The Regular Bi-Monthly Meeting of the Andover Park and Recreation Commission was called to order by Chair Lindahl on December 5, 2019, 7:00 p.m., at the Andover City Hall, 1885 Crosstown Boulevard NW, Andover, Minnesota.

Commissioners Present: Chair Jim Lindahl, Commissioners Ted Butler, Kathy McElhose, Dawn Perra and Jake Widmyer

Commissioners Absent: Angela Marinello and Mark Miskowiec

Also Present: Assistant Public Works Director, Todd Haas

Parks Maintenance Supervisor, Jason Grode

RESIDENT FORUM

No one appeared to address the Commission.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion by Butler, seconded by Widmyer to approve the November 21, 2019 Park Commission minutes as presented. Motion carried on a 5-ayes, 0-nays, 2-absent vote (Marinello and Miskowiec).

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Motion by Perra, seconded by Butler, to approve the Agenda as presented. Motion carried on a 5-ayes, 0-nays, 2-absent vote (Marinello and Miskowiec).

HOLD PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING/STROOTMAN PARK/20-12

Assistant Public Works Director Haas presented information in the staff report, stating that the Parks Department regularly replaces park equipment to maintain safety and quality standards. Mr. Haas identified the location of Strootman Park and showed photos of the existing structure.

Mr. Haas explained letters were sent out to the neighborhood notifying them their neighborhood park was going to receive a new playground and inviting them to provide
input on the amenities. Mr. Haas stated he had a few responses and the most popular item identified from the survey results was a half-court basketball court.

Chair Lindahl responded to a request received in writing about adding a skating rink to the Strootman Park. Chair Lindahl stated there was a rink many years ago which was rarely used so it was eliminated.

Tami Palmquist, 15621 Potawatomi Street, came forward and stated she doesn’t feel like a new playground will get used. She stated she spoke to many of her neighbors and they felt a basketball court and ice rink would get more use with the age of the kids in the neighborhood. She stated the canoe landing is the highest used amenity and she would like to see that area widened and improved. Ms. Palmquist stated there is a parking lot with poor lighting and would like to see better lighting.

Mr. Haas stated the DNR put in a canoe landing and the area has eroded. Mr. Haas explained there was a dock on another part of the river, and it didn’t last due to the fluctuating water levels. Mr. Haas stated staff will look at how they can improve the canoe landing.

Chair Lindahl stated adding an ice rink at the park requires an increase in expense and staff time and the Commission found it not cost effective.

Ms. Palmquist notified the Commission that there aren’t many younger kids in the neighborhood. Ms. Palmquist spoke against building a sandbox due to the number of wildlife and pets in the area leading to unsanitary conditions.

Commissioner Butler explained that the Commission has listened to neighborhoods with older children stating a playground wasn’t used and the City pulled it out. A few years later, the neighborhood changed over with younger families wanting a playground. He stated the ballfield at the park is underused.

Ms. Palmquist agreed the ballfield could be used more and she sees the playground being used more when there is a game or practice on the ballfield.

Commissioner Perra asked if the playground could get refurbished since it isn’t highly used.

Parks Maintenance Supervisor, Jason Grode replied that staff can look into refurbishing part of the playground.

Commissioner McElhose asked if the park could include a half court hoop and a smaller playground.

Mr. Haas stated it is up to the Commission as to what they wanted to include in the park remodel.
Commissioner Perra stated the ballfield is for 13U teams and their siblings are right around that age and she recommends the playground be interesting to 10-12-year-olds.

Commissioner Butler stated since there isn’t much interest in the playground, perhaps the Commission could look into a minimal playground and a half-court basketball court.

Chair Lindahl stated it would be wise to make the basketball court useful for pickleball as well.

Commissioner Widmyer asked if the playground could remain if they chose not to replace it.

Mr. Grode stated the sand needs to be removed and the structure itself is in need of replacement. He indicated there may be a few auxiliary pieces that could be refurbished.

Commissioner McElhose asked how much was in the budget for the park and how much it would cost to do the half basketball/pickleball court. Mr. Grode replied the budget was around $75,000 for the two parks combined.

Ms. Palmquist reiterated the importance of the canoe landing and parking lot lighting as a priority for the neighborhood and stated that it is used by people all around the City.

Mr. Haas stated a light would be around $5000 and could come out of the Park Improvement miscellaneous fund that is allocated each for smaller type park improvements.

Chair Lindahl stated the Commission would have to do more review on the park before they made a decision about what to do on the canoe landing and additional park amenities at Strootman Park.

**HOLD PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING/HIDDEN CREEK NORTH PARK/20-13**

Mr. Haas presented information regarding Hidden Creek North stating letters were sent out to 169 residents and the City received only 3 surveys in return. Mr. Haas displayed photos of the playground and results from the survey. Mr. Haas stated the park includes a ballfield and a soccer field.

Commissioner Butler stated the park is busy when the fields are used so it is important that the park include a playground.

Commissioner Widmyer asked how much a typical playground structure is. Mr. Grode responded around $45,000-50,000. Mr. Grode stated the footprint is large and the remodel would include shrinking the footprint, installing a new border and new wood
chips for the fall zone. Mr. Grode stated the price could come down if there were volunteers to help install the equipment. Mr. Haas stated the playground should include an ADA swing since it is a busier park.

Chair Lindahl suggested allocating $50,000 for Hidden Creek North Park and $25,000 for Strootman as a starting point. Commissioner Butler concurred stating Strootman Park could have a scaled down playground with minimal equipment with remaining funds going towards a basketball/pickleball court.

The Commission discussed parking lot lighting and improvement of the canoe landing at Strootman Park. Mr. Haas stated staff will look into what improvements can be done to the area within restrictions of the flood plain and the river.

The Commission directed staff to come back to the December 19th meeting with a plan for each park allocating $50,000 to Hidden Creek North and $25,000 to Strootman.

Mr. Haas asked if the Commission was interested in having an inclusive playground and Hidden Creek North Park. The Commission preferred the City Hall location for an inclusive playground.

REVIEW OUTSTANDING ITEMS

1. **Andover Community Center Advisory Board** - Commissioner Butler stated the Board meets on Monday and updated the Commission on the Community Center construction.

2. **Items of Interest** - Mr. Haas informed the Commission the Council approved the ASN Ballfield Lighting and staff will put out a call for bids in January. Kelsey Round Lake Park, ASN Trail, and the Hills of Bunker Lake West Park Trail final plans will be going to Council in January for approval.

3. **Parks Maintenance Update** – Mr. Grode reviewed the items completed by the Parks Maintenance Department. He stated workers have been preparing for the winter season, ice rinks, storing equipment, and snow removal. Mr. Grode stated all staff plow streets and cul-de-sacs which are priority, then move to parks and trails, which can take a few days. Mr. Haas reviewed the ice rink hours stating they are open 4-9 on weekdays and 1-9 on school release days and weekends.

CHAIR’S REPORT

Commissioner McElhose asked the easiest way for residents to find parks, hours, and amenities. Mr. Haas stated the Public Works page has a pdf map with locations and amenities. Commissioner McElhose suggested a link be placed on the home page so it is easier to find. Commissioner Perra concurred.
Commissioner Widmyer thanked the Parks and Public Works staff for the excellent job in snow removal.

**ADJOURNMENT**

*Motion* by Widmyer, seconded by Butler, to adjourn the meeting at 8:14 p.m. Motion carried on a 5-ayes, 0-nays, 2-absent vote (Marinello and Miskowiec).

Respectfully Submitted,

Shari Kunza, Recording Secretary

*TimeSaver Off Site Secretarial, Inc.*