

## 17. Presentations

### a. Joint Meeting with Parks and Recreation Commission

Parks and Recreation Commission members present were: Chair Jim Stark and Commissioners: Erin Azer; Randall Doneen; Gale Pederson; Mary Holt; Jason Etten; Harold Ristow; and Julia Jacobson. Chair Stark noted that Members Bob Willmus and Member David Holt were unable to attend tonight's meeting due to scheduling conflicts, but sent their regrets. Parks and Recreation Director Lonnie Brokke and Assistant Director Jill Anfang were also in the audience.

A proposed agenda for discussion was provided in the meeting packet, including discussion of the implementation of the Parks Master Plan; resources and volunteers as part of upcoming budget considerations; diseased and hazardous tree program for removal and replacement; and consideration of a local option sales tax.

Each member of the Commission shared in the presentation, detailing those discussion topics as outlined.

Discussion among Commissioners and Councilmembers included recognizing the importance of Roseville's parks and recreation system as distinguishing feature of the community and part of the goals and strategies of the *Imagine Roseville 2025* community visioning process; the success of a recent survey of high school students for their future park and recreation interests and suggestions; and significant interest of residents in a community center and realities in achieving that goal.

Mayor Klausung noted that a community center had been discussed for at least 20 years; however, noting the current financial situation and home foreclosures, in addition to state and the City's self-imposed budget restrictions, he opined that the only way to fund it would be through a bonding referendum, potentially through a cooperative venture with the School District for shared facilities. Mayor Klausung offered his willingness to hear all options, but suggested that a more realistic approach may be to look at phasing or upgrading existing buildings or to construct smaller buildings to facilitate specific uses. Mayor Klausung noted the disconnect between the concept of a community center and the reality of it to different people, and their specific interests.

Councilmember Roe, as a member of the Master Plan Community Advisory Team (CAT), advised that they had considered the phasing approach; but reminded all that the Master Plan process was for over a thirty (30) year period, and was not looking to implement everything

immediately, but to achieve milestones along the way to measure against for the future. Councilmember Roe advised that the CAT did an exercise to identify needs and desires in putting together initial prioritization, and that it would continue; with the objective of the Master Plan process to prioritize recommendations to the community and City Council.

Councilmember Johnson, expressed his desire to hear the priorities of the CAT as they were determined, with those recommendations coming to the City Council; opining that his personal goals did not include a community center as a priority. Councilmember Johnson noted that, as a participant in the *Imagine Roseville 2025* process and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Team, it was often voiced that a higher priority was to maintain existing equipment and facilities.

Councilmember Pust requested how much discussion had been held through the questionnaires and survey process as to how and how much the community was willing to pay; and urged the Commission to find ways to include that realistic question since whatever was done would be done with public monies, and would require public support. Councilmember Pust recognized the phenomenal job done throughout the Master Plan process by involving a broad range of citizens and receiving public input through various means; but noted the need to start having conversations on costs and impacts to citizens and their willingness to support the recommendations.

Further discussion included the constellation concept; coordination with the School Districts and other communities; identifying the various roles of the Commission, staff and the City Council in implementation of the Master Plan; and the City Council's rationale and budget considerations and criteria for park/recreation-related initiatives compared to other departments such as public safety and how to balance those items.

Councilmember Johnson noted that he was a "park and recreation guy," but advised that the Council seat was a different chair to be in; and as an example used the response time for fire and/or police calls compared to whether a community center was available, and the decision-making required based on such scenarios. Councilmember Johnson noted budget restraints in play, and encouraged the Commission to choose carefully their recommendations on the first phase of implementation based on the broad picture, noting the past struggles in maintaining Park Improvement Program (PIP) funding, with financial resources no better in 2011.

Councilmember Pust concurred, noting that it may be prudent to redefine "community," and whether it should be restricted to the city limits, or should include regional opportunities with surrounding communities and/or jurisdictions, including their bonding authority. Councilmember Pust opined that she was looking to the Commission to bring forward their recommendations, recognizing the City's limited

funding resources, and provide how to finance those recommendations as well, rather than anticipating that the City Council will do so.

Councilmember Roe clarified that it was up to the City Council to respect the Master Plan process and community input and not "put it on the shelf," but to be 100% behind the Plan as a guideline for a 20-30 year timeframe, no matter which items are able to be implemented immediately.

Councilmember Pust concurred, with one caveat that the Master Plan needed to be a relevant and living document and not outdated prematurely.

Mayor Klausing clarified that the City Council may be 100% behind the concept, but was tasked with the realities of other obligations and needing to reconcile everything based on that reality and impact to its citizens and taxpayers.

Additional discussion included trending in staff of the Parks and Recreation Department, consistently eroded since 1993, while the responsibilities of programs and facilities continued to increase; and how to increase volunteerism while adequately supervised by staff.

Commissioners noted the availability of volunteers within the community; however, recognized the need for staff to guide them; and recommended that a Volunteer Coordinator be provided to facilitate volunteers.

Discussion included development of a database of volunteers through this paid Volunteer Coordinator position's organization and supervision; partnerships with schools (e.g., service learning days, scouting); involvement with other agencies (e.g., Northwest Youth and Family Services); sharing of the database among other communities and/or organizations; and opportunities to maximize volunteers.

Mayor Klausing suggested that Mr. Brokke and City Manager Malinen coordinate follow-up on such an objective and recommendation to the City Council for consideration; and whether such a position could be for all departments, not specific to the Parks and Recreation Department.

Councilmember Johnson enthusiastically supported such an objective and concurred that this would be a win-win situation for all parties; and noted that the current volunteer base was aging, and needed to be resuscitated and nurtured to make it vibrant.

Further discussion included the potential for a local sales tax levy, authorized by the legislature, and requirements of such a levy and use of those funds for regional uses; and whether another option would be to affect legislation that such uses not be restricted to regional, but community capital uses.

Additional discussion included proactive actions on the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) concerns and receipt of a grant to inventory all Ash trees; impacts to the City's aesthetics and property values; replacement of those trees; current staffing and funds available to treat the problem; and actions of the U of MN and other cities to-date.

Councilmember Pust noted her recent attendance at a session in the City of New Brighton and options for regional cost-sharing and plans for a shared Forester and related costs. Councilmember Pust noted the need for inventorying private properties having Ash trees, as well as the grant funding for boulevard tree inventories; and impacts to environmental cycles needing immediate action. Councilmember Pust encouraged Commissioners to make this a priority for an integrated plan, and subsequent recommendations to the City Council.

Commissioners expressed their concerns with the continued elimination of Diseased and Hazardous Tree funds; and how those funds should be allocated.

Councilmember Johnson asked hypothetically, given tonight's discussion, how the Commission recommended paying for extra staff and maintenance of a community center; noting the difficulties being faced by the City of Duluth after using regional and state tax money to build facilities that they couldn't maintain over the long-term, noting that those monies couldn't be used for maintenance; and recommended some serious planning for long-term staffing and maintenance of such a facility.

Chair Stark thanked Councilmembers and Commissioners for the good discussion.