

PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING MINUTES
May 11, 2021

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

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Heather Carmona	(location: Birmingham, MI)
Susan Collins	(location: Petoskey, MI)
Pam Graham	(location: Myrtle Beach, South Carolina)
Ross Kaplan	(location: Birmingham, MI)
Ellie Noble	(location: Birmingham, MI)
Dominick Pulis	(location: Birmingham, MI)
John Rusche	(location: Birmingham, MI)

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

R.J. Carrel, Groves High School
Alison Chapnick Groves High School
Kyle Sayers, Seaholm High School

ADMINISTRATION:

Lauren A. Wood, Director of Public Services
Carrie A. Laird, Parks and Recreation Manager
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator

GUESTS:

Anne Lipp, Cindy Rose and David Young

It was moved by John Rusche, seconded by Dominick Pulis to approve the minutes of the April 6, 2021 regular meeting as amended.

ROLE CALL VOTE:

Ayes,	Heather Carmona, Susan Collins, Pam Graham, Ross Kaplan, Ellie Noble, Dominick Pulis and John Rusche
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Nays, None

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #1: Pickleball Sites – Public Input

Carrie presented to the Parks and Recreation Board a pickleball presentation. Carrie pointed out five potential locations of new pickleball courts which were Crestview Park, Lincoln/Eton Corner (Kenning Park), Poppleton Park, St. James Park and West Lincoln Well.

Carrie stated that there are two options to either provide new pickleball courts or to convert tennis court(s) into pickleball court(s).

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Carrie stated that staff reviewed all the City of Birmingham Parks and took into consideration spacing requirements, other programmed activity, proximity to other nearby parks with tennis courts, nature of park- active/passive and other items that the public might not be aware of.

Carrie stated other considerations such as parking, ladder leagues (6 to 8 courts needed), ADA- curb cuts, sidewalk up to and surrounding, site furnishings- tables, spectators, restrooms, proximity to nearby residences- sound attenuation/visual separation, tennis players, other current park activity, new vs. converting existing tennis courts.

Carrie showed the Parks and Recreation Board how new pickleball courts would fit at each of the five locations either for new pickleball courts or converting the existing tennis courts.

Carrie stated that \$150,000 has been estimated in constructing six to eight new pickleball courts.

Carrie stated that the new Engage Birmingham survey System was used for public input. Carrie will provide to the board an update on the rankings at the June Parks and Recreation Board meeting.

Carrie reviewed with the Parks and Recreation Board the 2020 tennis reservations that were reserved through our Parks and Recreation software at the seven City of Birmingham tennis courts.

Ross Kaplan said **it's his opinion that** ~~to be cautious with~~ the number of tennis reservations reported **are** since only 25-30% of Birmingham residents actually **make making tennis** reservations.

Pam asked if the staff had look at the possibility of using the tennis courts for both pickleball and tennis as a shared use.

Carrie stated the staff would have to explore the possibility of a shared use for both pickleball and tennis.

Carrie stated that at a future Parks and Recreation Board meeting a recommendation will be brought to the board for approval for a pickleball location and that tonight's meeting is just to receive feedback.

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Dominick stated that the board may want to have a conversation about pickleball and splash pad together so that the board can make more of a holistic assessment of all the facilities and make the best determination for the residents.

David Young stated he is not an advocate of converting tennis courts to pickleball courts and the city should build new ones and the online tennis reservations is not necessarily the true reflection of demand for tennis.

David stated frequently he will show up at the tennis court and there are people just playing at the tennis court casually, so he thinks staff should look at the total demand rather than the reservation demand. David stated he would advocate building new pickleball courts.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #2a-2d: Fire Station 2 Park Designation Request (City Commission Report dated March 30, 2021)

Lauren stated there is interest and ongoing conversation from community members about designating an existing public property (known as the Chesterfield Fire Station) as a City park.

In addition, to consider naming the park in honor of a local resident. Last year, a proposal and petition for a new park and playground located at Fire Station #2 was presented to the Parks and Recreation Board August 11, 2020 meeting.

The Parks and Recreation Board took no action. However, the Administration informed the presenter, Kate Bongiorno that further consideration and communication can occur about this idea after the Parks and Recreation Bond proposal in November 2020.

Lauren stated to the board that in addition to the August 11, 2020 Parks and Recreation Board Agenda Item #2 and meeting minutes, City of Birmingham Parks and Recreation Donor Policy, also included is the City Commission Report dated March 30, 2021, email received from Commissioner Rackeline J. Hoff, memorandum from Fire Chief Paul Wells and the City Commission draft minutes of April 26, 2021.

Lauren stated that moving forward staff would have to do some research on evaluating the proposed property, how much space that is available, what would it take dedicate or earmark as a park. The public property is designated as a fire department.

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Since this project was brought to the August 11, 2020 Parks and Recreation Board meeting it was not considered part of the allocation of the bond and was not one of the priority projects. The project will be ongoing and the Parks and Recreation Board will be given intermittently updates as this project moves forward.

John stated that the idea is wonderful and the concept of the park is interesting but finds it difficult to overcome the comments from Fire Chief Paul Wells and Ms. Hoff. If the development of that park had picnic tables and things that may be suitable for adults that would be an interesting idea. But to encourage children to come to a park that is right on a busy street as Maple is not a great idea.

Susan stated that she loves the idea of a new park but would like to reiterate John's comments that Maple is a very busy street especially since Maple has been reduced down to two lanes and would be concerned having children playing at the proposed park. Susan likes the idea about placing some seats at the proposed park location.

Dominick also in agreement with the concerns as stated in particular from the fire chief. Dominick asked if it would make sense to consider that location for pickleball as it perhaps skews towards older users and would alleviate younger children playing near a busy road but not sure however if this addresses the consideration of the fire chief for future expansion, hose drainage and training.

Heather stated she agrees with the comments made by John, Susan and Dominick. The idea and the premise behind the neighborhood wanting to do something to activate that space should be commended but believe that are some options and flexibility not only safety, to install some benches and trees and not to make a large investment into the area because of possible future expansion but to make it a respite area instead of a place to play.

Pam asked that staff contact Kate Bongiorno and give an update on the progress of the proposed park. Lauren stated that there continues to be communication with Kate, although **Kate is no longer a Birmingham resident.**

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #3: 2021-2022 CIP

Lauren provided to the Parks and Recreation Board the recommended 2021-2022 CIP for Department of Public Services.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

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COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #4 Capital Projects Sub-Committee Report-May 5, 2021

John reviewed with the Parks and Recreation Board the Capital Projects Sub-Committee Progress Report.

John stated that demolition is still continuing at the Birmingham Ice Sports Arena and the fencing was erected on May 6th. Ball players will enter on east side near skate park.

John stated that city staff has met with representatives from neighborhood associations: Birmingham Estates and South Poppleton and Roeper School regarding Adams Park. John stated that Roeper School will assist with the cost.

Michael J. Dul & Associates will revise the concept plan and bring it back to the associations, Roeper, then to the P&R Board by late summer, city commission approval September/October with final bidding and contractor selection with construction beginning in May or June 2022 in coordination with Roeper.

John stated the City of Birmingham has launched a new online engagement platform designed to encourage public input called Engage Birmingham (engage.bhamgov.org).

John stated that the Parks and Recreation has already discussed pickleball but when potential locations are consider a posting "public notice" signage at the courts to gather more public opinions would be recommended.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #5: Birmingham Ice Sports Arena Construction Update

Carrie provided the Parks and Recreation Board pictures of the demolition of the Birmingham Ice Arena.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #6: Ice Arena Finance Report, period ending –March 31, 2021

Lauren provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #7: Immediate Release-Birmingham Launches New Online Engagement Platform for Community Input

Lauren provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

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COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #8: Parks and Recreation Roster

Connie provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #9: Rouge River Clean-Up, May 15th

Connie provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #10: Quarton Lake Garlic Mustard Pull, May 16th

Connie provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #11: Email dated April 14, 2021, Re: Park Suggestions

Lauren provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #12: Parks in Mt. Clemens and Rochester Hills to be enhanced with new features and playgrounds, Metro Detroit

Lauren provided the information to the Parks and Recreation Board

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

COMMUNICATION/DISCUSSION ITEM #13: Trail Sub-Committee

Pam stated that she and Ross met with city staff to discuss the trail sub-committee responsibilities and to learn about the priorities of the improvements, such as improving the connectivity, accessibility and improving the signs and maps to help users navigate the parks better and a way to publicize the parks.

Pam learned about some limitations that the city has and there are protective wet lands. There are some coordinated efforts with the Birmingham Museum and Multi-Modal. Pam is looking forward having an on-site meeting. Ross added some additional historical information.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

No unfinished business

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

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approved

NEW BUSINESS:

Ann stated that she had spoken to some people in the skating world regarding offering Learn To Skate (LTS) classes in the summer. Anne stated that the LTS classes are reduced about 1/3 of participation in the summer after contacting two ice arenas.

No Action was taken by the Parks and Recreation Board

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA:

No Public Comments

Heather Carmona stated the next regular meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 1, 2021 virtually at 6:30 pm.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:53 pm
Connie J. Folk, Recreation Coordinator

approved