surrounding neighborhood before making a final decision. It was also noted that the garden's location would need proper sunlight, which limited its placement in Pioneer Park. It was suggested the community garden be considered on the new parcel if acquired by the City. Councilman Fischer also stated that the current parking is insufficient for existing uses and that parking should be considered for any future enhancements. Parks Maintenance Supervisor questioned if a second multipurpose field would be used. Abruzzese stated artificial turf would be necessary if there was a second multipurpose court. The Parks Maintenance Supervisor suggested incorporating a smaller multipurpose field within the ball field. Kost stated Springer and himself would put together a revised concept for the January 25th open house from 6:00 – 7:30 at City Hall.

Kost presented a concept plan for Spooner Park. He noted they approached this design with a light touch because Canadian Days uses this space. Kost stated the playground and trails could be designed to be universally accessible. He noted there was also a bump out along the trail near the amphitheater that would be accessible as well. Flowers, plantings and raingardens were also incorporated into the concept plan. Kost stated the bandshell should be remodeled. Abruzzese suggested portions of the trail be tucked in so as to be more hidden to walkers. She explained this could offer an element of curiosity to the park. Darling asked if the playground would be put in this year. The Community Services Manager stated he had received calls from many of the vendors he contacted last year, but the playground would not be built until after the Parks Plan was approved.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Anna Leibel