

Crystal Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
October 1, 2014
Crystal Community Center

The Parks and Recreation Commission regular meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Chairperson Jennifer Sodd. Commission members in attendance were: Lori Merriam, Lynn Haney, Steve Hildre, Lassana Bamba Jr., Nancy LaRoche, Erin Kolb, Michael McClain and Tom Jungroth. Also present were Mark Gaulke, Scott Berggren and Gene Hackett from the city staff; and Maggie Gray, Crystal resident.

The minutes were approved as sent.

There was not a Chairperson's Report.

Introductions were made.

Maggie Gray is a local wildlife photographer that has been photographing the foxes and other wildlife at Hagemeister Pond Preserve Park. She has had issues with another resident who lets her 3 dogs run unleashed in the park, doesn't pick up the dog waste and lets the dogs harass the wildlife – mainly digging at the fox den. Recently she has been entering the park before sunrise. All of these are against city ordinance. One of the dogs did come and jump on Ms. Gray. She did call 911 but no one responded. With these loose dogs, Ms. Gray is concerned for the wildlife as well park visitors that may encounter the loose dogs. Since the park is a conservation area designed to provide natural habitat and attract wildlife, she requested that the park be made “dog free” to prohibit all dogs.

Commission members felt that making the park dog free may not solve this problem as it seems that it is one person that chooses to violate park ordinances. It was felt that this is an enforcement issue. Maggie was instructed to continue to call 911 so that the Police have a record of the calls. Also discussed was setting up a trail cam to document this person. Mark Gaulke will look into the trail cam. Gene Hackett will talk to Chief Revering.

The Commission decided to table further discussion on making the park dog free to see if enforcement works. This will be reviewed at the November meeting.

Gene Hackett updated the Commission on the vacant Park/Building Superintendent position.

Scott Berggren reviewed the August Busking event with a list of pros and cons. Staff was disappointed that the event did not draw more buskers or a larger audience. Commission members discussed possible reasons why people did not attend. The recommendation is not to have another event. The word can go out that Crystal is busking friendly – possibly Councilmember Peak could help with that. Buskers could be invited to participate at another event to be named such as the Lions Corn Feed.

Scott Berggren presented his memo regarding a community garden at Lions Soo Line Park. He felt this may be an opportunity to work with “Gardening Matters” to do an educational project with the neighborhood. The Lions Club will be contacted to see if they are interested in participating in the program since they have sponsored the playground equipment there. Scott will work on a proposal to present to the Commission early in 2015 for a program that would begin in 2016. If the Commission decides to go ahead, neighborhood meetings would be held. The neighbors would be polled on removing the playground equipment; although Mark Gaulke thought that he may be able to move some pieces from Bassett Creek playground there to renovate rather than replace the equipment. There was some discussion regarding selling this park property since Twin Oak Park is so close; the Commission had mixed feelings regarding this and decided to wait to see the garden proposal next year.

Commissioners reviewed the first section of Long range Plan revisions – there was no additional discussion.

The Commission evaluated the 2014 outdoor meetings. Attendance was increased this year. The resident items that were brought up were reviewed – most items have been taken care of and residents notified. Other discussion included scheduling another park tour – a winter tour was discussed. Expanding the watershed clean-up to include Bassett Creek Watershed since the Shingle Creek group/event is not as active as it was. Additional discussion will take place in February when the outdoor meetings are set.

The Commission approved the following motion:

Moved by Ms. Merriam and seconded by Ms. Kolb to recommend that the City Council to adopt the resolution:

AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF CRYSTAL’S GRANT APPLICATION TO THE HENNEPIN YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM

Motion Carried – Unanimous

The Commission reviewed the 5 year PIR plan. Members asked to be informed of any City Council action regarding the request as they felt it was important to fully fund the parks and recreation department’s projects listed.

Moved by Mr. Jungroth and seconded by Ms. Merriam to recommend that the City Council fully fund the 2015 PIR projects for parks, community center, pool and recreation.

Motion carried - Unanimous

Mr. Jungroth suggested that the Crystal Cove Pool sign be updated.

Staff gave the monthly reports, highlighting major activities. Ms. Kolb asked about changing the time for Barnyard Boogie to accommodate those with younger children. Ms. Haney said the Daycare Association may have to find another location as they have been moved to a smaller room that does not fit their needs. Ms. Hackett will bring these up at the next Recreation Department staff meeting.

Ms. Haney gave the Crystal Frolics report. The group is looking for more Sunday activities that will attract families to the park. There were minor incidents this year so the Police Department thought the changes made really helped. There was discussion on using additional food vendors who are not civic groups. Their next meeting is October 20th.

Mr. Jungroth reported on the last CBA meeting at the Hennepin County Service Center. The group now has 52 members.

Ms. Hackett distributed photos of the Little Library at Memory Lane Park. A nearby resident would like it moved as it blocks the park view from their house. After looking at the photos, the Commission decided it should not be moved.

Ms. LaRoche reported that a group of small dog owners would like a section of the dog park fenced off for small dogs only. Mr. Gaulke thought the dog park group was not in favor of that. The Commission will talk about this at a later date. The dog park group is having a picnic October 12 at 4:30pm.

The minutes were approved as sent.

The next Commission meeting is November 5 at the CCC

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

Gene Hackett
Recorder