

**REGULAR MEETING
PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
City of Oakdale
August 20, 2019**

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Oakdale Parks and Recreation Commission was held on Tuesday, August 20, 2019, at Oakdale City Hall, 1584 Hadley Avenue, Oakdale, Minnesota. The meeting was called to order by Vice Chair Cunningham at 7:00 PM.

CALL OF ROLL

On a call of roll, the following were present:

Vice Chair: Janet Cunningham

Commissioners: Jane Klein
Paul Lockhart
James Roettger
Jenny Nyberg
Debbie Xiong

Also Present: Colleen Swedberg, City Council
Brian Bachmeier, Public Works Director
Julie Williams, Recreation Superintendent

Absent: Jeff Koesling, Parks Superintendent

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Regular Meeting, July 16, 2019

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ROETTGER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER KLEIN TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE REGULAR PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING OF JULY 16, 2019 AS PRESENTED.

6 AYES 0 NAYS

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE – Colleen Swedberg

Welcome Debbie Xiong – Councilmember Swedberg welcomed Debbie Xiong to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

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Titan Park – In response to a question made by Commissioner Roettger, Councilmember Swedberg replied that Titan Park will be discussed at the Council workshop in the Hadley Room on Tuesday, from 5 to 7 PM before the Council meeting. The topic was listed as an “action item” by Councilmember Swedberg.

Summer Concerts – Hornucopia performed at the Walton Park Bandshell last Wednesday and was a great free concert. The last concert, “Remembering the King,” is tomorrow night. Councilmember Swedberg works with the performer when he is at his daytime job.

2020-2024 PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM DRAFT – Brian Bachmeier

City Engineer Brian Bachmeier introduced himself to the new commissioners and explained that he works with the commission on capital improvement planning. This planning is done annually during this time of the year. It will take place over the next two to three months. The CIP’s past proposals will be reviewed and recommendations can be made to adjust the five year plan. The kick off meeting tonight reviews funding and expenditures, included in the commissioner’s packet.

He presented the first chart, the 2019-2023 CIP, that had crossed out the two 2019 projects completed this year. Replacement of the Oakfield Park Playground was completed this summer. Vice Chair Cunningham distributed pictures of the equipment. The dog park improvements will be completed this week. These included a parking lot, extended water service with a fountain for people and pets, and a rain garden on the south end. The last project listed for 2019 is the Walton Park Warming House. The commission discussed potentially delaying the project, with no activity on the project this year. It may be better associated in 2022 when the hockey rink is resurfaced.

Last year, when developing the CIP for years 2020-2023, a number of improvements were identified at the Walton Park pinwheel ballfield complex. All improvements are approaching 30 years of age. Work needed includes replacing the backstops (that don’t meet current standards), repairs to the aging pavement, and lighting upgrades. The old high pressure sodium is getting difficult to replace. The more current LED lighting would provide efficiencies. Identifying and coordinating the improvements all in one year, 2020, will be a significant amount at \$685,000. He proposed using a combination of park reserve funds and General Obligation, or GO Bonds. GO Bonds are sold when doing street and paving improvements. Park paving improvements can piggyback the street projects and fund paving improvements through GO Bonds. The balance of the improvements; the lighting and the backstops, would come out of the park reserve fund.

In 2021, paving projects are identified at Eberle Park’s parking lot (over 25 years of age), and Tanners Lake Park. The two paving projects are out of GO Bonds with their adjacent street improvements.

In 2022, Walton Park will have the hockey rink resurfaced. Additional property will be acquired adjacent to Bethke Park off 25th Street and Granada Avenue.

In 2023, The Walton Park Skate Park will be resurfaced. 3.5 miles of trail will be repaved at the Oakdale Nature Preserve. A number of the trails are approaching 30 years in age.

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There are also projects that were brought to the attention of the city engineer over the last year since the last CIP discussion. Next week, Council is discussing a couple park projects, including Titan Park and fencing at the dog park.

