

MINUTES OF THE RECREATION COMMITTEE
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
January 18, 2023 – 3:00 p.m.

Committee Members Present: Councilor Nancie Cameron, Chairman
Councilor Richard Michaud, Vice Chairman
Councilor Martin Pepin

Committee Members Absent: Councilor Kenneth S. Vincent

Administration/Staff present: City Manager, Bob Belmore
Director of Planning & Community Development, Michelle Mears
Director of Public Works, Michael Bobinsky
City Engineer, Amber Hall
Recreation Supervisor, Kristen Davenport
City Clerk, Kristen LaPanne

Chairman Cameron called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Councilor Pepin made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2022 and April 9, 2022 meetings. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 3-0.

ASH STREET PARK – MONARCH BUTTERFLY PROJECT

City Manager Belmore began the discussion by updating the Committee that one of the large trees within the park was cut down as it was in bad shape and created more room. He added that he and Director Bobinsky had a discussion pertaining to the timeline to complete the Project at this Park and the potential for it to have improvements phased over two years.

Director of Public Works Bobinsky met with City Engineer, Amber Hall and General Foreman, Gerry Vachon to discuss the project and would like to find out from the Committee their ideas on the design, timing, and priorities. . Director Bobinsky stated that Public Works staff will be able to provide labor once items are purchased, while there are items that the Department may be able to repurpose for the park such as granite curbing in an effort to save the City money.

Manager Belmore asked that Director Bobinsky reach out to Home Depot Community Garden to inquire about available volunteers to assist with the project such as the plantings. He added that Public Works staff tend to take most of their time off during the summer months as they accrue much of their time during the winter and feels that phasing the project over a 2-year period would be more doable. Chairman Cameron agreed with keeping costs low by contacting Home Depot and continuing to seek grants and also agrees with the phasing of the project over a 2-year timeframe is reasonable. Director Mears provided a memorandum to the Committee reporting that the City was notified that a \$4,000 grant through the AARP Community Challenge Grant was available; staff recommended purchasing a Victor Stanley bench and signage for the Ash Street Park Project.

Councilor Pepin questioned the possibility of reconsidering the design in ways that would allow for the City to save money and reuse items within the Public Works Department such as using straight edge curbing as opposed to radius curbing that would need to be purchased.

Director Bobinsky confirmed that he would work on gathering some estimates to provide to the Committee in a future update.

RECREATION DIVISION UPDATES

Recreation Supervisor Davenport provided an update to the Committee noting that 2022 was a great year for the Recreation Division and that 2023 programs are on the move with some new programs and events returning for the first time since the COVID pandemic. She reported having had multiple reputable companies provide demonstrations on recreation management software with a recommendation to pursue RecDesk Software that will be considered in the next fiscal year 2023-2024 proposed budget by the City Manager. The addition of this software would provide residents and participants with convenient 24/7 access to program information, online registrations and credit card payment options. Internally for the Recreation Office, the software would help streamline services, improve public access, improve program management and increase efficiencies. She added that she has contacted City's including Rochester, Keene and Concord which all use the RecDesk software and they are happy with the service.

Supervisor Davenport provided an update on programs and events beginning with Youth Basketball which has 110 co-ed players registered between first and sixth grade, the program runs December 10 through February 11th on Saturday mornings. The first and second grade levels are coached by parent volunteers and the third through sixth grade levels are coached by the High School Varsity coaches and players which has been a great way to build up the program while providing quality practices to the players.

Davenport reported that the Annual Valentine's Dance is scheduled for Thursday, February 9th from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Idlehurst Café. The event is for children grades K-6 with tickets costing \$25 per couple which admits 1 adult and children within the family, each additional adult costs \$5. Tickets are on sale now through February 8th and must be purchased in advance as tickets will not be available at the door.

Supervisor Davenport concluded her Recreation updates with Biddy Basketball beginning on February 25th and running through March 25th on Saturday mornings with two separate sessions for 3-4 grades and 5-6 grades at Idlehurst Elementary School. Currently, the programs are full with 30 children registered and a waitlist. The program is coached by the Recreation Supervisor and parent volunteers.

MISCELLANEOUS

Recreation Supervisor Davenport, City Wellness Coordinator, stated she has been working with the Human Resources Director to prepare an Employee Wellness Fair on April 13, 2023 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The City receives \$500 from the Health Trust to run Wellness Programs. The purpose of the event is to allow employees to meet with representatives from Primex, Health Trust, Private 457 Retirement Companies and more, providing employees with education on all of the benefits available to them. City Manager Belmore added that employees have the opportunity to earn up to \$75 quarterly through the Health Trust Program's wellness incentives and is thankful to the Recreation Supervisor and Human Services Director for planning this event.

Supervisor Davenport noted that last fall the Recreation Department added Tiny Toppers Play Program which was filled with 14 children ages 2-4 that provided the children and their accompanying adult with fun outdoor games, activities and the opportunity to try different sports equipment. She added that she has received lots of great feedback pertaining to the program and will bring it back for a Spring and Fall Session in 2023. The program incurred no startup costs as they were able to make use of the Summer Camp equipment.

The Committee discussed Millennium Park with Director Bobinsky reporting that the current lighting structures had been reenforced with support collars and that previous estimates came in around \$250,000 to completely replace the lights to all LED. Councilor Pepin spoke of past conversations pertaining to the possibility of renting out space at the Park and would like to discuss whether there is interest and the potential for City revenue through more rentals. Manager Belmore asked that Planning and Community Development Director Mears meet with City staff about posting on the website and the City Newsletter to gather more potential interest in renting of the Park. Supervisor Davenport mentioned that the Little League uses the field April through June.

The Committee discussed the need for the ballfield, structures and picnic tables to be assessed prior to renting of the park. Manager Belmore added that City staff will look into Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants (LWCF) to assist with the cost of any recommended upgrades and Supervisor Davenport will look into potential restrictions that a Grant may have pertaining to the renting of City Parks.

Councilor Pepin commented that it is nice to see Noble Pines Park full and the Splash Pad used often and wondered how much water is being used. Director Bobinsky reported that the water is now metered and would get back to the Committee with that information.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Pepin made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 3-0. The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk