

***PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING – MARCH 1, 2018
MINUTES***

The Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Andover Park and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Stenzel on March 1, 2018, 7:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1685 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners Present: Chair Shane Stenzel, Commissioners Ted Butler, Angela Marinello, Mark Miskowiec, Dawn Perra and Jake Widmyer

Commissioners Absent: Vice Chair Jim Lindahl

Also Present: City Administrator, Jim Dickinson
Community Center Facilities Manager, Erick Sutherland
YMCA Representative, Allison Boes

RESIDENT FORUM

No one appeared to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion by Butler, seconded by Marinello, to approve the March 1, 2018 Park and Recreation Commission agenda, as presented. Motion carried on a 6-ayes, 0-nays, 1-absent (Lindahl).

JOINT MEETING WITH ANDOVER COMMUNITY CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Chair Stenzel welcomed Mr. Sutherland to the meeting and explained the Park and Recreation Commission would like to discuss programming at the Andover Community Center. He asked if the Park and Recreation Commission should be making recommendations to the City. He then asked all those present to share their ideas about programming.

Mr. Sutherland introduced himself and commented he has not thought much about having recreational programs held out in the park areas. He stated he spent much of his childhood growing up in Rochester playing in the parks. He then said he felt staffing and

funding were essential parts of programming. Mr. Sutherland commented with the possible expansion and the continuous growth, he felt there is no longer a slow season. He questioned who would be responsible for drawing up the programs. He stated he is excited to explore this idea but said the Commission would need to ask the City Council what their thoughts are.

Allison Boes, representative from the Andover YMCA, commented she felt a full range of programs were already available. She questioned which populations of the community were not being adequately served by the available programs. She asked if there was a way that current programs could be altered to better serve community members.

Commissioner Butler asked if programming could be thought about in terms of a gap analysis situation. He asked if the gaps in park time usage were mostly during daytime hours, and he stated the parks are definitely being used during week nights and weekends for sports. He commented the YMCA has an outdoor programming area and he questioned if they use the parks. Ms. Boes agreed, and stated the YMCA uses both their outdoor area and some parks.

Commissioner Butler stated he felt there was little to no programming that targeted adults. Chair Stenzel stated he felt current programming typically targets young adults and large groups of people. He commented there seems to be a desire to make the programming feel more like a social gathering than a work out. He questioned whether the efforts of the Community Center and the efforts of the YMCA were enough. He questioned whether or not the City should play a larger role in facilitation of these things. Commissioner Butler stated when he joined the Park and Recreation Commission, around 2007, he felt the goals were not focused on programming. He stated he felt that the Community Center staff were the ones that started programming. He commented in the beginning there was a need to utilize vacant space, but he said now there is never enough space.

Mr. Sutherland stated the City Campus Master Plan was designed with green space to be used for outdoor programming. Chair Stenzel agreed, and stated the master plan had intended this, but stated if nobody programs the space accordingly then it just sits there and does not get utilized. Chair Stenzel asked what gaps were being missed and he asked who would be responsible to manage it all. He questioned if permits would need to be issued.

Commissioner Miskowiec questioned how often the Community Center used the parks. He asked if they used Purple Park. Mr. Sutherland stated the Community Center used the parks mostly for camps, and he believed the YMCA used the parks also. Ms. Boes agreed the YMCA does use the parks. Commissioner Miskowiec questioned if they used Purple Park most often. Ms. Boes said the YMCA had their own outdoor space which was heavily used and said they also used Purple Park. Ms. Boes stated travel becomes difficult due to the large number of children.

Commissioner Perra stated she felt there was some controversy over the proposed expansion and asked if the Community Center was doing anything to reach out to non-members. Commissioner Marinello agreed and commented on the Tot Time that used to be open to non-members and offered a discount to members. She stated she felt there were no nighttime programs available for young ages and said she felt many people were traveling to other communities to find these programs. Mr. Sutherland questioned if programming for young ages were to be set up during after work hours would people be willing to pay for it. Commissioner Marinello felt strongly that people would be willing to pay for it because they were already paying for it in other communities. She stated the benefit would be not having to travel so far to get to the programs.

Chair Stenzel commented he has often seen donation boxes set up for programs and stated this could be a way to cut staffing and organization time that might be necessary for programming. Commissioner Perra asked if Coon Rapids did donation boxes. Chair Stenzel replied yes.

Chair Stenzel mentioned showing movies can become expensive and inquired whether donations would be enough to cover the costs. Mr. Sutherland agreed and inquired about concerts. Chair Stenzel commented on the amphitheater in Ramsey and questioned if there were any areas to create options like this available in Andover.

Commissioner Butler questioned if volunteers could be utilized, and he stated he felt volunteers were often short term. Commissioner Perra stated there are many well educated people that might be willing to volunteer some of their time. She mentioned those on the Open Space Commission.

Chair Stenzel questioned who would be responsible for putting something together, and he questioned how it would be operated. He stated it could be offered through the YMCA as long as there were options for members and non-members. Ms. Boes stated it was easy for the YMCA to take some programs offsite. She stated summer time is more challenging due to the high volume of children onsite. She commented on the high costs for transporting and bussing. She said daytime programs could be looked at and she commented that some programs would certainly be easier than others to take offsite. Mr. Sutherland inquired about memberships. Ms. Boes stated member and non-member programs are actually easier offsite. She stated members like to keep the YMCA facilities limited to members as much as possible. Commissioner Butler commented members expect the member discounts.

Chair Stenzel asked Mr. Dickinson if the City had any staff dedicated to this type of programming. Mr. Dickinson replied no. He stated the City had partnerships with the YMCA, Community Education, and the Community Associations. He stated Community Education is funded by levy dollars, so they have to provide some programming. Commissioner Perra commented that Community Education does provide programming within the schools. Mr. Dickinson agreed, and stated some of the partners might be willing to provide more if they were asked to. He explained the funding can be

transferred to partners depending on what partners are actively programming. Mr. Dickinson commented when the Community Center was first built, the turnout was not what was expected. He explained some city assets are over or under-utilized. He stated the City conducts surveys and the responses so far have not indicated a need for anything additional, people seem happy with the existing parks. Commissioner Perra further inquired about the surveys conducted. Mr. Dickinson explained people want trails, and they seem to want peace and quiet. He clarified the City Council hears and discusses these requests. Mr. Dickinson stated a proposed expansion has been asked for a long time and many people have been pushing for decisions to be made. He commented the stake holders showing up and speaking are usually the ones that will be heard.

Chair Stenzel commented he felt that many people do not realize that the Community Center is separate from the YMCA.

Commissioner Perra asked if the City had anything in place for communicating about these programs. Mr. Dickinson replied the City has the bi-monthly newsletter and he also stated the surveys have indicated that people like the newsletters. Commissioner Butler inquired if Community Education still produced paper notifications. Commissioner Perra stated yes, they do. Commissioner Butler asked if the communication efforts could be spread out across all groups. Mr. Dickinson stated there are many groups and many opportunities that often get overlooked.

Commissioner Perra stated there is nothing posted on the City website regarding reservation. Commissioner Marinello agreed and added there are no email notifications sent out either. She stated she is willing to help facilitate communication efforts with the City and said she has tried to in the past. She stated there is no good contact person at the City that she can work with on the matter. Commissioner Perra echoed the frustrations about not being able to facilitate better communication from the City. She commented there are many media avenues, such as Facebook and email, that are free to use. Commissioner Butler stated the Community Center uses Facebook often. Commissioner Perra stated the Fire Department and the Sheriff's Department also use Facebook often.

Mr. Dickinson stated the City needs to be selective on social media involvement. When items are posted the City owns that post and often times we need to determine where to start and stop.

Commissioner Perra asked if the City has requested a staff position which would incorporate communication or marketing as a duty. Mr. Dickinson replied the budget has not allowed for such a position to be added and most freed up funds have gone for infrastructure maintenance including parks. Commissioner Perra recommended they start small scale, perhaps with an intern position.

Chair Stenzel commented community members have disposable income. He stated the programming would need to find out how to utilize disposable income to fund the programming so that it would not need a referendum or a levy. Commissioner Perra

stated Community Education has a very restrictive funding set up and they cannot collect profits without full disclosure. She explained this would make it difficult to structure the programming as was suggested.

Mr. Sutherland stated they should try to come up with four or five programs and work together to get things jumpstarted. Commissioner Butler agreed that starting small scale could be a good idea. Mr. Dickinson questioned if there would be enough of a demand to sustain long-term programming efforts if they were to start small scale.

Commissioner Marinello stated they could do a planting event perhaps for Arbor Day. She stated she felt an event like this would be of low cost to the City.

Chair Stenzel inquired if they would like to circle back on some of these ideas at the next meeting. He suggested they come up with a few specific program ideas and thoughts on how the events could be operated. Mr. Sutherland agreed that would be a good idea. Chair Stenzel suggested a task force could be formed. Ms. Boes commented spring and summer programming will be starting soon, so it would be a good to get things rolling sooner than later.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Chair Stenzel did not have any report updates.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Commissioner Butler, seconded by Commissioner Marinello, to adjourn the regular meeting at 8:34 p.m. Motion carried on a 6-ayes, 0-nays, 1-absent (Lindahl).

Respectfully Submitted,

Natasha Lukacs, Recording Secretary
TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.