

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

AUGUST 6, 2020

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 August, 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 6:36 p.m. and the following members of the Parks & Recreation Commission were present at roll call:

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION: Horwath, Darling, Miller, Ray, Schletty, Chu, and Abruzzese.

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 Commissioners 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 Horwath made a motion to approve the July 9, 2020, Parks & Recreation Commission minutes as submitted. Commissioner Darling seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

PRESENTATIONS: RON FULFORD JR. WITH iBall4Life

Ron Fulford Jr., President of iBall4Life, stated that they are a community outreach company that began in 2015 and specializes in athlete highlights, training, mentorship, charitable events, feeding the homeless, and spiritual growth. He stated that they speak to youth at schools and hold youth camps. He provided details on his concept of Little Big Project which would be a partnership between iBall4Life and Little Canada Parks and Recreation. He stated that the purpose of the partnership would be to refurbish the Pioneer Park basketball court to create a safe place for gameplay engagement, events, and programs. He provided a mockup of what the basketball court could look like including new pavement markings, bleachers, new regulation hoops with stable glass backboard and logos, and gum quality performance poles for the hoops.

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He stated that iBall4Life could also hold a Little Hooper's Clinic that would include a Harlem Globetrotter's player and they would practice shooting, dribbling, and mentorship. He stated that iBall4Life would also host the Pioneer Park fundraising basketball game which would feature additional special guest Bone Collector. He noted that the event would be live-streamed on the Little Canada Park and Rec page, if possible, to raise awareness and funds that would be used towards improving the Little Canada community. He stated that he would also host an Anti-Violence Ball4Peace Rally to bring together Police, Fire, and other community leaders that could connect and speak with the youth.

Commissioner Ray stated that he remembers watching Mr. Fulford play in 2006 when his son was in school.

Commissioner Darling commented that this is very exciting, and Mr. Fulford's enthusiasm is catchy.

Commissioner Chu commented that she is also excited about this opportunity.

Mr. Fulford stated that with all the things 2020 has brought, there is a void and the youth are in need of something. He stated that iBall4Life started in Little Canada and he would like to start at home and build this community.

The Community Services Manager stated that staff wanted to bring Mr. Fulford in tonight to make the presentation, noting that Mr. Fulford would like to be engaged and help bring this forward. He noted that his intent was just to get input from the Commission. He stated that the resurfacing was done about three years ago, so perhaps the improvements are phased. He suggested perhaps moving forward with the new hoops as a starting point. He stated that they would have to work through details on events because of the pandemic but believed that a positive event would be beneficial to the community.

Commissioner Chu stated that the Commission has discussed different ways to engage the changing demographic of the community. She stated that she walks in the evenings and loves seeing children out playing basketball. She suggested that perhaps the improvements not only occur at Pioneer Park but other heavily used basketball courts in Little Canada.

Commissioner Ray stated that while he likes the look of the blacktop, he is unsure that would work on hot summer days. He noted that perhaps the logos could be incorporated. He stated that perhaps fencing on the ends would help.

Mr. Fulford agreed that a fence behind the hoop would be helpful because there is a wooded area behind one hoop and the ball often goes into that area. He stated that fencing helps to keep the game in the court area.

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Commissioner Ray commented that this is a great idea and he appreciates the enthusiasm of Mr. Fulford.

Chair Miller thanked Mr. Fulford for his ideas and excitement. He asked if the height of the hoops would be adjustable.

Mr. Fulford stated that he would suggest an adjustable hoop height. He explained that the City would own the keys to the hoop to ensure that damage is not done by others in the community. He explained that the height could be lowered for an event for younger children and then moved back up. He stated that the rims could also be breakaway for adult events that may be held at the location.

Chair Miller commented that the City has shied away from logos but has placed thank you's in parks to recognize other organizations.

Mr. Fulford explained that he would be fine not having his logo and further explained what iBall4Life is and the mission of the organization.

Commissioner Horwath stated that he would want to see the Master Plan updated with these changes so that they could be worked in with those improvements. He stated that he would be in favor of moving the court further away from other elements so that it has its own space. He noted that sometimes basketball has foul language and therefore would prefer to have that further away from the playground and tennis courts.

Mr. Fulford stated that he understands that statement and would agree that the court could be moved to the other area of the park that is not heavily used but noted that would be the decision of the City.

Commissioner Chu stated that they are in the Pioneer Park Master Plan process and perhaps this project could be included, identifying short and long term improvements.

The Community Services Manager commented that it would be expensive to move the basketball court and therefore is not something they would most likely want to do. He stated that perhaps there are areas in the park where another basketball court could be added, noting that the community is deficient in the number of courts offered compared to other similarly sized communities. He stated that these enhancements would not interfere with the Master Plan process for Pioneer Park and could move on separately. He stated that one idea could also be to move the playground further away.

Commissioner Schletty stated that the Commission has had a lot of discussion over the vision for Pioneer Park and what the group would like that park to be. He stated that it had not occurred to him as to improvements that could be made to the athletic fields and/or courts to make those destinations. He stated that he likes the idea of a court that would be a destination with

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bleachers. He stated that he often notices groups of people congregated around the basketball court and therefore seating would be helpful.

