

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES

August 11, 2020

Heather Carmona, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. for the virtual meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Pam Graham, Ross Kaplan, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Mallory Windsor, Seaholm High School

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ABSENT: Hayden Watkinson, Seaholm High School

ADMINISTRATION: Lauren A. Wood, Director of Public Services
Carrie A. Laird, Parks and Recreation Manager
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator
Annmarie Erickson, VanDyke Horn Public Relations

It was moved by John Rusche, seconded by Ellie Noble to approve the minutes of the July 7, 2020 regular meeting as received.

ROLE CALL VOTE: **Yeas,** Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Pam Graham, Ross Kaplan, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche

Nays, None

AGENDA ITEM #1: Parks & Recreation Bond Information Campaign

Lauren stated the City of Birmingham have been preparing Parks and Recreation Master Plans and are typically a five year document and assists the city on receiving grant funding. In addition, the document is a tool for the city to use for capital projects for budgeting and forecasting future parks improvements based on public engagement and input over several years when the city updates their plan. The current Parks and Recreation Master Plan is dated 2018 through 2022 and it was adopted by City Commission in March, 2018.

Lauren stated the City Commission in June, 2018 asked the Parks and Recreation Board to review the new updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan and put together a priority list of potential projects that the board could garner from the master plan and also have more public engagement with the community to identify these projects as potential bond opportunities. ~~If and when the city were ever to go forward to ask the voters to approve a Parks and Recreation bond like occurred in 2001.~~

The Parks and Recreation Board through a Parks and Recreation Board Master Plan Sub-Committee worked diligently for several months on that task and began having public input sessions. A campaign which consisted of a survey which was called Pick Your Park Passion in February, 2019.

The Parks and Recreation Board came up with a recommendation of potential projects for a parks bond if and when City Commission ultimately pursued a bond at an upcoming election through ballot language. The Parks and Recreation Board recommendations went to the City Commission in November with a variety of project and cost estimates.

Lauren stated a recreation bond would allow the city or community to advance park improvement projects throughout the city and would allow administration and the Parks and Recreation Board to finalize plans that were once conceptual plans, to re-engage the community and to design parks and playgrounds with community wide input.

Lauren stated that at the July 20th City Commission meeting bond language was approved for the November election.

Lauren introduced Anmarie Erickson, VanDyke Horn Public Relations to assist as the city's communication consultants to provide services in order to promote, educate and to inform the public on the bond proposal.

Anmarie stated that this is a public information campaign. VanDyke Horn will give the public sufficient accurate factual information to make an informed vote. Anmarie stated the most visible piece will be on the City of Birmingham website where there will be a series of frequently asked questions placed on the site. Anmarie stated the cost will be \$51.06 for a \$250,000 assessed value, which will not be an increase because other bonds are being retired, so it will actually be a net reduction over the 21-year period of the bond.

Anmarie stated every month there will be two to three posts once a week, newsletters and two direct mail pieces and an informational event held at a Birmingham park in late September early October.

Heather complimented Anmarie on a well-designed proposal.

Pam asked about signage to be displayed at City of Birmingham parks and or businesses for the campaign.

Anmarie stated the City of Birmingham is being cautious about lawn signs but she would pass on Pam's comment.

John asked when the citizens would see some development taken place.

Annamarie stated that some of the projects as early as spring, 2021 particularly at Adams Park since there is a finalized concept plan and construction estimate.

Lauren added there are some other projects such as planning of playgrounds and the Booth Park corner feature.

Lauren stated that 2 million has been set aside in the 2020/2021 fiscal budget for the mechanical improvements at the Birmingham Ice Arena. The Birmingham Ice Arena was deemed valuable by the Parks and Recreation Board and also during the public input sessions.

Susan stated many people assume that the Birmingham Ice Arena is not being used and asked Annmarie how that perception can be changed. Susan stated that the Birmingham Ice Arena is full twelve to fifteen hours a day and is a wonderful place for the children to be.

