

MINUTES
CITY OF MAPLEWOOD
PARKS AND RECREATION BOARD MEETING
September 16, 2021

I. Call to order: Meeting called to order at 6:04 by Laine Schenkelberg

II. Roll Call: Beth Newman, Megan Dougherty, Rebecca Flynn, Julie Francois, Bob Harsh, Laine Schenkelberg

- Excused absence: Sarah Walker

III. Welcome to visitors and public comment

- Anthony Traxler, Director of Public Works
- No public comment

IV. Approval of minutes.

- Julie motioned to approve, and Becky seconded. All approved

V. Parks board member reports on parks:

- Central Park (Laine)- gate on Elm difficult to open, electric meter outlets are uncovered, residents feel it is “theirs”, like it being fenced in, gratitude for being mulched
- Deer Creek (Bob)-fine
- Greenwood (Julie)-more mulch is needed in the pit area
- Ryan Hummert (Megan)-looked great, backs of doors in restrooms coated in grime, needs to be addressed. Laine noticed grass encroaching on baseball diamond
- Kellogg (Becky)-looks great. Dog park- new metal hose is in disrepair
- Lindbergh (unassigned)-Bob was there, garden has side vines, dead tree still not addressed, but out of way of users
- Sutton Loop (unassigned)-mulch in, looks great, sprinkler head broken west side near alley
- Trolley (Sarah)-no report
- Yale (Beth)-good
- Skate Park (Becky)-fine

VI. Old business

- Tennis Courts- update on memo
- Splash Pad-update on memo
- Hummert Dugouts-Anthony explained there is no extra money in the budget
- Mission/Vision Statements-tabled to next month. Bob asked about the need for this when the Park’s Department has a mission statement. Tiffany explained that members of the Parks and Recreation Commission wanted their own mission/vision statements.

VII. New Business

- Mini Canvas Yale Park- The Board discussed canvassing the area to see what the residents would like. Could possibly partner with the council members in that ward. Anthony stated we need to be careful with the questions asked. No need in getting residents hopes up if they ask for things we can’t do. During the October movie night that has been scheduled, the Park Board can set up a table to get resident input as to what they would like to see in the space. Picnic tables? BBQ grills?

- Council Presentation 9/28-Laine will send out a draft presentation and members can provide feedback.
- Deer Creek Greenway-GRG will be presenting at the September 28th meeting. Question was asked why this is being brought to the board when it has been thoroughly discussed by the City Council. Laine stated the Mayor asked to be put on the agenda. Mayor Knapper encouraged Parks board members to attend. The Mayor stated specific questions could be sent to her. Julie asked if it was the same plans or has there been some redesigning. Mayor stated GRG has heard the citizen's concerns. Anthony states Greenwood will be re-constructed and the intersection will be elevated to hopefully increase visibility (2024-2025). Bob asked if the citizen advocate group would be reactivated. The Mayor will inquire.
- Park Master Plan-2 proposals received. One from SWT Designs and the other from Planning Design Studios. Tiffany states both firms have done work for the City and both firms are more than capable of completing this project. Board members liked things about both proposals and some things seemed unclear. Tiffany will set up a meeting with both firms so they can elaborate on the things the Board is unclear about.

VIII. New Business

- Q & A with Anthony Traxler
 - Anthony spoke about the overall City budget and how the individual funds feed into the bigger picture of the general fund budget. ½ cent parks and stormwater sales tax brings in roughly 1.2-1.4 million each year. The general revenue fund is the hardest to manage because many factors tie up the general fund. Roughly 2 years ago a portion of public works staff salaries now come out of the parks budget. It was done out of necessity and it probably won't change in the future. Park budget has reserves, but we didn't "just find \$400,000". Personnel is about 75% of the total budget. Maplewood was fortunate that our sales tax base was not as negatively affected as other municipalities. Lowes and Schnucks did well during the pandemic. Maplewood is heavily reliant on sales tax. Increase in online sales affects the sales tax rate. Upcoming legislation may help, but relief may come in future years. Question was asked about sales tax money from the car dealerships. Bob stated the sales tax money goes to the City the car is registered in.
 - The Board asked about master maintenance schedules for the parks. Mowing is contracted out. Mulching and tree maintenance are on a schedule, but it is not as good as it should be due to staff shortages. Jason will be attending an upcoming meeting and he can discuss park maintenance in more detail. Anthony did state he told Jason that sewer lateral repairs were his top priority after he was promoted. The City is looking to hire at least 2 more public works employees.
 - The Board asked about previous park plans to see what has been planted at the different parks. Tiffany will send what she has out, but mentioned the plans don't necessarily have what was planted.
 - Sutton Loop Park-Anthony states what's there now is significantly different than what was originally planned. Once it was staked out, residents, park board members and the Council liked the way it is currently laid out.
 - Citizen's Academy would be a great tool to learn more about the City's overall budgets and departments. It's about 6-7 weeks and each city department is covered.
 - Anthony states he knows the Director of Autism Speaks, Michael Quinn. Mr. Quinn would like to attend an upcoming meeting to discuss park components.
 - Tiffany asked Anthony to explain what an advisory board is to the Park Board. The Board has asked at previous meetings what items staff gets to decide versus what

staff will discuss with the Park Board. Park Board members can always approach City staff with concerns. For example, the decision to have a splash pad and where it will be located and how it would look would be something staff would discuss with the Park Board. Once it is built, it becomes a part of staff's day to day management. Staff is paid to make the day-to-day decisions. The City Council has the final say on everything. Park Board members did originally want the splash pad to be placed in Deer Creek or Kellogg Park (couldn't do that because it's in the floodplain) and Hummert Park (lot of concrete foundation still onsite, cost prohibitive). Big picture items are discussed with the Parks Board, day-to-day operations are the responsibility of City Staff.

- Aquatic Center-agreement with Midwest Pool will be cancelled next year. The City will hire their own pool staff next year. The City would like to work with the School District in hiring students to become lifeguards.
- Dog Swim-will be held this Saturday from 10-1. PARC's staff will be handling the event this year and hopefully going forward.
- Tree City USA luncheon-please let Tiffany know if you can attend no later than September 30th.

IX. Adjournment

- Bob motioned to adjourn. Julie seconded. All approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm. The next meeting will be October 21, 2021.

Respectfully submitted- Beth Newman