

Roseville Parks and Recreation Commission

Agenda Item

Date: January 3, 2023

Item No: 5

Item Description: Prepare for Joint Meeting with City Council

Background:

Periodically, the Parks and Recreation Commission meets with the City Council to review and discuss accomplishments, activities and work items of the Commission. The next joint meeting is tentatively scheduled for Monday, January 30, 2022.

This meeting will focus on the work that the Commission completed in 2022 and the Commission's recommendation regarding the name of Pocahontas Park.

Requested Commission Action:

In preparation, it would be helpful for the Commission to:

- Review the attached Draft Request for Council Action (Attachment A) and provide feedback.
- Consider who would like to be a lead presenter for the meeting.
- Consider any other items that the Commission would like to discuss with the Council.

Attachments:

A. Draft Request for Council Action for Joint Meeting

REQUEST FOR COUNCIL ACTION

Date:
Item No.:

Department Approval

City Manager Approval

Item Description:

BACKGROUND

Periodically, the Parks and Recreation Commission meets with the City Council to review and discuss accomplishments, activities and work items.

The Commission has participated in and provided input on the following items since the last joint meeting on January 31, 2022:

- Accepted and provided feedback on the Recreation Program review.
- Established Parks and Recreation Commission Goals (Attachment x).
- Reviewed deer management program and provided recommendation.
- Completed Pickleball Courts at Evergreen Park and renovation of tennis courts at Anpétu Téča Education Center.
- Participated at summer Discover Your Parks Events.
- Reviewed and completed recommendations on several park dedication sites.
- Participated in the engagement and community builds for the Owasso Hills and Pioneer Park playgrounds.
- Reviewed the implementation strategy of the Accelerated Emerald Ash Borer plan.
- Reviewed the Guidant John Rose MN OVAL project (substantially complete).
- Accepted two Minnesota Parks and Recreation Awards of Excellence:
 - Kite Day in the Park (Category: Excellence in Programs and Events).
 - Central Park Victoria Inclusive Playground Expansion (Category: Partnership and Sponsorship).
- Reviewed and provided feedback for the Parks and Recreation Department's strategic racial equity initiatives and strategies.
- Reviewed and provided guidance on the Cedarholm Community Building Kitchen/Grill vendor Request for Proposal.
- Reviewed and provided feedback on the Central Park Arboretum pathway project.
- Reviewed the 2023 Parks and Facilities workplan.

One item that the Commission has spent a significant amount of time on is the name of Pocahontas Park. The Commission originally began discussing the topic in late 2020 and has completed a thorough process to analyze the current name, and recommend a new name. Specifically, the Commission and staff have:

- Utilized the Racial Equity Tool Kit to develop an Engagement and Analysis plan.
- Engaged with Native American individuals and groups who have expertise on issues related to Native American names.

- Consulted a variety of academic sources related to issues of Native American naming including the Reclaiming Native Truths documents and discussions hosted by Dr. Kate Bean of the MN Historical Society and others.
- Mailed to residents in the area around Pocahontas Park (more than 500 letters) to inform them about the process and solicit feedback (fall 2021).
- Had countless conversations at 15 Discover Your Parks events, the Wild Rice Festival and other Parks and Recreation events.
- Posted signage soliciting feedback in Pocahontas Park throughout the summer and fall of 2022.

Ultimately, the process yielded more than 60 suggested names from a variety of sources. Once the names were collected, staff continued to engage with Native American individuals and leaders for their feedback. Ultimately, the Commission settled on the name Keya (pronounced Kay – Ah) which is the Dakota word for turtle.

This suggestion was submitted by a neighbor of the park as an acknowledgement of the Dakota history on which the park resides, and because of the turtles that find their way into the park from the marsh below.

As part of the process, staff continued to engage with a Dakota individual who connected with others in the Dakota community and provided feedback. Keya was one of two final suggestions that were recommended by that individual.

Ultimately, the name Keya was supported by the Commission for several reasons:

- It complies with City Policy #40: Assigning Names to City Facilities (attachment x) for naming parks and facilities based on animals or natural resources.
- It is in keeping with the playful spirit of a park.
- There is the possibility of utilizing a Keya (turtle) theme in the design process for the replacement playground, which is planned for installation in fall 2023.
- The name is supported by the Dakota individuals who participated in the process and subsequently by a broader cross-section of Dakota individuals.

In addition to recommending the name Keya Park, the Commission also recommended the development of a land acknowledgement and consideration of additional signage or other educational opportunities within the park.

Following the Commission's recommendation, staff again followed up with contacts from the Dakota community who stated that they had spoken with many people, including tribal leaders and members of the tribal historic preservation group. The contacts confirmed that they thought Keya Park was a great name and are pleased with the process.

POLICY OBJECTIVE

Advisory Commissions are established to provide a method for citizen input and are advisory to the City Council. Joint meetings are a useful tool for the Commission to provide input to the Council and receive Council feedback.

The Parks and Recreation Commission's work regarding the name of Pocahontas Park is consistent with the City's community aspirations of being welcoming, inclusive and respectful and the City's Racial Equity Narrative.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The items discussed by Commissioners could have a variety of budgetary implications.

A name change to Pocahontas Park could have the following budgetary implications:

- Park sign (\$x,000)
- Possible interpretive signage (TBD)
- Additional Keya themed items in the playground (TBD)

As details of the plan are teased out, a funding source will be established.

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT SUMMARY

The Commission understands the key role that Parks and Recreation services play in equity in a community. Throughout the year, equity considerations are discussed as part of specific projects, an overall equity plan and approach was discussed at the October 2022 Commission meeting.

When considering the Pocahontas Park name conversation, the Commission considered equity impacts throughout the process in a variety of ways. Specific attention was paid to Native Americans who live in Roseville and beyond based upon the current Native American name of the park.

Specifically, the following steps were taken:

- Created and executed an Engagement and Analysis Plan that was guided by the Government Alliance on Racial Equity: Racial Equity Toolkit.
- Researched issues related to Native American name use.
- Made contact with a variety of Native American individuals and organizational leaders, including members of the Dakota and Ojibwe tribes.
- Continued engagement with Dakota individuals as names were considered.

Although no feedback is completely homogenous, the general consensus was:

- The name Pocahontas is not appropriate for the park, as Pocahontas the person had no ties to Minnesota and the use of her name furthers stereotyping and marginalization of current-day Native Americans.
- A new, more appropriate, Native American name could be appropriate.
- If a Native American name is selected, it should be Dakota as the park is located on land that was the Dakota's.
- General support of the name Keya Park and the recommendations that the Parks and Recreation Commission made.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Discuss the Commission's work with the Parks and Recreation Commissioners.

Consider a motion to change the name of Pocahontas Park to Keya Park.

REQUESTED COUNCIL ACTION

Receive Commission updates and provide feedback on any items. Suggest any items that you would like the Commission to explore in the coming year.

Consider taking action to change the name of Pocahontas Park.

Prepared by:

Attachments: A: