

Crystal Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
December 2, 2015
Crystal Community Center

Approved 1/6/16

The Parks and Recreation Commission meeting was called to order at 7:02 pm by Chairperson Erin Kolb. Commission members in attendance were: Lori Merriam, Nancy LaRoche, Lynn Haney, Tom Jungroth and Steve Hildre. Also present were Elizabeth Dahl, Council Liaison; Brad Fortin, and Gene Hackett from the city staff. Also attending was Meredith Torres-Walsh, a candidate for Commission membership.

The minutes were approved as sent.

Mr. Jungroth was congratulated on his 25 years of service on the Commission.

Commission members that are up for re-appointment should have received an email from the City Manager regarding the re-application process. The City Council hopes to begin the re-appointment/selection process in February. Mr. Jungroth suggested that the Commission by-laws be updated when the new appointment process is finalized. Four current Commissioners are up for re-appointment; and there are 3 candidates for the 3 available openings on the Commission.

Commission elections were held:

Chair	Nancy LaRoche
Vice Chair/Tree Board Chair	Erin Kolb
Secretary	Steve Hildre

Secretary duties will be updated to include coordinating Next Door, sharing Department Facebook posts and working with Scott for other social media and communications.

The Commission reviewed the updated final 2015 work plan.

Moved by Mr. Jungroth and seconded by Ms. LaRoche to accept the final status report of the 2015 work plan.

Motion carried – unanimous.

Ms. Kolb spoke with Shawn Smith from the Crystal Fund for Community Progress. The CFFCP is interested in funding park projects. They would prefer a selection of low, medium and high cost projects so that they can plan their budget. Staff will put something together for review at the January meeting. The Commission brainstormed ideas that would help the CFFCP fundraise such as Amazon Smile and a marketing campaign.

The Commission began review of the Long Range Plan 2016 and beyond for future discussion on funding priorities.

Bassett Creek Park – The Commission supported the vision of moving the dog park to Brunswick and construction of a new expanded park building. There was discussion about removing the tennis courts since they are in poor shape and reconstruction could be cost prohibitive. Staff will work on a phase – in plan for these improvements.

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Becker Park – Long Range Plan items are on hold pending the outcome of the LRT planning. Discussion was held regarding 2 ballfields – Crystal Frolics would like to keep 2, as more softball tournament teams brings in more people and then more money for the civic group sponsors. Since it is close to 5 years before the light rail comes to Crystal, Commission members felt strongly about investing in repairs to the building and grounds to keep the park useable. Ms. Dahl asked if repairs are made, what plans are there for using the building. Ms. Dahl asked staff to prepare a report listing Becker activities from the past, present and future plans. The cost of repairs is quite expensive and the cost may not balance out with the usage, especially if/when the park is redeveloped and building relocated or removed as in the LRT station planning discussions. Commission members felt that the 3 park options as presented by Hennepin County/LRT station planning have not been thoroughly discussed by the Commission, even though they have been presented to the public for comment. Some of the “low impact” ideas seem to make sense such as thinning out the trees and flattening the berm. Mr. Jungroth thought that the Parks Department could start thinning out trees to make the park more visible:

Motion by Mr. Jungroth and seconded by Ms. Haney to recommend to the City Council that as a first step to redevelopment the park Department begin to thin out the trees and landscape around the park to make the park more visible.
Motion carried - Unanimous

Motion by Ms. Haney and seconded by Ms. LaRoche to recommend to the City Council to amend the 2016 budget to include the Becker building repair money for the roof and other building repairs be reinstated in the 2016 budget.
Motion carried - Unanimous

Yunker Park – Mr. Fortin showed the Commission some ideas for the Yunker Park sun shelter. Members preferred the chalet style. The building is scheduled to be removed this year.

Rest of Plan – Mr. Fortin and Ms. Hackett will meet and make a recommendation on phasing in the plan including yearly costs for discussion at the January meeting.

Commission members were informed of a joint Planning and Park and Recreation Commission meeting on December 14 at 7pm at City Hall. The agenda will be a final report from the LRT Station Planning group.

Mr. Fortin reported that he is working on options for improvements at MAC Park. He will bring those to the Commission at a later date.

Staff gave the monthly reports, highlighting major activities.

Ms. Dahl highlighted the last City Council meeting. The 2016 budget was adopted.

There was not a report from the Crystal Frolics or the CBA.

Minutes: December 2015

Ms. LaRoche reported that the new dog park rule sign has been installed and looks great. Dog park users have requested a small dog area if there is reconstruction of the dog park. She reported that there seems to be a problem with the dog park lights. Mr. Fortin is aware of the problem and is working on it.

Ms. Dahl informed the Commission that she is working on recruiting volunteers for beautification projects and has started a Facebook page. She will coordinate projects with Mr. Fortin.

Community News items:

- The Crime Prevention group fundraiser is at Buffalo Wild Wings on December 7 and 16.
- The CBA holiday gathering is also at Buffalo Wild Wings on December 16.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:15pm.

Gene Hackett
Recorder