

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

**JULY 9, 2020**

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof a regular meeting of the City Council of Little Canada, Minnesota was convened on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of July 2020 in the Council Chambers of the City Center located at 515 Little Canada Road in said City.

Chair Dave Miller called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION:** Abruzzese, Chu, Darling, Horwath, Miller, Ray, and Schletty Absent: None.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Parks & Rec/Community Services Manager Bryce Shearen and Recreation Coordinator Claire Hoffman.

*In accordance with the requirements of Minn. Stat. Section 13D.021, the City Administrator has determined that an in-person meeting is not practical or prudent because of a health pandemic or an emergency declared under Chapter 12 of the Minnesota Statutes.*

*Because of the health pandemic and emergency declaration, it has been determined that attendance at the regular meeting location by elected officials and members of the public is not feasible. Therefore, some or all of the Parks & Recreation Commission members may be participating by telephone or other electronic means. This meeting will be recorded in its entirety.*

*Members of the public may monitor the meeting on the CTV North Suburbs website (live stream) or use the meeting link provided on the city website prior to the meeting.*

**MINUTES**

Commissioner Ray made a motion to approve the May 7, 2020, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Abruzzese seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

**OLD BUSINESS: None**

**NEW BUSINESS: RESILIENT COMMUNITIES PROJECT – PIONEER PARK  
MASTER PLAN**

The Community Services Manager provided background on the RCP students and Pioneer Park Master Plan process. He stated that the cost of the program has been budgeted for within the parks consulting funds.

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RCP students Cate Bruns, Vipasha Bansal, Kendra Klencz, Gunnar Carlson, and Kyle Franta introduced themselves.

Commissioner Chu asked for clarification on the questions and how the information will be used. The Community Services Manager explained that the RCP students developed these questions and will use the answers to guide the community engagement process. He stated that this input was desired from the Commission prior to beginning the community engagement process.

Mr. Carlson asked what has been done to engage community members in the past and which methods worked well.

Chair Miller stated that there was community engagement gathered at Canadian Days for a past park project. He stated that children were also engaged at the schools. He stated that they attempted to take advantage of events that were already being held to engage a large number of residents. He recognized that the process may be different because of the pandemic and lack of public events.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that a community survey was also done. She stated that was completed via telephone. She recognized that both methods had gaps in those reached. She explained that the people that show up to the larger events are not always the people that use the parks on a regular process. She stated that the survey was done via telephone in the middle of the day, which is not always the best time for people.

Commissioner Chu commented that she would have loved to have enough time to go to the community to get more responses in the last process. She commented on the changing demographics of the community and wanted to ensure that all members of the community felt heard. She commented that plans were also on display at City Hall for community members to come and provide input. The Community Services Manager confirmed that a neighborhood meeting was held at City Hall.

Commissioner Darling commented that the open house at City Hall was a successful method to gather input. She noted that members of the Commission were present and the residents that attended provided lots of ideas.

Commissioner Horwath commented on the technology and dot system that was used for the different methods of engagement.

Commissioner Schletty concurred with Commissioner Horwath and stated that it would be great to gather additional input from local children.

Commissioner Ray commented that the City can use its social media and website and provided examples of different things that have been promoted in that manner. He commented on how the diversity of residents that participated in the fishing event.

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Commissioner Schletty commented on the community playground build, which was very successful. He commented on the wide range of skills that residents brought to the event.

Mr. Carlson asked for details on that event.

The Community Services Manager stated that a subcommittee was formed, and the group reached out to residents and local businesses. He stated that there was a fantastic turnout for the event. He noted that planning began about six months in advance of the event. He hoped that built a foundation that will increase the buy-in for Pioneer Park.

Commissioner Chu stated that SignUp Genius was used for the event, which allowed people to choose the time and activity that they would participate in. She stated that staff was instrumental in bringing forward examples of other community build events.

Commissioner Horwath stated that the signup process went well, and he was impressed with the great turnout for the event. He stated that some people attended through word of mouth and showed up to help with tools. He stated that Pioneer Park was talked about as being the next example where a community build could be scaled up.

The Community Services Manager commented that along with residents and local businesses, city staff and the Fire Department volunteered their time helping with the build.

Commissioner Chu stated that residents that participated were very proud that they were a part of building the playground. She commented that it is a great opportunity for families to be involved.

Ms. Klenz asked the prominent community groups within the town in terms of public engagement.

Commissioner Chu stated that there are a lot of Asian Americans in Little Canada along with a large African American community. She noted that many are new immigrants and she is always thinking of ways those groups can be reached to be included. She stated that there are also families that have been in Little Canada for generations.

Commissioner Darling stated that two of the groups that would be important to gain input from would be the Little Canada Recreation Association and the Canadian Days Committee.

Commissioner Horwath stated that in terms of engagement for the playground structure, there are apartment buildings adjacent to the park and commented that it would be important to gain input from that group in addition to the other methods and groups mentioned.

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Commissioner Schletty stated that adjacent to the park is a small group of single-level townhomes. He stated that when he visits the park there are children and families, but the park is also used by the senior population. He stated that he would want to ensure the accessibility needs are considered and implemented. He noted that there are a number of mobile home parks in the community and wondered if those groups of residents are properly engaged.

Commissioner Ray stated that there is some lower-income housing near Pioneer Park and believed that a community garden would be a popular feature.

Chair Miller echoed the comments made by other Commissioners. He commented that there are sports leagues and teams that use the fields at the park that should be engaged.

Commissioner Abruzzese commented that there is a crosshatch of people that are found in the gaps in terms of engagement and believed that more should be done to try to reach the lower-income and more diverse groups of the population.

Commissioner Chu commented that many of the children go to the schools in Roseville and therefore that would be an overlap that could be used for engagement.

The Community Services Manager stated that the Commission could answer question three and then the responses to the remainder of the questions could be provided via email, as there would not be enough time to address all the questions tonight.

Ms. Bansal asked if the Commission believes that the parks serves its constituents well and whether it would be interested in receiving feedback from groups outside of Little Canada that may use the parks.

Commissioner Horwath stated that he has been very interested in making Pioneer Park more of a regional attraction, not just for residents but for others outside of Little Canada. He stated that he has a 10-year-old and 13-year-old and they have traveled far and wide to reach good playgrounds. He stated that it would be nice to have people coming from other communities to visit playgrounds in Little Canada in the same way he is willing to drive 40 minutes to bring his family to an interesting park.

Commissioner Schletty stated that he would also like to see the parks bring in a wider group of people from outside the community. He commented that some of the parks do not have parking available to serve a high number of users. He believed that the City is doing well serving the parks needs of its constituents. He stated that the City could do more to provide additional amenities and provide more variety to serve people of different age groups.

Commissioner Ray stated that there was a huge influx of interest in a splashpad. He stated that a splashpad would be a feature that would bring more people in. He stated that there was also a

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discussion of a community building that could be rented and would also be attractive to people from other communities.

Chair Miller stated that he would want to first focus on serving the community of Little Canada. He stated that if other people come, that would be great, but he would want the focus to be more on the community itself.

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she agrees that the focus should be on residents of Little Canada. She stated that if it is a quality park, that would be attractive to people from outside the community as well. She stated that she would like to see elements that are open for residents to access, even if they are not a member of a team or club.

Commissioner Darling stated that she agrees with the concept of serving this community first. She stated that others would always be welcome, but the first priority would be the people of Little Canada. She commented that more work should be done to include and engage minorities. She stated that she would like to concentrate on the fact that it is a Little Canada park and would like to see the history of the City incorporated into the design. She stated that they could partner with the History Center of Little Canada.

Commissioner Chu stated that she agrees with many of the comments, noting that they can center on ensuring that the community is served and that can lead to the park being a destination for others. She commented that she has met users of the park that have come from other communities. She stated that she also believes that additional work should be done to engage people of color. She also suggested that they could look at honoring the history of the past while also looking at how the City has evolved.

The Community Services Manager thanked the Commission for their input.

Ms. Bruns commented that there is a question related to history and asked the Commission members to respond to the remaining questions via email in order to provide the remainder of the feedback.

The Community Services Manager asked the Commission to respond to the remaining questions via email to him by the following Tuesday and he could send those responses to the RCP students.

**NEW BUSINESS: FARMERS MARKET REPORT**

The Recreation Coordinator reported that the Farmers Market season began the previous week and will run every Monday from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m. through September 28<sup>th</sup>. She commented that there is sanitizer and face masks are available. She stated that visitors are encouraged to wear a mask, but they are not required. She stated that the market ran well, and people were very respectful. She commented that about 130 people attended and two additional vendors

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approached her to sign up. She commented that those additional vendors and a food truck will be at the event the next week.

**UPDATES**

The Community Services Manager reported that most of the youth activities were canceled for the summer. He stated that staff is working on potential fall events. The Community Services Manager reported that adult activities have begun with COVID-19 preparedness plans submitted prior to the beginning of sports. The Community Services Manager stated that the facilities are being rented following the guideline of groups of 25 people or less. The Community Services Manager stated that one of the recreation coordinators has significantly reduced his time with the City because of the lack of recreational programming.

The Community Services Manager stated that an initiative will begin the next week in order to encourage more residents to fill out the census. He encouraged the Commission to reach out to their friends and neighbors to fill out the census form and ensure that a proper count is provided for Little Canada.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:21 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple  
*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*