Dominick stated that some of the elements within the bond proposal are more ready than others and how can we articulate through the public relations campaign there is still plenty of opportunity for public involvement with defining elements.

Dominick wants to gain some consistent messaging about why a bond proposal is the right tool for what the city's trying to achieve versus, why the city does not just proceed on the projects.

Annamarie stated since the bonds are timed, the city wants to get something started right away so that the city can take advantage of having that cash flow and Adams Park is the piece that has been focused on since there is a site plan and construction estimates.

Annamarie stated that bonds are used for multiple projects that will take many years to complete and will cost many millions of dollars.

Ellie stated there are several homeowners association and that would be a good way to get the word out since there is not much time.

Lauren stated the City of Birmingham has such a wonderful process in place that is successful on getting information out that now is the time to educate and inform the public about the November election, for the park bond. Lauren stated that the parks are being used more than ever.

Jeff asked if the timing of the bond and the economic marketplace we're living in right now if it is advantageous for the city.

Annamarie stated the City of Birmingham has a stellar bond rating.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

AGENDA ITEM #2: Letter dated July 10, 2020-Requesting a New Park & Playground-Quarton Lakes Estates

Lauren introduced Kate Bongiorno who presented a proposal for a playground in the Quarton Lake Neighborhood next to fire station #2, located on Maple Rd. and Chesterfield Rd. Kate stated it would be a park with a playground that would provide opportunities to the community for recreation activities.

Katie iterated the next steps would include community conversations. The area would include an all-inclusive playground structure, benches, picnic tables and a gazebo.

Lauren stated that the property is about a .5 acre and a continuous part of fire station #2 and is not identified on any of the City of Birmingham maps in our Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Lauren stated that the timing is good for this type of project.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #1: Parks Bond Opportunity- City Commission Meeting Agenda Item July 20, 2020:

Lauren presented the supporting background information in terms of the park bond opportunity, Language which is strictly a supplement to Annmarie's presentation.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #2: Parks and Recreation Bond –email received from John Rusche

John stated he was motivated on sending the email after watching the deliberations from City Commission and the comments on how does the City Commission even knows that the Parks and Recreation Board is behind the Parks and Recreation bond.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #3a Kenning Skate Park, Emails received from Dr. Anna Groebe and Jackie Ruppert

Lauren provided an exchange of communication on different uses of Kenning Skate Park. Lauren stated that staff is looking at other skate parks and once information is available they will be contacted so information maybe share with them once the item returns back to the Parks and Recreation Board. Lauren also stated that the parks rules and regulations will also be forthcoming.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #3b Letter regarding Kenning Skate Park-received from Henry Franco

Lauren provided a letter that was received from Henry Franco regarding using scooters in the Lincoln Skate Park.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #3a: Finance Report-Golf Courses

Lauren presented to the Parks and Recreation Board the June, 2020 finance report provided from the finance department.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #3b: Golf Report- August July 5, 2020

Lauren presented to the Parks and Recreation Board the golf report prepared by Jacky Brito. Lauren stated the golf courses are tremendously busy.

Lauren stated as a follow-up to Pam, Pam had asked the question at the last meeting regarding COVID expenses for both golf courses. Jacky has spent a little over \$2,100 on purchases of sanitizers, bleach, masks and signs and is following all the protocols.

Lauren stated the golf courses are looking for seasonal employees.

Heather stated Jacky has knocked it out of the park on her golf report.

Dominick stated what a wonderful job the golf course is doing and to please forward the comments to Jacky and her staff.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Dominick wanted to thank Henry Franco for writing the letter regarding the skate park.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

NEW BUSINESS:

No New Business

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

Ross wanted to thank Connie and her team for a great job that has been done on the on-line reservation program that is now available.

Lauren thanked Connie and Carrie for a job well done on the reservation program.

Heather Carmona stated the next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday September 1, 2020 virtually at 6:30 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:06 pm
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator