

***PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – MARCH 2, 2023
MINUTES***

The Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Andover Park and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairperson Widmyer on March 2, 2023, 6:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1885 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Jake Widmyer, Commissioners Kristin Lackie, Sophia Newton, Shane Stenzel, Tracy Strombeck

Commissioners Absent: Commissioners Jim Lindahl, Ruben Ustimchuk

Also Present: Parks & Streets Operations Manager Jason Baumunk
City Administrator Jim Dickinson
Associate Planner Jake Griffiths

ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON FOR 2023

Motion by Commissioner Stenzel, seconded by Commissioner Strombeck, to appoint Commissioner Jake Widmyer for Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Lackie, seconded by newly appointed Chair Widmyer, to appoint Commissioner Tracy Strombeck for Vice-Chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Commission. Motion passed unanimously.

RESIDENT FORUM

No one appeared to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

February 16, 2023

Motion by Commissioner Strombeck, seconded by Commissioner Stenzel, to approve the February 16, 2023 Park Commission minutes as presented. Motion carried on a 3-ayes, 0-nays, 2-present (Lackie and Newton), 2 absent (Lindahl and Ustimchuk).

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Parks & Streets Operations Manager Baumunk stated no changes need to be made to the agenda.

Motion by Commissioner Newton, seconded by Commissioner Strombeck, to approve the March 2, 2023 Parks Commission agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

COMMUNITY CENTER 4TH QUARTER REPORT

City Administrator Dickinson presented the Andover Community Center (ACC) 4th Quarter Report for budget year 2022 reflecting activity through December 2022, comparative data with December 2021, and the entire year of 2021. He noted to the Commission that pre-audit, he wouldn't expect any major changes in the numbers shown in the budget. The full audit will take place in March or April, then official numbers should be ready by May. Mr. Dickinson shared the 2022 revenues are ahead from 2021, the primary reason being a large donation that was received in 2022. He reviewed reasons for cost differences from 2021 to 2022 which included staff salaries, roof repairs, an upgraded security system, and ice system updating. He went over some programs and activities that take place at the Community Center including Andover Basketball, MN Premier Volleyball tournaments, resident passes, track users, and Tot-Time. Looking ahead to scheduling for 2023-2024, they want to make sure prime hours are rented out - focusing on getting new users during off times, and keeping the building as full as possible. They need to keep a balance of busy and down times so they can keep up with maintenance updates as needed, so the facility stays up-to-date.

Mr. Dickinson asked Parks & Streets Operations Manager Baumunk if he had rolled the turf out yet. Mr. Baumunk stated they are trying to and hope to soon but are working around the weather.

Mr. Dickinson went over the list of the Community Center's biggest clients who rent out space. He shared that a majority of meeting rooms are rented out during the evening, mostly by non-profit groups. Many groups who used to meet in the Council Chambers have transferred to meeting at the Community Center.

Commissioner Strombeck asked about the large donation given to the Community Center in 2022, inquiring who it was from and how much they gave. Mr. Dickinson shared it was from the Hockey Association for about \$38,000.

Commissioner Strombeck asked if Mr. Dickinson had a tool showing turf rental and how much revenue is generated by it, wondering if ice makes more than turf. Mr. Dickinson stated it does. Commissioner Strombeck asked if the City has enough users for both ice and turf, which would win? Mr. Dickinson said he is under direction from City Council, who made a commitment to make turf work. Spring 2023 will be the first season of trying to make turf work. City staff will monitor the turf usage closely and report back to City

Council on a monthly basis. Staff will also provide statistics to the Parks and Rec Commission after the first quarter. The City knows it can make more money by selling ice, but if they start looking at not doing turf he feels that people will want a separate turf facility somewhere. The Anoka Ramsey Athletic Association is working with Twin Cities Orthopedics to make a turf, which could meet the need for the City. Mr. Dickinson expects the months of March and April to be busy on the Community Center's turf for rentals, but he believes people will go outside once they are able to.

Commissioner Strombeck asked about new pickleball courts that went in nearby, and asked if it has affected the indoor pickleball court usage at the Community Center. Mr. Dickinson said it has not, the pickleball courts have remained busy.

Chair Widmyer asked if the City charges for meeting room use. Mr. Dickinson shared that for-profit organizations are charged, and if groups either for-profit or non-profit want to bring food, there is a clean-up fee.

Commissioner Stenzel asked if there is a policy for when the facility is closed during inclement weather, similar to when schools or other facilities close. Mr. Dickinson shared they decide day-by-day. They check in with organizations to see if people who are renting still want the space. If they do, the Community Center stays open for them when possible. One snowy day recently they opened later than usual so they had time to clear the parking lot and Public Works had time to clear the streets. They make the call on the day and don't have an official policy for inclement weather. They use social media to let people know if it will be closed or open later. He shared they don't always follow suit with what the local YMCA does, but do what they think is best.

Informational; no action required.

OUTSTANDING ITEMS

Mr. Baumunk received notice that Reuben Ustimchuck stepped off the Parks and Rec Commission Board today due to unexpected conflicts with another board he was appointed to. Mr. Baumunk thanked Reuben for his time on the Board, and shared that Admin will reach out to his alternate.

1. **On-going Projects:** Mr. Baumunk reviewed the remaining on-going items. He recently met with the City's playground vendor. The three playgrounds the City is working on for 2023 are finalized and ordered. Materials should arrive about the time they plan on doing installs. There will be a lot of design work especially with Hills of Bunker Lake West playground to make it ADA accessible by adding some transfer platforms. They are fitting it into a tight budget with large price increases. The playground vendor also offers park shelters and facilities, similar to modular homes where you can design it and then have it put together in pieces on site like a Lego set. He said it could save a lot of money for the Commission.

2. **Updates from Previous Meetings – Park Survey Options:** Park surveys are out in the City Newsletter. He has only received a few and hopes to see more come in. The surveys provide great input for the Parks Commission and City staff. He encouraged everyone to provide their input.
3. **Other Items of Interest – Update of Pedestrian Trails:** Mr. Baumunk stated there is nothing new. The Kelsey Round Lake boardwalk replacement is still in the works.
4. **Outdoor Ice Rinks:** The rinks have been shut down for the season. It wasn't a great winter for making ice, but Staff kept them open until February 21. Staff tracked the usage of the City's free skate rinks, and noted that one was averaging use only 2 times a month. They will discuss that particular next year to decide whether or not it is worth keeping open.
5. **Trail Plowing:** During last week's big snow storm, they decided not to try to open the trails. Staff was busy plowing for multiple days and there were high winds. All trails have been opened since the storm and widened out. Staff has been actively working on clearing them again.
6. **Field Use:** Mr. Baumunk shared that field-use schedules and applications will be coming in next week. Tournament applications are in for the season he will put those together for the Commission's next meeting. There will be no meeting on March 16th, since it is Spring Break week, so he'll have it ready by the first week of April.
7. **Winter Clean-Up:** With extra time, Staff has been cleaning up from winter. They are taking the warming house down from Hawk Ridge tomorrow morning, and nets from the City's ice rinks are being refurbished and made ready for next season. They have also been dealing with lots of snow.

OTHER ITEMS OR UPDATES

Mr. Baumunk stated there were no updates for this item.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Commissioner Strombeck shared a big Thank You and Congratulations to the Girls' Hockey Team which placed second. She stated they did a great job, that she is very proud of them, and that did a fantastic job representing Andover.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Stenzel, seconded by Commissioner Newton, to adjourn the meeting at 6:27 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina Haas, Recording Secretary
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.

***PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION WORKSHOP MEETING
MARCH 2, 2023
MINUTES***

The Workshop Meeting of the Andover Park and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chairperson Widmyer on March 2, 2023, 6:30 p.m. at the Andover City Hall, 1885 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners Present: Chairperson Jake Widmyer, Commissioners Kristin Lackie, Sophia Newton, Shane Stenzel, Tracy Strombeck

Commissioners Absent: Commissioners Jim Lindahl, Rueben Ustimchuk

Also Present: Parks & Streets Operations Manager Jason Baumunk
Associate Planner Jake Griffiths
City Administrator Jim Dickinson

REVIEW OF CITY OF ANDOVER COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

Associate Planner Griffiths explained that at the February 16, 2023 meeting, the Commission asked Staff to provide an overview of the Comprehensive Plan. He shared a map showing where the City plans to extend City water and sewer services, focusing on land they believe will someday be developed. Much of the currently undeveloped land in Andover are floodplains or wetlands so there is a limited amount of land that is able to be developed. The City's Park Study focuses on maintenance, making improvements, and building out current park systems. There are no plans for acquisition of future park land other than one small area indicated by the dashed red line on the map. There are 1,300 acres in the middle of the City, much of which is floodplain. For now, the plans for that area are to-be-determined.

Commissioner Strombeck asked approximately how many farmers there are in the rural reserve. Mr. Griffiths shared there are four primary families. Commissioner Strombeck asked if it's mostly sod fields near 161st Avenue and Veterans Memorial Boulevard. Mr. Griffiths said the fields have been used for produce over the years but it's mostly sod. Mr. Dickinson added there are 4 primary families and a few other scattered families as well.

Commissioner Strombeck asked about a specific neighborhood park off of the University Avenue area, wondering if it is still in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Griffiths replied saying it is in the Parks Study.

Commissioner Strombeck asked when they accept cash in lieu of land, she noticed land in lieu of cash isn't an option. She asked what the problem is with taking a chunk of land, like from Peterson's farm, and keeping it. Mr. Griffiths shared when you go through the Comprehensive Plan, there is a park dedication fee which is collected to make improvements and build out the park system as it exists. When additional land is required, maintenance costs to that park area increase. By deviating from that plan you could end up in a situation like the City currently has where you have many little parks, or tot lots, that aren't connected to anything, which increases maintenance costs. He shared the Park Commission has an option through State statutes to recommend park dedications, but at this point with the land that is left in the City, taking parkland will make any of the proposed projects not feasible since there isn't enough land for a park. He stated it might be different for a Peterson Farm-style property. With 4 acres you might get 6 or 7 lots, and the most you could do is a Tot Lot which doesn't make sense financially. These are the reasons why the Comprehensive Plan is recommending looking at neighborhood parks, making them an amenity for residents in the area.

DISCUSS 2024-2028 CIP PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Parks & Streets Operations Manager Baumunk explained that this item is in regard to discussing what the Parks and Recreation Commission wants to do with the large budget they have to work with. A good portion has been scheduled over the next five years but there are still more funds to decide what to do with. He shared details of the current plans that are in place. Some park projects are flexible and can be pushed back depending on neighborhood needs. Mr. Baumunk is seeking direction and an overall vision from the Commission on how to finish certain projects, like Prairie Knoll Park and Pine Hills North Park.

Commissioner Stenzel asked what is in the Sunshine Park building right now, upstairs. Mr. Baumunk stated just the announcer's booth and some storage. Commissioner Stenzel asked who stores up there. Mr. Baumunk shared the softball team uses the space. Andover Station North also has a small office upstairs, an announcer's booth and storage, which is used solely by the baseball team.

Commissioner Stenzel stated he feels like the City spends a lot of money building nice facilities that are mostly used for storage, when they could rent a storage unit nearby for much less money. He does not know if they should continue this process of building buildings that need to be maintained just to be used for storage. Mr. Baumunk shared that in both buildings mentioned, the downstairs is heavily used for concessions and bathrooms. He would like to see more accessible, non-portable bathrooms for park users in those buildings.

Commissioner Stenzel shared even if a building has bathrooms, they are rarely open. He stated he could go to any nearby park, like Andover Station or Prairie Knoll, and on most days the bathrooms are locked. Even on days when there is practice they are closed. They

are mostly open only when there are games happening on the fields, so they don't seem to be built for the average park user.

Commissioner Stenzel asked who cleans the bathrooms. Mr. Baumunk shared he would hire a company to clean them. Right now the Associations clean them, since they are only open for Associations during games.

Commissioner Stenzel clarified he is not advocating for the bathrooms to be open all the time, he is advocating for not building more unnecessary buildings. Mr. Baumunk shared this is why he is seeking direction. He wants the Commission to consider if they want public-accessible buildings open during park hours, or just put portable toilets at parks with a shelter that is big enough to fit a couple picnic tables.

Commissioner Stenzel shared there doesn't seem to be enough visitor count at any parks to justify having a restroom open during park hours. He would rather have nicer fields than flushable toilets.

Commissioner Stenzel asked what the reason is for having flushable toilets, inquiring if it is to attract tournaments. It was stated people have said it would be nice to have flush toilets, but the current portable toilets have been working just fine and are emptied frequently. Commissioner Newton shared even though she would prefer using a flushable toilet versus a portable one, she wonders if other cities have run into issues with leaving bathrooms open. Mr. Baumunk shared the doors would be on automatic locks and would lock when the park closes at 10:00p.m. Other cities have bathrooms that are open during park hours. He mentioned Kelsey Round Lake Park could be a good spot for a nicer building with bathrooms, a couple outlets, etc. for when people host birthday parties or other similar events. He mentioned there may always be some sort of trouble involved with keeping bathrooms open.

Commissioner Strombeck suggested that the Parks and Rec Commission walk into the current buildings to see how they are used so they have a better idea of what they are trying to do. Mr. Baumunk shared that a walk-through would be fine, and added that a workshop meeting could be hosted there. Commissioner Strombeck listed the three locations of the current buildings and it was discussed to do a tour of all three locations. Mr. Baumunk also suggested a night where the Commission could do a tour of the big parks where they are discussing spending the largest amounts of Park Dedication funds. There was a general agreement among the Commission.

Commissioner Stenzel asked Mr. Baumunk asked if there are things in any one of the proposed park areas where there are certain things that are needed from a maintenance or security standpoint. He asked what the priorities are based on what Mr. Baumunk and his Staff have noticed at each location. Mr. Baumunk shared that smaller ticket items, like security lights and finishing irrigation pieces, need to get directed from Staff. He stated that for larger items like whether or not Prairie Knoll Park is a destination park enough to justify a shelter with open bathrooms, he is seeking opinions from the Commission. To

him, Pine Hills Park is a large park with a large area to finish outside of Athletic Association driven projects. He envisions different style playgrounds, a disc golf course, etc. Kelsey Round Lake Park is a park in the middle of town that would be good to focus on. The City has a master plan, the board just needs to decide what they want to do, and make it happen.

Commissioner Widmeyer shared he agrees with Mr. Baumunk, he has been on the board for six years and every year they are trying to finish a park.

Mr. Griffiths said he would be in favor of Pine Hills and building a shelter there. Commissioner Stenzel added if you are going to do a shelter, do a nice big one that holds 100 people, a rentable, reservable space.

Commissioner Lackie stated it would be nice for any proposed shelter to be multi-purpose and not just usable by the Athletic Association. A shelter that would be usable for graduation parties, birthday parties, etc. Mr. Dickinson added if they started charging residents for multi-purpose rooms they could use the funds to build a shelter. Commissioner Lackie shared she has attended bridal showers and other similar parties at shelters in other cities and knows they charge a small fee.

Mr. Baumunk told the Commission to think about the big park project stuff, and he will come back at the next meeting with the small projects that need to be done. Mr. Dickinson said they should try to hit every zone if they can. Commissioner Lackie shared they've seen in surveys that people are interested in having creative, different types of playgrounds like an obstacle course or zip line. Mr. Baumunk shared there are other types of playgrounds built for older kids. Mr. Griffiths shared that Coon Creek Water District added a water feature to one of their parks so residents have kayak access. One resident has approached City staff asking for more kayak accessibility, although there are a couple other kayak and canoe accesses in the City.

Mr. Stenzel asked if the City would entertain putting in something that would generate revenue, like a brewery. It wouldn't have to be at a park, could be on any open City parcel. He mentioned other cities who have done this, including Chaska, Minnetonka, and Ramsey. His point was that if you are planning to build a building with bathrooms and storage space, why not make it a restaurant/brewery that will create revenue to pay for the building. Commissioner Stenzel shared the idea of a pickleball court plus a brewery. Mr. Griffiths shared there are two private groups looking at similar projects on commercial industrial land in the City. Mr. Griffiths shared it will take more than what is under the purview of the Commission to make a project like that happen. Mr. Dickinson inspired the team to think outside the box, as this could be an opportunity for the City, using the funds it currently has available, to add an amenity as a partner that uses the facility but adds revenue. They City could create an enterprise fund that can be used for park-related things. Many other ideas were discussed such as a trap or skeet shooting range, and a paintball course.

DISCUSS 2024-2028 CIP TRAIL CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

Mr. Baumunk explained that this item is in regard to the four trail segments that have been identified as part of the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan. Due to a railroad track and some utility projects going on, trail segment 1 needs to be pushed back until 2024, which pushes other segments and trail projects back another year. The 2023 project needs to be pushed back to 2024.

Chair Widmeyer asked at what point the City should skip the project if it does not seem feasible due to the challenges. Mr. Baumunk shared that in order to do the engineering on the trail, it needs to move back due to the timeframe of doing the back work/engineering work. He stated this is the largest year engineering has ever had for both trail projects and also approximately 19 miles of road projects. The Engineering team would have needed to start last year in order to get the trail done this year. Trail segment 1 is planned for 2024, so the Commission needs to look at segments 2, 3 and 4 in addition to other options of where trails might be needed based on what they have seen or heard from residents. He stated there is no rush on figuring this out, and he is open to feedback about where other trail connections need to happen.

Commissioner Stenzel asked how often the Trail Master Plan is reviewed and updated. Mr. Baumunk and Mr. Dickinson shared it's annually.

Commissioner Stenzel asked how it is reviewed and if it goes to Council. Mr. Dickinson shared it goes through Council and the CIP process and the City reaffirms with Council the trails. Right now the trail fund is negative so there is not a lot of push for that.

Commissioner Stenzel asked why the fund is so low and why more money isn't put into the trails. He said looking around in Andover at the parks and the trails, most people are on the trails. He asked why the City should spend money on buildings at parks when they could invest money into finishing trails so kids can get to school and parks more safely. He stated he has a hard time with the potential of investing \$100,000 into a bathroom and a storage building while being \$100,000 short of the needed funds for finishing a trail.

Commissioner Strombeck agreed and added she thinks about how much money is wasted by doing the trail projects in segments by needing to bring in equipment at separate times, instead of completing the whole trail at once, but added if that's what the Council supports, that's what it supports. Mr. Baumunk shared for a trail like this, you might wait 20 years to finish the next segment.

Commissioner Strombeck asked if the City had heard back from anyone about easements. Mr. Baumunk shared that the easement conversation is at a standstill. Commissioner Strombeck asked if it would be helpful for Commissioners to talk to them or bring them into a meeting. Mr. Baumunk shared that in a conversation he had with his director who spoke with some people about the easements, they just aren't interested. Mr. Dickinson

asked if this is about the Crosstown Trail, and added the City is migrating how that is going to be negotiated. It is moving toward administration. He stated that one of the biggest funders of trails is the Metropolitan council, adding that if you aren't a little city you aren't eligible for grant funds. If Andover got Council money, it would be used for a trail in partnership with Anoka County connected to parks that were funded by the Metropolitan Council. The funding needs to be a County initiative, so Andover needs to continue to foster a positive relationship with Anoka County.

DISCUSS 2024-2028 CIP PLAYGROUND REPLACEMENTS

Mr. Baumunk explained that this item is in regard to playground replacement within the City. Finance does not support the money Mr. Baumunk requested. In the past, the City has spent \$50,000 per playground replacement. He requested more, but the budget can't support it. They are now doing \$55,000 per replacement but can only replace two playgrounds over the next five years. The playgrounds on the list are based on age, inspections, and Staff who maintain them. Mr. Baumunk wants to move back to replacing the 3 playgrounds listed, but there is not enough money in the budget for it at this time. If the Commission feels strongly about it, they will need to discuss with Council where this ranks on importance.

Commissioner Stenzel asked what the shelf life is for playgrounds. Mr. Baumunk shared it's 15 years based on manufacturer recommendation and warranty is 15 years, but the City is currently doing 20 years but they are noticing things are breaking.

Commissioner Stenzel asked what the City does if there are broken parts. Mr. Baumunk shared they replace pieces that are broken. They are trying to get to a point of replacing things before they break.

Commissioner Stenzel asked if there is a liability that goes with using the playgrounds beyond 15 years, adding he was not sure what recreational immunity allows for. Mr. Baumunk shared that if you are doing inspections as you should, you are covered, but he wants to prevent situations before they happen to keep children safe.

Commissioner Stenzel asked why park dedication money can't be used toward new playgrounds. Mr. Baumunk shared it's because they are replacing an existing structure. He shared about Bunker Hills Regional Park as an example. The City is using some improvement money at that location because they are adding outside the bounds of what is currently there. He also shared that at Hawk Ridge, a new shelter that was put up replaced a smaller shelter. The smaller footprint was paid for with maintenance money. Anything outside of that was paid for with park dedication money.

Commissioner Stenzel mentioned the City might need to remove some playgrounds in the future if it can't keep up with replacing them every 15 years, or put in less expensive playgrounds that are more simple.

Commissioner Lackie asked if the tiny tot playgrounds are less expensive. Mr. Baumunk shared they are, but not considerably. You don't get very much for under \$10,000-\$15,000. A swing set is around \$8,000.

Chair Widmeyer asked if playground replacements will need to be smaller if the Council doesn't increase the budget. Mr. Baumunk shared options will be restricted to what you can put back in the playground. The current budget of \$55,000 will get them the bare minimum playground. If three playgrounds need to be replaced, some features will go away and not get replaced.

Commissioner Stenzel asked if the City is wasting their time, if they aren't able to fully replicate a playground. Commissioner Strombeck added that Council voted on another main park in a development. Many phases and locations of desired parks were discussed.

ADJOURNMENT OF WORKSHOP MEETING

Motion by Commissioner Strombeck, seconded by Commissioner Stenzel, to adjourn the workshop meeting at 7:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kristina Haas, Recording Secretary
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.