



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Fridley Municipal Center
7071 University Ave NE, Fridley MN 55432

AGENDA – Sept. 8, 2020

DATE: Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. – **NOTE: DATE AND LOCATION CHANGE**

LOCATION: Fridley Civic Campus – 7071 University Ave NE, Fridley, MN 55432

FIRESIDE ROOM (NOTE CHANGE IN LOCATION).

PLEASE BE PREPARED TO WEAR FACIAL COVERINGS IN THE BUILDING AT ALL TIMES AND DURING THE MEETING

1. CALL TO ORDER – Names to be read by Chairperson, Heintz
2. APPROVE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA FOR SEPT. 8, 2020
3. APPROVE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES FOR AUG. 3, 2020
4. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS:
 - a. Summer recap/enrollments/participation
 - b. Staff survey on field use
 - c. Food truck licenses/permits
 - d. Locke Park Playground update
 - e. Parks Master Plan update
 - f. Anoka County Parks JPA Update
 - g. Pumpkin Nite Alternative (Mike)
 - h. Pavilion Project Recognition and opening (Mike)
 - i. Rec Vehicle
5. STAFF REPORTS:
 - a. Springbrook Nature Center (Mike)
 - b. Staffing update (Debbie)
 - c. Other
6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
 - a. Other
7. ADJOURNMENT

Next Meeting: Oct. 5, 2020 – 7 p.m.

Attachments:

Aug. 3, 2020 Meeting Minutes, Rec Division Highlights



PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Fridley Municipal Center
7071 University Ave NE, Fridley MN 55432

MINUTES

August 3, 2020

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Heintz called the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Members Present: Mike Heintz, David Kondrick, EB Graham and Pete Borman

Members Absent: Shanna Larson and Ryan Gerhard

Others Present: Mike Maher (Springbrook Nature Center Director), Jeff Jensen (Operations Manager for Streets, Parks and Facilities), and Deborah Dahl (Director of Community Services and Employee Resources)

2. APPROVE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION AGENDA FOR AUGUST 3, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Borman to APPROVE the August 3, 2020 meeting agenda. SECONDED by Ms. Graham. The MOTION PASSED unanimously.

3. APPROVE PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION MINUTES FOR JUNE 1, 2020

MOTION by Mr. Kondrick to APPROVE the June 1, 2020 meeting minutes with the exclusion of page 6. SECONDED by Ms. Graham. The MOTION PASSED unanimously.

4. NEW BUSINESS/ACTION ITEMS:

- a. Parks Master Plan Update – Debbie Dahl

Ms. Dahl summarized the discussion for the meeting is to review the Parks Master Plan status, have a preliminary discussion, discuss cost and funding mechanisms, answer questions, and discuss next steps in the plan.

Ms. Dahl provided a presentation about the parks master plan, stating the Fridley park system was established 50 years ago with a strong commitment to parks and green spaces. There are currently 34 parks and the 2013 Citizen Survey respondents valued parks and playgrounds very high.

In 2015, a Moore Lake Plan was developed, based on a survey from residents, which indicated broader needs and interests about parks and park use in the community. At the time, the cost of the Moore Lake plan in 2016 was \$4.5M. The plan and comments received triggered Council's interest in looking at the entire park system. The Parks Master Plan was initiated by Council in 2018 and parks are a top priority in Focus on Fridley by creating vibrant neighborhoods and places as well as contributing to public safety and environmental stewardship.

Fridley exceeds the national standards for walking distance to a park (1/2 mile or less) from neighborhoods and celebrates 87% of the parks meet the standard. With the exception of the Springbrook Nature Center, none of parks/amenities meet all of the ADA guidelines. Playgrounds were systematically revamped over 30 years ago. Many parks have safety concerns as determined by the parks maintenance team who performed a conditions assessment. Staff gave 59% of the parks a "C" or less, on average.

Ms. Dahl stated that the current capital investment on average, less than 4% of the total budget is dedicated to maintaining the \$43M in assets in the Fridley parks system. Staff have gathered feedback and data, identified common themes, taken an inventory and performed assessments, and prepared concept designs and estimates based on the data.

The feedback received showed that Fridley residents want improved playgrounds and amenities, gathering spaces, year-round use, better connectivity, and unique experiences. Additional Themes included: spaces that are *Open to All* and ADA compliance, improved communication, signage, Wi-Fi and lighting; More opportunities in *Nature*: expand trails, year-round use, sustainability, and environmentally friendly; and *Quality Facilities*: gathering spaces unique experiences and flexible to meet changing needs.