Commissioner Abruzzese echoed the comments that these are great ideas. She agreed that improvements could be made to other basketball courts in the community. She asked the role of iBall4Life in this partnership and reviewed the responsibilities of each partner as she understood it to be. She stated that it sounds like a great idea. She stated that there is a long-term vision for Pioneer Park and therefore it may take a while to get to the final outcome for the court. She agreed that perhaps the updated backboards and hoops would be a good start.

Commissioner Horwath stated that Mr. Fulford has great energy and great ideas. He stated that he believes second party programming is a great opportunity and brings forward new and unique programming that would not need to be run by Little Canada staff. He stated that his only concern would be with language and liked the idea of adding a second court to the park.

Commissioner Darling stated that she likes the idea of starting with the events and programming mentioned in the presentation as those could help to get this idea out and get people excited about the partnership. She stated that the Little Hooper's Clinic would be a great way to start.

Mr. Fulford commented that he could hold the event at Little Canada Elementary School.

Commissioner Ray asked if there is an outdoor court that would be comparable in the area that he could visit.

Mr. Fulford provided the location of a similar court at a park off Lexington in the City of Roseville.

The Community Services Manager stated the Commission could direct staff to continue to work with Mr. Fulford on the partnership with iBall4Life

Chair Miller introduced the following motion:

***DIRECT CITY STAFF TO CONTINUE TO WORK WITH IBALL4LIFE ON
OPTIONS TO ENHANCE THE BASKETBALL EXPERIENCE IN LITTLE
CANADA.***

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

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS: FALL PROGRAMMING

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The Recreation Coordinator stated that staff is preparing for the fall sports programming but awaiting direction from the State and local School Districts as to which things will be allowed. She reviewed some of the youth, adult, and senior activities that have been scheduled. She reported that the City-wide garage sale was canceled but the participation in the Farmers Market continues to grow. She highlighted other programs that staff hope to get up and running this fall including geocaching and posting educational naturalist signs around the community. She stated that there is a lack of programming for seniors and reviewed an idea that could help seniors feel engaged and updated about things in the community.

REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS

Commissioner Abruzzese stated that she visited different parks in the community and is having more appreciation for the park now that her child is old enough to enjoy those amenities. She asked how they can bring forward the idea of making the parks more inclusive to the diverse community.

Commissioner Chu echoed the comments of the previous Commissioner. She asked the process the Commission would follow to bring forward that idea.

The Community Services Manager stated that Commissioners can bring their ideas forward to Chair Miller to ensure the item is included on the agenda.

Commissioner Chu stated that she has been walking around the community. She stated that she visited the park she was assigned for the year and noted an extra trash bin would be helpful for that park along with the previous suggestions by Commissioner Abruzzese.

Commissioner Darling stated that she visited the park she was assigned and whenever she goes past the park there are users of all ages. She stated that the park is always clean and nice and does not have trash lying around. She stated that she continues to be impressed with the number of people that use that little park. She stated that she loves the farmers market and the opportunity to purchase fresh produce.

Commissioner Horwath stated that it was nice that the City attempted to do something with Canadian Days in this challenging time. He thanked staff for their efforts and noted that it was valuable to see that extra effort. He stated that he received the City Newsletter after Canadian Days which detailed the events, noting that it would have been nicer to receive the mailing prior to the event. He thanked staff for the effort they continue to put in during these difficult times.

Commissioner Schletty stated that he has been spending a lot of time at the parks and on the trails and is finding everything to be in great condition. He commented that the playground at Spooner Park is getting a lot of use. He noted that it would be nice to have additional benches and trash containers near the playground. He asked if the bathrooms at Spooner are closed for the summer.

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The Community Services Manager confirmed that the bathrooms are closed unless you have a rental of the building. He stated that there are four benches on order and three of those will go around the playground at Spooner. He noted that a concrete pad would be poured for a picnic table south of the playground. He stated that the fourth bench would be added near Gilbertson Field in conjunction with the new electronic scoreboard.

Commissioner Horwath stated that it is nice to have shade at parks. He noted that some parks have shade sails set up to provide shade.

Commissioner Ray asked if the Wi-Fi is working at Spooner.

The Community Services Manager confirmed that the Wi-Fi should be working at that location. He noted that he used the network the previous day for a virtual meeting.

Commissioner Ray stated that people can get their packet of pollinator-friendly seeds from Xcel Energy at www.Xcelenergy.com/pollinators.

Commissioner Chu thanked staff for taking the feedback about the newsletter, noting that the new font on the background was much easier to read.

UPDATES

The Community Services Manager provided an update on the work the Resilient Communities Project (RCP) Fellows are completing. He noted that there will be a fall semester as well to complete and analyze the community engagement.

The Community Services Manager reported that the City Council will meet the following week to receive an award from the MRPA for the Spooner Park all-inclusive playground. He stated that the Gervais Mill project was bid but the bid received was not acceptable and therefore that project will not move forward in 2020.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Staple
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.