Councilmember Zabel requested talking about additional fencing in the dog park, including fencing off the wetland areas. A repeating comment since the park's development two years ago has been to fence off the wetland areas so dogs don't get dirty or exposed to harmful bacteria. There is a continuous flowing stream that runs along the park and crosses 50th, without a lot of stagnant water. While we are unaware of any dogs getting sick there, if there were a dry year without flushing, the water could become stagnant.

When the community was surveyed about water features in a dog park, the response was 50-50; certain breeds love to play in water, but others were concerned with dogs becoming dirty or being exposed to harmful bacteria. At that time, wetlands were not fenced off. If they are fenced, it will take off all property north of the trail and will impact use of the park.

Another request is fencing off an area for smaller breeds. This could be 10,000 square feet. It will be discussed with council.

Installing a swing set at Tilsen Park was also brought up, and is listed on the commission agenda. A resident on Upper 35th Street lives across from Tilsen Park is appealing that consideration be made to add a swing set to increase the use of the playground structure. The existing footprint is not sufficient to accommodate a swing set; it would need to be expanded to the west with a border and woodchips. Currently there is sand, but for ADA reasons, woodchips would be put in. A conservative estimated cost of \$15,000 for the project would price a swing set at ~\$5,000, with a border and resurfacing materials at ~\$10,000. Equipment is purchased from Minnesota Playground when they have discounts instead of paying for catalog pricing.

One other improvement at Walton Park was suggested by Parks Superintendent Jeff Koesling. The Lions Shelter west of City Hall has shingle roofs that are 15-20 years old and receive continued vandalism from skaters who stack picnic tables to get on top of the roof and rip the shingles off. It is suggested to program something within the next five years. Replacing the shingles with a metal roof similar to the other roofs we now have at Walton Park will prevent the damage that is occurring to the shingled roof.

Mr. Bachmeier presented the next chart outlining the Capital Park Reserve Fund. Years 2019 through 2023 were worked with last year. The 3M dedication fee was unknown. This is the White Star Development north of what was formally Imation, now Slumberland. 208 acres of the site will be developed residentially. They will be providing almost 50 acres of park land; a very substantial amount of park land; almost 25% of the space.

Due to the amount of land they are providing, Community Development says it is unlikely we will be collecting any park dedication fees. So when the chart was generated last year, Finance Director Suzanne Warren was showing a very nominal \$5,000 a year starting in 2020. That is looking like it will be \$0. So, we should strike the \$20,000 that's reflected in 2020-2023 as potential revenue stream.

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Last week's meeting with Lennar Development Home Builders (who are in the process of acquiring the property from Maplewood Development) provided an update indicating that construction would start in 2020 and homes would start being built in 2021.

The balance of the revenue streams is still reflective of what we would expect between antennae rental, property taxes, the levy that we have, rents we get off of facility use, and \$21,000 a year from the Oakdale Athletic Association for use of the ballfields. There is approximately \$200,000 a year in revenue.

The expenditures reflect improvements. The warming house is still listed; \$100,000 depending on if the project is moved out to 2022. It is still an expenditure, the question is what year it should be in. The summary at the bottom shows expenditures from \$100,000 - \$197,000. If \$20,000 is taken off in revenue, there is around \$80,000. Looking at the other improvements that have been suggested, you can see where there is a balance between the revenue and the expenditures.

This is the kick off meeting to familiarize commissioners with some of the projects that have been discussed and the planning process. The next meeting will go into greater detail. In the past, matrices were used to rank and rate projects and move them around. If there's an appetite for that, that process can be set up again, or, if there's more comfort with the program we have in place, we can move further along.

Mr. Bachmeier replied to a question made by Vice Chair Cunningham that the commission would decide what year to program adding Tilsen swing sets. He pointed out that there is a "Parks without Borders" fund of \$15,000. The fund is there for 2019, 2020, 2021... that was always a contingency fund in the event a request like this came up and the decision makers weren't comfortable waiting for the project to happen. To respond more immediately, those funds can be used.

Vice Chair Cunningham suggested that if a swing set were to be added at Tilsen, that a bench be added too. There is not a bench to sit there.

Commissioner Lockhart added that the Tilsen I field is used for younger youth practices that get scattered on grass areas.

Commissioner Roettger noticed that the five year revenue projection uses the same figures each year. Even with inflation at a two percent increase at current inflation rates, no increase is seen in the revenue stream. Adding parks in the new housing projects in the north by the Imation area will need long stream revenue sources to accommodate them. He noted a seesaw, up and down effect, and encouraged the City Council to address why increases are not being seen in revenue sources. Either we cut back on expenditures, or look at another situation. Projections point toward a recession, and bond markets are not doing right. Where is the money going to come from? How are our expenditures going up and down? If five years down the line we have the same revenue stream as we have now, those dollars are buying a lot less than they are today. The money going out versus the money coming in is concerning, unless you're going to look at raising property taxes or finding some other source of revenue, we could find ourselves in a bind.

Director Bachmeier appreciated the comments of Commissioner Roettger. That question has been identified; what other funding streams are we going to have for the park improvements in the new

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developments? Every year we go through the process of updating the CIP. If there are dramatic changes in revenue or cost, we have opportunities to adjust going forward. This is a snapshot at five years. Next year, we will do it again. We try to do a limited number of improvements every year and reflect on the numbers and projections to consider if adjustments are needed.

Commissioner Roettger replied that in reality, if we aren't going to have any new revenue sources, then somehow we need to reflect the fact that at the very least, two to three years out, it is going to be buying a lot less than it is today. The citizens need to know that. We take our parks for granted, expecting them without realizing that they're not really free and need to be funded. We've got really good parks and should maintain them.

Vice Chair Cunningham enclosed swing set information relating to ideas and costs for the commissioners to review regarding Melissa Turnquist's request for Tilsen Park.

Director Bachmeier added that if the commission wanted to pursue the swing set this year, we could talk to a vendor. The vendor would come out, identify the space, and provide a more realistic cost estimate that can be brought back to the commission for a recommendation.

Commissioner Klein argued that 30 year old ball fields and 25 year old parking lots are a lot on the plate. There are other projects that need to be addressed first before adding new swings. The park there should have swings, but we should ask if we have the funds available this year.

Commissioner Lockhart discussed how the commission decided to not build the warming house next to the hockey rink at Walton Park a few meetings ago. He requested an update on the process of the commission's recommendation. There could potentially be unused money from that project that could help build a swing set at Tilsen. He also asked when the council will be addressing the commission's recommendation that the Walton Hockey Rink not be iced this year, so that feedback can be collected regarding the rink's use.

Councilmember Swedberg replied that if the hockey rink is going to be redone, then the warming house will be needed. She replied that the council has not yet discussed or decided whether the Walton Park Hockey Rink will be iced or not.

Commissioner Klein elaborated on the commission's recommendation to not flood Walton Hockey this year. She said that by not flooding the rink and closing the warming house, the decision makers can see what the feedback is from the people who use it. If people don't miss the ice rink, they could go to another active park's rink. The amount of money for the project is a huge amount; \$100,000 for a warming house, and \$250,000 to resurface the hockey rink; and the expenditure's value to the city and residents needs to be validated.

Mr. Bachmeier replied to a question made by Commissioner Klein that the Walton Park Ballfield lighting upgrades will cover fields 1 - 4.

Commissioner Lockhart expanded on the ballfield lighting issue, saying that the issue with the lighting involves access, because of the wetlands, to replace the bulbs. It is an issue on the football field too.

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Commissioner Klein identified the goal of reworking the lighting to make it economical. The use of the lighting needs to be balanced in the budget.

In response to a question made by Commissioner Roettger, Director Bachmeier said that the payback of switching to LED from sodium lighting at the ballfield probably has a similar calculation to a home setting that has a two to five year payback. The supplier can be asked what the payback for upgrading the lighting will be.

Director Bachmeier replied to a question made by Commissioner Klein about the sale of Titan Park. The sale of Titan Park is not reflected in the revenue. The commission recommended the money from the sale be put in the park fund. This will be discussed by Council next Tuesday.

Commissioner Nyberg prioritized the fencing at the Oakdale Bark Park. The dog park is an asset to the city and she wants dogs to go there, be safe, and enjoy it.

Commissioner Klein agreed that the dog park is a success and the dog ratio of homeowners is huge.

Director Bachmeier replied to a question made by Commissioner Klein. He said that the dog park rain garden was funded through part of the street project, and was considered part of the paving. He thanked the commission, inviting them to share any thoughts on the CIP process. Discussions will be continued next month.

RECREATION UPDATE – Julie Williams

Summer Camps – Recreation Superintendent Williams reported that the camp season has wrapped up. The great group of summer staff included five returners and four new employees. Next year a couple of the staff will be moving on to become full time teachers. They will be missed.

Second Movie in the Park – How to Train Your Dragon: The Hidden World was to be held last Friday night. At 8:15 PM, a storm came through Oakdale out of nowhere. While the event was ready to go and set up, the downpour flooded the park with everything under water. It happened so fast and did not stop raining until after 9 PM. Everyone will be kept posted if it is possible for the event to be rescheduled in the next few weeks.

Fall/Winter Newsletter – The newsletter will be mailed to residents in mid-September and will cover the recreation programming for the months of October through January. Winter is planned.

Farmers Market – Mrs. Williams reported that there are only seven more market dates. When the Taqueria Los Paisanos food truck is unavailable, a backup option for a food truck is the Tiger Belly Eats serving Korean food. Drogo Joes Coffee has a new truck too, offering fresh crafted drinks and selling coffee beans. The 2 Sisters will perform on August 28 and September 11. They have a nice following and market shoppers appreciate their music.

Summer Concert Series – Hornucopia's performance received a ton of compliments; people enjoyed the performance. Oakdale Recreation hopes to bring back the crowd's favorite

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performances. Remembering the King is a favorite that comes back each year. He will wrap up the season tomorrow night.

Artist of the Month– Joe Hilyar’s canvas paintings are on display August and September. His new art pieces are on display, and people enjoy his shows that happen once each year. Joe Hilyar’s art is one of Mrs. Williams’ favorites.

Amped Up Entertainment Series – There were great turnouts for each of the six events in the series. Dazzling Dave finished the season last week with his Professional Yo-Yo performance. The kids enjoyed the free Thursday morning events.

Touch a Truck–On Tuesday September 10, from 5 to 7 PM, the event will take place at Walton Park. The Maplewood Oakdale Lions Club will be providing concessions. Attendees will receive a free ice cream cone or sandwich.

Family Fun Flatables – On Saturday September 28, from 11 AM to 4 PM, Walton Park will host a big event with a ton of inflatables. A kids DJ will also perform from 12 to 3 PM. There will be concessions available. Around 2,000 people attend this event; an amazing turnout. There are 11 sponsors who are both recruited and participate through word of mouth, with more coming in last minute. It is a great opportunity for community involvement for local businesses. Sponsors can contact Nathan Timmons, the Recreation Coordinator, to participate at the event.

Commissioner Roettger knows of several Woodbury families that come to Oakdale because they think Oakdale’s programs are better. The kids like the Touch a Truck and Family Fun Flatables. They don’t have those programs in Woodbury.

Mrs. Williams replied that a lot of kids from neighboring cities participate in the Oakdale programs.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Wellness 50+ – Vice Chair Cunningham, serving as a liaison between Oakdale Wellness 50+ and the commission, shared a couple upcoming events. The first event is a free Hands Only CPR Course on Thursday, September 12 from 6 to 7:30 PM. Registration is required because the course is limited to 40 participants. The beneficial lessons will be taught by Oakdale Fire and will also include blood pressure checks and how to respond quickly when someone is choking. The second program is a Living Well with Chronic Conditions course happening on Tuesdays from 6 to 8:30 PM from October 22 through November 26. Participants can sign up on the website by the deadline on November 16.

In response to a question made by Commissioner Xiong, Vice Chair Cunningham replied that the Oakdale Wellness 50+ offerings are not limited to Oakdale residents or by age.

Recreation Superintendent Williams added that when registering, participants are not asked for an ID or to verify their age. Just a name and contact information is taken.

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ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER ROETTGER, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER LOCKHART TO ADJOURN THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION, DATED AUGUST 20, 2019, AT 7:44 P.M.

6 AYES 0 NAYS

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Linzmeyer