Ms. Dahl presented a 10-year proposed plan to modernize, upgrade and enhance Fridley's parks in general. Standards can be improved by updating amenities, installing or upgrading parking lots, resurfacing courts, creating pollinator gardens or native plantings, creating walking loops and trails, improving signage, updating safety and security, as well as improving drainage.

She provided a list of proposed priorities for the general park improvement plan, where staff would be focusing on the worst parks first. Ms. Dahl then discussed the three major park upgrades for Moore Lake, Commons and Community Parks and provided concept drawings prepared by a consultant and possible ideas for amenities.

Moore Lake Park would capitalize on lakeshore activities with a focus on nature and passive use, featuring a new park building, nature playground, dog park, rentals (kayak, canoe, shelters) and updated trails. *Commons Park* improvements would have an emphasis on families, youth and play, with ideas to build a splash pad, skating loop, new and adding a new park building, ADA playground, modified sledding hill, fields/open spaces, parking and events. *Community Park* would emphasize multi-use fields, a central park concept for events, a new park building, gardens/orchards, trails, a new playground and connectivity to Civic Campus.

Ms. Dahl reviewed the 10-year cost of the entire plan. The estimated costs of the general park improvements would range between \$3,599,010-\$6,397,010. Upgrades and enhancements at the three major parks could range between: \$16,200,307 - \$27,336,060. Additional costs for Support Staff/Contracting would range between \$4,249,963 - \$7,007,093. Other estimates for wayfinding signage, public art, and marketing would range between \$190,000 and \$395,000. The estimated grand total of the 10-year plan could cost between \$24,230,279 and \$41,775,764.

Ms. Dahl identified current funding sources could include the Community Investment Fund (parks only) at \$5,000,000, Donations/Grants at \$500,000 and Parks Capital Projects Fund at \$3,950,000--for a total of \$9,340,000. A shortfall of approximately \$14-32,000,000 would still exist and would require the need to explore other funding options, such as: donations and grants, round up (water bills), dedicate additional Liquor Store revenue, events and fundraising campaigns, park dedication fees, legislative action – e.g. Mighty Ducks Bill, raise fees for programs and services and pursue bonding vehicles (such as a referendum or other forms of taxation).

Ms. Dahl noted that if it was decided to hold a special election for a referendum in 2021, staff would need to begin campaigning in January-February. Public engagement workshops (between 25 and 50) would be held and a formal survey would be conducted to determine public interests and feasibility. If feasible, the vote could be placed on the ballot for a special election held in November and the estimated cost would be \$30,000.

Staff estimated cost per household would be \$31-70 per year. If successful, the improvements would build on Focus on Fridley Goals of Vibrancy, Safety, Environmentally Friendly, Parks for All. She went on to say that the City will have listened to our community, increased home and business values, attracted new residents, visitors and businesses, prepared for the next generations, and preserved and built upon the \$43M in parks assets.

Ms. Dahl said that if the City did not improve the parks, they would continue to deteriorate and pose possible safety hazards. The decline could contribute to a declining image and loss of pride, loss of home and business values, loss of future revenues (programs), and eventually a loss of public support and trust. Delays could cost more if pushed into the future as prices continue to increase each year.

Ms. Dahl posed three questions/options to the Commission members as to where to position the park system in thinking about its future investment in the parks: 1) Does the public want an average park system with minimal maintenance, and wait until future funding or windfalls to come along before fixing the system? 2) Revise the proposed plan, making urgent improvements, maximizing on CIP and available funding resources, revising plans and having aggressive fundraising and public engagement; or 3) Follow the proposed plan to have a quality and attractive parks system, with a grand vision, sustainable amenities, an affordable system that provides value and pride, and a strong public engagement process.

Ms. Dahl noted that feedback is needed from the Council and Commission's direction on the Plan before proceeding to take this plan to the public and get feedback on design and implementation costs.

The public engagement plan is yet to be finalized but will likely include the entire master plan and will be available to review by the entire community. The City's website, social media, print media, TV Channel will show the plan updates/progress, how the community can get involved in the process/engagement opportunities, and general information. Community meetings can be held in-person and virtually at civic campus, as well as in neighborhood or mini parks. Outreach can be held at community events using outreach kits or meetings in a box. Staff, commission members and additional volunteers can be trained to conduct outreach to assist with the campaign.

Program participants and facility users can also be surveyed throughout the year during activities or events. Staff will meet with external key partner organizations and stakeholders, like sports and community associations, schools, and the business community. Also, property managers and residents of apartment or manufactured home communities would also be included.

Ms. Dahl reviewed the next steps will be: preview the plan with key staff and stakeholders; hire consultants to assist with the campaign; finalize site plans and priorities; establish teams to lead the campaign; formalize the engagement and marketing plan; research options for a statistically valid survey; explore various funding options (such as a referendum or others); and decide on the final implementation plan.

The Commission members expressed their opinions and liked the options. No objections were raised or heard. No formal vote was taken since the plan is still at a conceptual stage, however, it appeared to be the general consensus of the group to follow plan A (or question #3 from above). Mr. Kondrick said he preferred Plan B (question #2).

Ms. Dahl thanked the group and said that staff will continue to be update and revise the plan and incorporate feedback. She said she will keep the commission apprised of any developments or changes and asked the members to reach out to her with any questions or feedback.

b. Other

Ms. Dahl shared a brief update that the Rec N' Roll program has been rolled out for families of all ages offering different types of activities. The staff have been very creative and are having a lot of fun with this program, particularly with the challenges of COVID.

5. STAFF REPORTS

a. Springbrook Nature Center Update – Mike Maher

Mr. Maher provided an update at what was happening at Springbrook, saying some programs are relaunching on a limited basis, and the center was reopened to the public at a limited capacity. He said a few grants came in from Excel Energy (\$7,500) and International Paper (\$4,000) to purchase supplies. There are Eagle Scout projects going on and staff are working on fall programs. He reported staff has not made a decision to host Pumpkin Night in the Park just yet, given the pandemic and CDC guidelines. He asked the Commission for their feedback they generally agreed the event should not be held this year. No formal vote was taken.

b. COVID-19 Update

Mr. Maher provided an update on the Pavilion, stating an open house and large gathering will likely not be held, due to COVID. He said staff is working on alternatives for a recognition event and that it will likely be on a smaller scale and scheduled sometime in September. Key donors and representatives will be invited, and the virtual open house can be shared via social media. He will provide an update to the Commission with the plans are formalized.

c. Other

Mr. Jensen reported that staff hosted the Locke Park playground meeting for the civic campus and Holiday Hills neighborhoods on July 29 to display the designs and talk with residents. He said it was a great turnout and feedback from residents was very helpful. He said the playground construction will be completed this fall and will also connect to Rice Creek Trail Corridor and bike trails. A pollinator garden along with wild seed plantings will be planted to provide a buffer between the trail and playground and likely finished next spring. He noted that 72 town homes and 26 patio homes will be complete the development.

No further questions or items were raised.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Kondrick made the MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 p.m., SECONDED by Ms. Graham. The MOTION PASSED unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Krista Peterson, Recording Secretary

HIGHLIGHTS



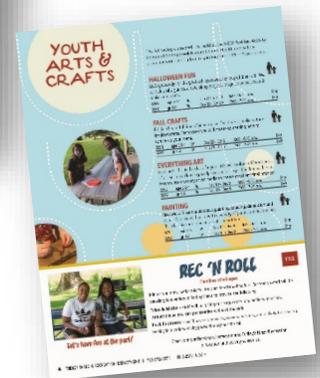
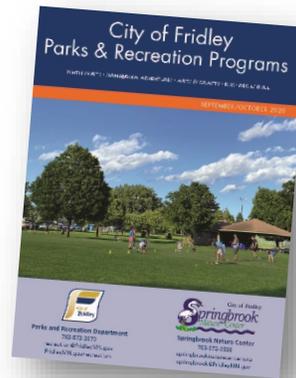
Recreation Division - August 2020

Fall Programs

The fall program brochure was mailed out to residents with the City Newsletter last week. Programs will begin in a few weeks. Below is a list of programs we'll be offering.

Preschool and Elementary Youth

- Soccer
- Sports Sampler
- Musketeer Fencing
- Basketball
- Halloween Fun
- Fall Crafts
- Everything Art
- Painting
- Tot Time Open Gym



Family

- Painting in the Park
- ROX: Recreation...in a Box - **NEW**

This new activity has everything covered for fun at home. Families simply sign up and then receive a kit full of goodies to get their party started. The following kits will be available this fall: Puppy Surprise, Family Follies and The Spooktacular.



Adult

- Zumba in the Park
- Pickleball Clinic
- Adult Softball League
- Adult Bag Toss League

Rec 'n Roll

- We will continue offering activities throughout the park system this fall.

Adult Softball

The shortened-summer season wrapped up August 20 with a real barn-burner playoff championship ending with a score of 22-21. All teams complied very nicely to the Covid guidelines and we are confident moving into the next season. We have six teams registered for the fall season which begins this week.

Recreation Event Vehicle

The Fire Rescue Vehicle has been repurposed and we'll begin using it for programming throughout the Park System. The Recreation Division staff worked with Communications and the City Mechanics to prepare the vehicle. Here are a few pictures of the truck.



Rec to the Rescue

Staff have continued to offer programs for residents to participate in at home. Since the last meeting, we have completed 2 additional Activity Guides that have been emailed to participants as well as posted on the website and promoted with Facebook and Instagram. This guide was created to be easily viewed on a mobile device and also encourages participants to engage with us via social media. Within the last few guides we have also been able to highlight upcoming program offerings.

Shelter Rentals

Shelter Rentals have continued to come in through August. To date we have had 50 rentals (27 at Commons, 10 at Flanery and 13 at Moore Lake).

Tie-Dye Party

On Thursday, August 6 this event was held at Commons Park with ten participants in attendance. All participants received a cotton facemask to personalize and were invited to bring items of their own to dye. We offered a second session a couple of weeks later, however we did not receive enough participants to run it. However, we created "take home" kits for the few participants we had and they were very appreciative of the opportunity.

Lawn of the Week

In August an additional four lawns were awarded for exemplifying creativity, neatness and beauty. Lawns were nominated by Fridley Residents and staff selected the winners each week and placed a sign their front yard. The program continues to be well received and winners have been appreciative of the recognition. Many positive conversations have been sparked between neighbors as a result of this program.

Rec 'n Roll

Last summer we ROCKED, we ROLLED in 2020! Recreation staff traveled to a variety of Fridley Parks to provide the following:

- Take & Make – staff gave out bags containing activity items and instructions so families could get creative while at the park. We distributed 250 bags during July and August.
- Park Features – we have six features (story walks, scavenger hunts, and activity trails) that rotate to six different park locations each week.

Below is a message from a resident that was received through the “Report and Issue” link on the City Website.

You're doing a good job!

I frequently walk through Briardale park and I've noticed several cheerful chalk drawings on the sidewalks that are signed: Fridley Park and Rec Dept. I think it's great that you take the time to add that bit of day brightening.

Then, I walked past Moore Lake and saw a series of signs along the path with “interesting” facts printed on them. The information was just for fun, and I appreciate that!

I think it's great that you make an effort to make the parks more cheerful and fun.

Thanks!

Charlie Kocourek

Summer Program Survey

A program survey was distributed to all participants in summer programs (ranging from t-ball to track). While the response rate was not high, we did receive very positive feedback from those that did complete the survey (10).

- Did your child enjoy the experience: 100% Yes
- My experience with staff was positive: 100% Yes
 - What programs would you like to see the department host: Basketball, soccer, hockey, martial arts, craft/art (highest response), football and kids games
- What special events would you like to see the department offer:
 - Movies in the park (multiple responses)
 - Concerts for kids (multiple responses)
 - Storytime programs
 - Kids walk/run
 - Ice cream social

Community Engagement - August 2020

Red Cross Blood Drive

On Saturday, August 29th the City of Fridley hosted a blood drive in partnership with the American Red Cross. The event went from 9am-3pm and took place at the Civic Campus. The event collected a total of 38 units of blood, which translated to up to 114 lives saved at local hospitals. Our last drive at the City collected 20 units of blood, so we nearly doubled what we had for the last drive. There were a total of 41 donors including 2 power red donors that helped donate 2 units of blood. There were 0 first time donors, just all loyal Fridley donors!

Adopt-A-Park & Adopt-A-Rain Garden

The City of Fridley's Adopt-a-Park program continues to be a huge success! The program now has a total of 14 parks adopted and one rain garden. Earlier this summer, the City also incorporated our five rain gardens into the program to be adopted. Of the 14 groups that have adopted parks 11 are Fridley families, one is a Fridley business, one is a Fridley community service organization, and then the Fridley Police Explorers have also adopted a park. You can see which parks and rain gardens have been adopted and by which groups in the interactive Adopt-a-Park map, [here](#).

The City's Employee Relations Committee also hosted three clean up events. A total of 13 staff volunteered.

Locke Pointe (Pulte) Homeowner's Association Annual Meeting

Community Engagement staff visited the Locke Pointe (Pulte Patio Home Development) HOA Annual meeting on Monday, August 24th to pass out New Resident Packets and then give an update on the Locke Playground. Staff passed out a total of 16 packets and is working on delivering the additional 10 to the address that didn't attend the meeting.

Fridley Community Network

The Fridley Community Network had another gathering on August 13th. A total of 10 community partner organizations were represented. The next gathering is scheduled for 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. for October 8th.