City of Birmingham
A Walkable Community

MEMORANDUM

Department of Public Services

DATE: **January 7, 2015**

TO: **Joseph A. Valentine, City Manager**

FROM: **Lauren A. Wood, Director of Public Services**

SUBJECT: **Staff Report – Parks and Recreation Board Report**

The attached report is being submitted from the Parks and Recreation Board as it was an added item on the night of the meeting to the January 6, 2015 Parks and Recreation Board agenda. The report was supported by the Parks and Recreation Board.

In turn, the Parks and Recreation Board requested this be submitted to you in order for it to be forwarded to the City Commission.

BIRMINGHAM CITY COMMISSION

Subject: Parks and Recreation Board
Interim Report on Priority Projects

Prior to the September 15, 2014 joint meeting with the Birmingham City Commission (Commission), the Parks and Recreation Board (Board) toured the parks to identify potential opportunities for improvements and attempt to develop a priority to accomplish such improvements.

Following is an interim report summarizing the results of the joint meeting and identifying courses of action for Board activities in the coming months.

MANOR PARK

Although long recognized as a nature preserve, this beautiful park is underutilized, due primarily to its anonymity. The joint meeting highlighted the fact that most residents are unaware of the parks existence, as well as its location. Unfortunately, the initial Recreation Master Plan (2000-2005) incorrectly listed Manor Park as 2.21 acres and categorized it as a Neighborhood Park, i.e., one that is the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. At 8.47 acres, this is the largest park currently identified as a Neighborhood Park. A nature preserve serves a broader purpose, i.e., one that focuses on meeting community-based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces; this is an important criterion for identification as a Community Park. Access to Manor Park is difficult and parking is virtually nonexistent. The neighborhood currently uses this facility as a dog park.

Actions indicated to improve this park:

1. Identify it as a Community Park.
2. Advertise the park's amenities (website, quarterly, and BBAC).
3. Investigate relocating the entrance to north and improving parking.

POPPLETON PARK

Arguably the City's busiest park, traffic congestion and lack of on-site parking are problems well known to users and neighborhood residents. The Board recommends relocating the park's entrance to Madison, closing the Rivenoak entrance and developing the unused area east of the tennis courts to accommodate additional parking, thereby eliminating the existing problems. The need for a Master Plan is questionable.

Actions indicated to improve this park:

1. Traffic study for Madison.
2. Traffic study for Lawndale, including rationale for one-way south.
3. Notice to neighbor on Madison.

LINN SMITH/ LINDEN PARK

Construction of a bridge across the Rouge River would create additional access to Linden Park and open the Rouge River Trail to usage from Southfield Road. Mr. Lasser has offered to contribute to funding the bridge and trees to shield homes along the west side of Linden Park.

Actions indicated to improve these parks:

1. Design and locate a bridge (possible contest for high school students).
2. Pursue funding from Mr. Lasser.

ADAMS PARK

Overall updating of park is needed. Removal of asphalt pad, updating of basketball court and improvement of soccer play area are required. Neighborhood associations and Roeper School should be involved in improvements.

Actions indicated to improve this park:

1. Contact neighborhood associations and Roeper School for funding.
2. Improve playground as required.

CRESTVIEW AND BARNUM PARKS

Playgrounds are weedy in both parks.

Improved weed control is required.

UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE PLAYGROUND

Birmingham is devoid of a park that is accessible to the elderly with mobility problems and individuals with disabilities. Other nearby communities have established these parks. Consideration is needed to develop a park with universally accessible playground facilities. Grants and corporate sponsorships may be available to assist with funding.

Actions indicated:

1. Select a location.
2. Pursue a grant or corporate sponsorship.

ROUGE RIVER TRAIL

This very important City asset is not identified as a City Park. Pursuit of continual improvements, including establishment of a continuous trail, is required.

MISCELLANEOUS ISSUES

Installation of new park signs with updated park rules has been completed. Enforcement of off-leash dog rules is required.

Efforts are required to increase resident awareness of all parks. Enhanced advertising and marketing are required.

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD