

1 **ROSEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION**
2 **MEETING MINUTES FOR**
3 **December 1, 2020 6:30 p.m.**
4

5 **PRESENT:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Carlson, Dahlstrom, Heikkila, Hoag, Kim,
6 Lenhart, O'Brien, Stoner

7 **ABSENT:**

8 **STAFF:** Brokke, Christensen, M. Johnson
9

10 **1) INTRODUCTIONS**

11 Chair Hoag introduced the virtual Zoom format for the meeting due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
12 State Law allows for an exception to in-person public meetings during pandemics to ensure the
13 safety of commissioners, staff and the public. The public was still encouraged to participate in the
14 meeting using the Zoom platform.
15

16 **2) ROLL CALL/PUBLIC COMMENT**

17 **Roll Call Commissioners:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Carlson, Dahlstrom, Heikkila, Kim,
18 Lenhart, O'Brien, Hoag, and Stoner.
19

20 Chair Hoag called for public comment by members of the audience. No one indicated a desire to
21 speak.
22

23 **3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 5, 2020 MEETING**
24

25 Vice-Chair Dahlstrom moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Lenhart seconds.
26

27 **Roll Call**

28 **Ayes:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Dahlstrom, Hoag, Lenhart, O'Brien and Stoner.

29 **Nays:** None.

30 **Abstain:** Heikkila.
31

32 **4) POCAHONTAS PARK NAME DISCUSSION**

33 Staff began with a review of the previous background that the Commission has completed on the
34 Pocahontas Park name discussion, including:

- 35 • Reviewing the history of Pocahontas
- 36 • Utilization of the Government Alliance of Racial Equity (GARE) Racial Equity Toolkit as
37 the framework to examine the issue
- 38 • Identifying and agreeing upon engaging the communities that are directly impacted by the
39 name

- 40 • Utilizing the process as a potential opportunity to educate the Commission and community
41 on Native Americans in Minnesota

42
43 As part of the process it was identified to reach out to members of the Dakota Tribe as the land
44 would have been theirs historically.

45
46 Shannon Geshick, Executive Director of the MN Indian Affairs Council, founding member of the
47 Roseville Indian Affairs Parent Committee, a consultant with the St. Paul School District Indian
48 Education Program as well as a Roseville Resident was introduced to the Commission by staff. Ms.
49 Geshick thanked staff for the introduction and also added that she is a mother, grandmother and a
50 member of the Bois Forte Band from Northern Minnesota. She relayed that she was very
51 appreciative of the outreach that the Commission has already done. In addition, she reiterated that
52 the Dakota should be included in the discussion as Pocahontas Park would be on their ancestral land.

53
54 Geshick relayed that Pocahontas is not a villainous character. However, there is a concern of
55 historical inaccuracies, as the victor has the advantage of telling the story. To address this there has
56 been a push for updating stories with truth telling that would highlight multiple perspectives. In
57 addition, she shared that a conquered people can sometimes be seen as “mythical people” instead of
58 modern people. However, indigenous peoples are doctors, lawyers, etc. all living current lives. She
59 explained that this could be a good opportunity to tell a shared story and bring indigenous peoples
60 into modernity.

61
62 Commissioner Stoner asked if the name should honor an indigenous person.

63
64 Ms. Geshick relayed that she only speaks on behalf of herself, she acknowledged that she feels that
65 reclaiming the name and honoring what it once was is a good idea. She stated that she did not know
66 Roseville’s naming policy. However, she offered using the name of a Dakota person such as
67 Lieutenant Governor, Peggy Flanagan. She also added the idea of “#landback” which would give the
68 land back to the Dakota people.

69
70 Chair Hoag questioned if the name needed to be changed if an educational component was added at
71 the park.

72
73 Ms. Geshick responded that she does not find the name Pocahontas personally offensive. However,
74 she noted that there is a thriving Native American community/culture and history in MN that could
75 be reflected in the name and this could potentially be a good opportunity for this teaching.

76
77 Commissioner Dahlstrom asked Ms. Geshick how you give historical significance to a place without
78 losing the education of modern indigenous people.

80 Ms. Geshick responded that there are multiple avenues to historical knowledge. However, an
81 acknowledgement that indigenous people are still here is important with projects

82
83 Commissioner Baggenstoss added that indigenous people are not only modern but are a valuable
84 piece of the world. He acknowledged that Roseville has the opportunity to do the right thing and get
85 in front of the discussion as it pertains to the name Pocahontas.

86
87 Commissioner Arneson suggested having a QR reader at the park to connect park-goers with
88 educational information about the native people who originally lived on the land.

89
90 Commissioner O'Brien noted that she has read much of the information put out by the Roseville
91 Historical Society. However, she relayed that it generally all starts with Rose Township. She stated
92 that she would like to read about the Dakota people who were here originally. She added that
93 partnering with indigenous communities to provide educational experience at the park would be a
94 great opportunity.

95
96 Ms. Geshick commended the Commission for the work they have done already. She said that any
97 recommendations that she would have offered (include the native voice, contact native agencies,
98 include the Dakota Tribe) have already been addressed by the Commission.

99
100 Staff asked Ms. Geshick what Parks and Recreation can do to further the narrative that indigenous
101 people are still here as a modern people.

102
103 Ms. Geshick responded that the Commissioners has already discussed some great ideas such as:
104 Using the QR code to connect to a website that has historical and current information, include tribal
105 nation information, and highlight current indigenous people. She noted that Roseville could be a
106 model for other cities.

107
108 Commissioner Heikkila recognized Youth Commissioner Andrew Kim who brought this topic to the
109 Commission originally.

110
111 Former Mayor, John Kysylyczyn, provided a review of Roseville City Code 204 and 205 to the
112 Commission. He relayed that it appears to him that much of the information in the Pocahontas Name
113 Process falls under 205 and may fall under the Human Rights Inclusion and Engagement
114 Commission (HRIEC). In addition, he noted that he does not believe that a Commission has the
115 authority to engage other sovereign government bodies, discuss reparations or land donations. In
116 addition, he noted that historical research would be done by the Roseville Historical Society.

117
118 Kysylyczyn noted that he does not have any evidence of historic settlements on the specific piece of
119 land that Pocahontas Park sits on. He acknowledged that per the Roseville Park Naming Policy parks
120

121 are only named after fallen Roseville officers. Kysylyczyn brought up different examples of parks
122 that would need to be revisited if the park naming policy is no longer followed and parks are named
123 after people other than fallen Roseville officers. He noted that there is a specific naming policy and
124 he feels that the Parks Commission is obligated to follow that. Finally, he cautioned the Commission
125 that he feels members of the City Council may not appreciate the Commission engaging other
126 sovereign governments without approval.

127
128 K. Vandre, Thanked Ms. Geshik for being at the meeting. She relayed that she lives in the
129 Pocahontas park neighborhood and she does not feel comfortable using the name of the park. She
130 relayed her appreciation to the Commission for taking up the issue. Also, she pointed out that if we
131 are worried about policies, Pocahontas was a real person. Therefore, if we are worried about having
132 parks named after people, and following policies, the park name should be changed. She also relayed
133 that the HRIEC should be involved in this process. In addition, she felt that the public should be
134 allowed to have a voice. She concluded by stating that the people whose land was taken should
135 especially have a voice in the discussion and not including them would be wrong.

136
137 Commissioner O'Brien reconfirmed that the Commission is thinking about a strategy that would be
138 proposed to the City Council and is currently in the information gathering stage. Staff confirmed that
139 is where the Commission is at with gathering information to present at a joint meeting with the City
140 Council in early 2021.

141
142 Commissioner Baggenstoss added that there is nothing wrong with bringing new voices to the table
143 and asking questions. He added that if in the end, the worst thing to come out of all of this is that
144 more people believe in government, the Commission is on the right track.

145
146 The Commission discussed next steps in the process, including reaching out to representatives of the
147 Dakota Nation and the Roseville Historical Society. They also discussed meeting with the City
148 Council and if any additional information was needed prior to that meeting.

149
150 Commissioner Stoner noted that he would like to potentially have this as a topic next month, if
151 possible.

152
153 Staff clarified the process and reasoning for having a joint meeting with the City Council as a next
154 step, as it will ensure clear communication, guidance and support for the renaming of Pocahontas
155 Park to the Commission.

160 5) **ANNUAL REVIEW OF PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION EDUCATION**
161 **PRIMER**

162 Commissioner O'Brien suggested updating the reference to "pocket parks" on page 6 to the specific
163 names of the parks (Midland Gardens Park and Unity Park).
164

165 6) **STAFF REPORT**

166 a) **NEW OR RELEVANT COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATE ITEMS**

- 167 • As part of the four week pause that started on November 20 all park buildings, facilities and in-
168 person programs are closed until December 18. Parks, playgrounds and trails are still available
169 for residents to use.
- 170 • Cedarholm Golf Course is still open and will remain open, weather permitting.
- 171 • Cross country ski trails will be groomed at Cedarholm and Acorn Park once the weather allows.
172 Ski and snow shoe rentals will begin out of City Hall at that time as well.
- 173 • The outdoor neighborhood skating rinks are beginning to be flooded by maintenance staff. The
174 determination has not yet been made on opening warming houses. Extra benches will be placed
175 outdoors at the rinks.
- 176 • Virtual programs are still taking place during this pause time.
- 177 • Deer reduction letters have gone out to residents to notify them of the program with the United
178 States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The program will begin in the coming days with the
179 USDA baiting and monitoring the sites.
- 180 • The winter/spring brochure will be included in the City Newsletter again. It is anticipated to be
181 in houses around January 1, 2021.
182
183

184 7) **OTHER**

185 Commissioner Arneson asked how the snow and ski rentals will work with COVID-19. Staff
186 responded that residents would call in and pay via credit card to confirm their rental. Once they
187 arrive their rental order would be brought outside and placed there for them to pick up. Staff noted
188 that this process is in the finalization stage and may have some updates prior to going live.
189

190 Commissioner O'Brien inquired if the Commission would be reviewing the Natural Resources
191 Program in January. She added that it may be a good idea to invite the four volunteer leaders to the
192 meeting.
193

194 Chair Hoag asked staff if Cedarholm has been open in December previously. Staff confirmed that it
195 has.
196

197 Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

198 Respectfully Submitted,

199 Danielle Christensen, Department Assistant