

**PARKS & RECREATION BOARD
VIDEO CONFERENCE
APRIL 15, 2020**

Video conference participants: Jim Anderson, Julie Asmus, Rick Fagerlie, Tom Gilbertson, Abdi Hussein, Rand Middleton, Andy Ogdahl, Chloe Quinn, Val Swanson

Staff present: Rob Baumgarn, Britta Diem, Curt Hein, Gary Manzer, Ryan Scheffler, Alex Sobieck, Becky Sorenson

Guests present: Jared Voge – Bolton & Menk and Rachel Skretvedt

Chairman Jim Anderson opened the meeting, asking everyone to announce themselves. He then asked if there were any additions or corrections to the secretary's report. Rand Middleton made a motion to approve, Andy Ogdahl seconded. Motion to approve the secretary's report was passed.

Jim Anderson stated we would skip the public forum.

Invest in Willmar presentation: Rob Baumgarn introduced Rachel Skretvedt from the Robbins Island sub-committee. Rachel stated that the sub-committee has been meeting for the past year, tasked with coming up with plans for the \$3 million that has been allocated for Robbins Island updates (roads, parking lots, shelters). She stated that her sub-committee was lucky in that a lot of the groundwork had been done thru the Mayor's Robbins Island Task Force. The sub-committee did some fine tuning on how they wanted the Island to look. The sub-committee was able to give their suggestions and ideas to Jared with Bolton and Menk to draw up a proposal for the Island projects. This plan is being presented to the P & R Board and then moving up the chain to the City Council. Rachel thanked Bolton and Menk for their work on this plan. Rachel also mentioned that her sub-committee had consulted City staff and Public Works staff on how they see the plans being implemented and ease of maintenance.

Jared Voge presented his report, stating the proposal showed the water line route and the new drive aisles along with parking lots. Two alternates were also included. Alternate 1 was a new shelter replacing Open Shelter #1. Alternate 2 was a new shelter replacing Hilltop Shelter. Contractors will bid on the main project and also add Alternate 1 and Alternate 2. This would allow the City to select the core improvement alone, the core improvement with Alternate 1 and/or with Alternate 2, depending upon the cost.

Jared then shared his graphics on screen with everyone. He explained that the current parking lots would be removed. The existing road on the back side of the Island would remain for walking/biking only but be open for traffic between Thanksgiving and New Years for the Holiday lights. The main access to the Island stays relatively the same with a bit of widening of the entrance. A boat launch will be added to the southwest part of the Island with a path connecting to the trail. This will also give access to the shelter specified in Alternate 1. This proposed shelter would be 20' x 40' with a 16' overhang. North of the shelter are trail connections. On the north side of the Island on Willmar Lake is a proposed boat access with a parking lot.

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Jared stated that currently there are 200 vehicle parking spaces, the new plan will have 237 along with 13 by the boat launch for boats & trailers. He stated that there was a request for handicap parking spaces near the playground so several had been added.

Alternate 2 includes a new shelter at the Hilltop Shelter location. This would be the same size, 20' x 40' but no overhang would be included. Jared stated that the shelters would be built to look similar to the four season shelter with the same color roof and other material making it more convenient for staff to maintain.

Jared concluded his presentation and asked if there were any questions for him or Rachel. Rand Middleton asked what the history was for the decision to close the road on the back side of the Island. Rachel responded that was discussed during the Mayor's Robbins Island Task Force. Two plans were presented to the public and the road closure was the choice by the community. Rachel stated that this closure will not affect the Celebrate the Lights event. During that time period, the road will be open to traffic. Rand thanked Rachel for the clarification.

Tom Gilbertson asked what the large open space behind the beach will be utilized for. Rachel stated that she thought it would be a grassy area with the possibility of adding a skating rink allowing the four season shelter to be used as a warming house. Rob stated that, since the area is flat, it could also be used by large groups such as Rib Fest for a picnic area since it is close to the parking lot.

Rand Middleton asked if there would still be a field area to the east available for soccer. Rob replied that there would be soccer fields along with a volleyball area.

Julie Asmus asked if there would be electricity to the proposed new shelters and whether there would be mini biffs near each shelter. Rob said that there currently is electricity to the existing Hilltop and Open #1. There is also a restroom at the top of the hill southwest of Leaf (northeast of Hilltop) but that mini biffs could be added if needed. Rachel stated that was the reason that Hilltop and Open #1 locations were chosen due to the electricity being available and the accessibility of getting to the shelters along with parking space. Julie asked what was going to happen to the shelters north of the playground. Rob responded that Leaf and Green Shelters will remain for the time being. Green Shelter has storage space that Public Works currently uses (approximately a third of the building). There have been talks about moving one of the shelters to become a better warming house for outdoor ice rinks.

Tom Gilbertson asked if there was a plan in place to slow down traffic near the playground. Jared responded that the roadway near the playground will be narrower than the main road. This is called traffic calming when you go from a wider road to a narrower road. There are no current plans for speed bumps. Rachel stated that signage will be an important factor. She said they had talked about speed bumps but had decided against them because of maintenance, snow removal. Curt Hein agreed but stated that speed bumps could be added at a later date if it was felt necessary. Tom asked about a stop sign, a stop light or a bridge. Jared stated that flashing lights similar to those at Lakeland Elementary

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could also be added at a later date if deemed necessary. Regarding a bridge, he stated that there is not enough height to allow for that.

Rand Middleton stated his concern is more towards the turn in to the Island from Highway 71, wondering if there was a way to slow the traffic or put up a traffic light. Rachel stated that the main problem is the fact that it is not a City road but a State Highway. Tom Gilbertson stated he was also concerned and thought there should be a crossing guard for kids who will be biking to the Island. He also questioned whether the parking lots were big enough to allow for buses to turn around. Jared stated that bus turn around room was included in the plans. Julie Asmus responded to the crossing guard issue, stating that the number of kids biking has declined over the years. She stated that kids coming from the south and west would be on the Ella Avenue side so they wouldn't have to cross the highway. The numbers of kids from the south and east side coming over the walking bridge is few. Tom Gilbertson stated that he felt these issues should be addressed before there were any accidents.

Jim Anderson asked for a motion to approve the plans for Robbins Island as presented. Andy Ogdahl made the motion, Rand Middleton seconded. Motion carried.

Staff Changes: Rob Baumgarn mentioned that Eric Banks resigned from his position. Rob stated that Ryan will be moving into Eric's position. Alex Sobieck has been hired to coordinate the youth programs. Rob called upon Alex to talk about herself. She talked about her excitement about her new position and talked about her past college and intern position.

Rob reminded everyone that this is Becky Sorenson's last meeting. Various Board Members thanked her for her 33 years of service.

Playground Closures: Jim asked Rob to speak about this. Rob said that we are following the governor's "Stay at Home" order and have closed the playgrounds. We closed them and then decided to re-open. Many complaints were received when the playgrounds were re-opened so they were closed again. Hopefully, when May 4th rolls around, we will be able to fully open playgrounds, etc. Tom Gilbertson asked how many other communities have closed playgrounds. Rob responded that he thinks we were one of the first to do so but other communities have since closed. One of the main complaints was that school playgrounds were open. Rob had communicated with Scott Wallner, Community Ed Director regarding this. Rob has talked to some of our playground suppliers regarding cleaning playground equipment. While there are products that are available, the products are expensive and are only effective until the next person touches the equipment.

Summer Programs: Rob stated that we are in a kind of limbo right now regarding summer programming. He is hoping that we will be able to start June 8 if the "Stay at Home" order ends on May 4. Staff is working an abbreviated schedule, working 10-12 hours. If the order gets extended to the end of May, our Plan B would be to start summer programs on July 6. Val Swanson asked if Rob felt we would be able to run a full program if we can't start until July 6. Rob replied that he feels we could get

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in a six week schedule. Our brochure is on a delay and probably won't be a printed version, just a digital one this summer. Once we know for sure what we will be able to offer, we will be updating dates, etc on our online program. Chloe Quinn asked about having smaller groups of children and needing more staff. Rob responded that we will be looking at that issue. Parents may decide to keep their children at home versus participating in an activity.

Coordinator's Reports: Ryan Scheffler gave a run-down on adult and youth sports. He has a meeting next Wednesday with representatives from surrounding communities to discuss Grade 3 & 4 and Grade 5 & 6 baseball for this summer. He knows that communities still want to do something this summer. The Timberwolves grant has been pushed back. The Vikings camp on June 23 may be cancelled.

If we are not able to start right away, he is hoping to get a six week league in for adult softball.

Tom Gilbertson asked how staff is being affected. Ryan stated that it mainly affects part-time employees the most. We have a lot who would like to come back but he is not sure how many would want to wait until July 6 if that is when we start. Alex said that she has been in contact with last year's summer staff, letting them know what is going on. Rob said that Ryan, Alex and Britta are doing their best to stay on top of everything. Britta said she has been talking to pool managers and adding an additional cleaning regimen.

Alex has been working on creating virtual recreation and online opportunities. She is keeping in touch with staff, letting them know that we are still here and thinking about them. She has been preparing and making program plans and creating disinfecting routines. She has also been in touch with coaches regarding camps which they seem interested in doing.

Britta has been staying busy getting the gardens ready for people to start planting. There are still some plots available. She has also been keeping in touch with pool staff. She stated that all the bikes are at the Arena along with the locks so hopefully we will be able to get that going sometime soon. She has been looking at options for keeping the bikes clean and sanitized.

Julie Asmus asked about the cement work at the pool. Curt Hein has talked to the company that will be doing the plaster repair. They need to have 3 to 4 days of good weather so they can finish the project. The completion date is supposed to be the first part of June or possibly Memorial Day.

Rand Middleton asked about a bike path on Lakeland Drive. Gary Manzer stated it is in the plans to add a bike path from Olena Avenue on the east side of Lakeland Drive to Highway 12.

As there was no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Andy Ogdahl, seconded by Tom Gilbertson. Motion carried.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, May 20 at 1:30 pm.