

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

June 7th, 2018

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission of the City of Little Canada, Minnesota, was held on the 7th of June in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road East in said city.

Chair Dave Miller called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and the following members of the commission were present:

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Rose Chu
Ms. Sharen Darling
Mr. Ron Horwath
Mr. Dave Miller
Mr. Tom Ray
Mr. Peter Schletty

MEMBERS ABSENT: Ms. Anna Abruzzese

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. Tom Fischer, City Council Member
Mr. Bryce Shearen, Parks & Recreation
Community Services Manager
Ms. Anna Leibel Recording Secretary
Ms. Vanessa Van Alstine, Cable TV Prod.

MINUTES

Ray made a motion to approve the minutes of the May meeting. Darling seconded the motion. The motion passed 6 – 0.

**LANDSCAPING
IN THUNDER
BAY /
WESTWINDS
PARK**

The Community Services Manager reported staff had met with Xcel Energy on May 29th at Thunder Bay/Westwinds Park to talk about what could be grown in the area that was clear-cut. He explained the Commission had also toured this area during the Parks tour prior to the meeting. The Community Services Manager stated the City has received many calls about the vegetation removal, and the mulch that was left behind is not very aesthetically pleasing. He noted the contractor that cleared the area, sprayed a chemical to kill all deciduous growth. The Community Services Manager stated the area could be planted as early as this fall, but if nothing is done grass will grow through the mulch. He explained there was an opportunity to enhance the area through pollinator

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plants, natural vegetation, or a possible location of a community garden. The Community Services Manager stated Greenbrier Street is likely to be redone soon and will need space for stormwater runoff. He noted Jake Sedlacek from Xcel Energy was present to discuss potential options for the site, but it is not known how much or if any funds would be available from Xcel towards any projects in this area. Mr. Sedlacek stated the area was cleared of all woody species and sprayed with a chemical to kill all deciduous tree growth. He explained growing pollinator-friendly plants under powerlines works well because it keeps the woody species out, and can be one less area for the City to mow. Mr. Sedlacek explained there are three to four inches of mulch under the powerlines which will allow grass to grow, and keep deciduous growth out. He noted Xcel Energy does not have money in the budget for these types of projects, but there is a team of people from Xcel Energy who meet and find possible ways to get money for projects like this. Mr. Sedlacek explained Xcel Energy has used Minnesota Landscape in the past to help create a plan for the area, which can be shared at a public meeting.

Chair Miller asked if Minnesota Landscape could bring pictures and examples of things that have and haven't worked in the past to provide residents and the Commission with ideas for the area. He also suggested the company come prepared with the type of soil found in the area. Chair Miller asked why some trees were left while others were taken. Mr. Sedlacek explained if the trees were on private property the landowners may have had a license to plant a certain type of tree. He noted these licenses were being checked to see if they were used appropriately, but if they were not, they would be taken down the next time the area was cut. Darling asked if the ideas provided by Minnesota Landscape were free. Mr. Sedlacek explained the ideas were at no cost. Schletty explained the pictures that were shown to the Commission were in rural areas, and may not be best suited for the park and trail which abuts people's backyard.

Mr. Sedlacek stated the regrowth process was about three years, and by the third year, the new plantings begin to thrive. Horwath noted landscaping a portion of the area may also be a suitable option. He also thought it may be necessary to restore animal habitats that may have been destroyed. Ray suggested the area by Arcade Street may be a good place for a community garden. Chu stated the ponding and surrounding vegetation should also be improved.

The Community Services Manager stated the area off Greenbrier Street would most likely be used for stormwater once Greenbrier Street has been reconstructed. Chair Miller noted the Commission had some time to think about the area because the chemical wouldn't allow anything to grow until late fall. Ray asked if Xcel or the City had options for the Commission to consider that included cost. He also suggested getting input at Canadian

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Days. Chu explained the project could be done in phases to divide the cost. Chair Miller stated the Commission would need to know where the private land boundaries were along the area. Mr. Sedlacek clarified private landowners and the City alike can plant approved shrubs and plants, as long as a plan is submitted and approved by Xcel Energy.

Councilman Fischer shared his excitement about being able to work with a clean slate, but noted Xcel Energy should have spoken with the City before clear cutting the area. He explained residents were devastated by the loss of trees and how the character of the area had been changed. Councilman Fischer asked why Xcel Energy decided to clear-cut the area. Mr. Sedlacek explained woody species are supposed to be taken out every four years, and usually neighbors are warned before large trees are taken. He stated this project was seen as routine, and a mailing wasn't necessary. Mr. Sedlacek noted in retrospect a mailing should have been sent to affected property owners. Ray asked what the clear zone was for plantings. Mr. Sedlacek responded it was 25 to 30 feet below the lowest point of the overhead lines. Chu suggested a statement from Xcel Energy be shared with residents on social media. Councilman Fischer stated this clear-cut was much more than four years of growth. Horwath stated he has lived in the area for 8 years, and this had never happened before. Councilman Fischer explained this had been a public relations challenge for the City to overcome and hoped this would be handled more appropriately going forward. Darling stated residents and the City should be treated with more respect in the future and made aware of projects like this. Horwath asked if Xcel Energy would be coming back to clear the shrubs and trees that were left. Mr. Sedlacek explained the plantings that were left were thought to be on private property and Xcel would review their easement agreements before acting.

**VETERANS
MEMORIAL
PARK
EXPENDITURES**

The Community Services Manager reported the Veteran's Memorial Committee plans included an interpretive sign at Veterans Memorial Park. In addition, two 12-inch by 12-inch pavers engraved and four 4-inch by 8-inch veterans pavers need to be engraved. **Horwath made a motion to approve the expenditure from the Veterans Memorial Fund in the amount of \$617.90 to Advantage Sign and approximately \$125 to Rivard Stone for the engraving of six pavers. Chu seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.**

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**JULY PARKS
TOUR**

The Community Services Manager suggested the Commission hold a parks tour prior to the next meeting on July 10. Darling explained the Waterworks Trail was a hidden amenity in Little Canada and may be a good chance to explore a portion of the trail. The Community Services Manager suggested the Commission visit Pioneer Park and consider some of the improvements outlined in the Parks Master Plan, or even visit a park outside Little Canada. Horwath noted it may take a little longer than a regular parks tour, but he could help set up a visit to a park in Minneapolis. He suggested July 17th as a potential date for the Parks tour. The Community Services Manager stated visiting the waterworks trail and the dog park on Demont Avenue would be a suitable option prior to the July 10th meeting. He stated he would send additional information to the Commission prior to the next meeting.

**OTHER
BUSINESS**

The Community Services Manager reported the Market Place Morning Talk topic is Estate Planning on June 13th at the Bingo Hall.

The Community Services Manager reported senior exercise takes place year round, every Wednesday and Friday from 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. at the Old Fire Hall.

The Community Services Manager reported the off-leash dog park at the Demont Avenue Skating Rink is open for the summer season.

The Community Services Manager reported registration for fall youth activities was open the firearm safety class would be offered as a hybrid class again, due to its success in the Spring.

The Community Services Manager stated 20 people had participated in the adult pickleball class, and the group was planning to continue in the Fall and evolve into league play. He stated the goal of this class was to help connect pickleball players and provide times for players to have access to the court and others to play with.

The Community Services Manager stated Hotdog with a Deputy would take place on June 26th from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. at Pioneer Park.

The Community Services Manager reported the first Movie in the Park event of the summer was scheduled for June 21st and the movie would be Despicable Me 3. He stated the event would have an ice cream truck and concessions. Another movie is scheduled for later this summer on August 16th.

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The Community Services Manager reported the Ice Cream Social would be on August 2, at the Spooner Park lower shelter.

ADJOURN

Horwath moved the meeting be adjourned

Motion seconded by Chu.

Motion carried 6 – 0.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna Leibel
Recording Secretary