

# MEETING MINUTES

Monday, April 13th 2015

6:30 p.m.

City Hall, 2077 W. Larpenteur Ave.

## City of Falcon Heights Parks & Recreation Commission

### 1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:35pm.

	Attendance	X=present; AB=absent
X	Gordon Strom	Chairperson
X	Tim Sandvik	Staff
X	Tim Pittman	Staff
AB	Chuck Long	Council Liaison
X	Mary Hannon Jacobson	Co-Secretary
X	Ron Eischen	Co-Secretary
AB	Dave Thomas	
X	Liz Asmus	
AB	Michael Breen	
AB	Cari Lee	
AB	Emily Metcalf	

### 2. Approval of Feb 9th, 2015 meeting minutes

The meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

### 3. Assessing Parks Master Plan

#### a. Revisit process

Gordon Strom discussed the request to revisit the Master Plan for Curtiss Field from residents during a neighborhood meeting held on Tuesday April 7<sup>th</sup>. Gordon asked the Commission how often it should revisit such requests for all park plans; generally, Master Plans are re-visited annually for any minor updates. In this case, because of the KaBoom! new playground project and the upcoming playground build on June 3rd, it lends itself to revisiting the plan in regards to other parts of the Master Plan for Curtiss Field (ie: basketball court, building/structure placement, hockey rink, etc.)

During the KaBoom! Design Day on Thursday April 9<sup>th</sup>, there was also a request to expand the playground area to accommodate more swings. Gordon and Tim Pittman agree that since the playground may be expanded to more than what was identified on the Curtiss Field Master Plan, that it modifies the current plan and revisiting the other pieces of the park now (or soon after the playground rebuild) is warranted.

A motion was carried to seek a fee proposal from WSB Consultants to update the Curtiss Field Master Plan (only). This consultant's work scope would also include a recommended process for seeking community wide design input for the remaining portion of the park. After receiving and reviewing the fee proposal, the Commission will present it for approval to the City Council. If approved, the work could begin this summer.

## **b. Community Feedback re: Curtiss Field**

Several members of the community from the Curtiss Field neighborhood attended the Parks & Rec Commission meeting. Resident Deb Wiswell asked why feedback was solicited at the Parks Open House in Oct 2014 but was not taken into consideration before finalizing the various park plans. The Commission communicated that the ideas and feedback of many residents of Falcon Heights were included in construction of the plans and that none of the feedback received in the October Open House warranted a change in what the Commission felt was the best design considering all residents input from the various venues. They also communicated that the Master Plan is a guideline only, and can be periodically revisited.

Another resident spoke up about the lack of green space and that too much concrete was in the current plan (ie: basketball court, hockey rink.) The resident said he would like to see more pasture: trees, green space, etc; doesn't want to look at a concrete block. The resident also said the proposed dock overlooking the pond was a bad idea because of the current status of the pond. Various commissioners spoke up again and said that revisiting the Curtiss Field Master Plan will be done to address these concerns, but that moving forward and working together in a positive atmosphere would be appreciated.

Commissioners communicated that they are volunteers, not park design professionals, and worked with WSB Consultants (a professional consulting firm) to design these parks with the best intentions of what was requested by residents through the various venues. For each decision made there was a reason behind it which the attending residents may not be aware of. Another resident spoke up and offered her appreciation for the Commission to revisit the Master Plan for Curtiss Field and agreed that moving forward in a positive atmosphere was the best plan.

Resident Deb Wiswell asked why several trees were removed from Curtiss Field. Tim Pittman replied that it was due to the Emerald Ash Borer project the city is currently undergoing – to remove all Ash trees in the city (regardless of infestation status.) Deb asked if the trees would be replaced. Tim replied that trees will be replanted in Curtiss Field but how many and where will depend on the final Master Plan for Curtiss Field.

Another resident asked about a grant in March that was submitted – what it entailed. Tim Sandvik replied that it is to explore a grant opportunity to pay for a hockey/ice rink. Residents asked that the city do a better job at communicating when grants are applied for and why. Tim Pittman commented that grants often take a year or more between application and award finalization.

## **4. KaBoom! Project**

Tim Sandvik gave a brief history behind the KaBoom! project and the grant behind the Curtiss Field playground rebuild with the MN Vikings and Toro. Last year, the city applied for the “Good Neighbor fund” grant which was created due to the MN Vikings using TCF Stadium (U of MN) and the impact it had on surrounding communities. The city found out it was in the final stages of being approved for this grant, but was asked by the MN Vikings to abstain from any announcements since they (the MN Vikings) wanted to make the announcement. Tim explained this is why the city delayed it's communication about Curtiss Field. Falcon Heights found out it was the official recipient in early April and the next day, the City communicated via the website and the city newsletter about the grant.

Design Day was held less than a week later (Thursday 4/9). It entailed a site walkthrough at the park, a kids Design session and an Adult Design session. The Kids session was held at Falcon Heights Elementary School and had a lot of excitement with school aged children drawing their “dream” playgrounds. The Adult session included a lot of community involvement where residents discussed target age range(s) for playground equipment in that park and identifying various pieces of equipment they would like to see included in the final design. KaBoom! staff will take this feedback and identify 3 layouts/plans for residents to choose from and fine-tune by April 17<sup>th</sup>. The next 8 weeks will involve finalizing these design plans and preparation for Build Day on June 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **5. Update on summer programming and special events**

Summer programming is currently available online with a printed version available to residents this week or next week. Movie in the Park will be held on Friday June 19<sup>th</sup> – showing the Annie reproduction. The annual Ice Cream Social will be held on Thursday July 23<sup>rd</sup>. The September 5K will be on Saturday 9/12.

## **6. Community Garden Fence**

Gardeners in the Community Park Community Garden want a new fence around the community garden – something to keep rabbits out. The gardeners have their own fund (currently over \$5K) used for hoses, shovels, water system maintenance, etc. and want to use this money for a new fence. Of the 20+ gardeners, 8 replied to a survey and 7 want the fence, 1 says no. The commission said they’d like to see more feedback from more gardeners before making a decision. The request tabled.

A resident asked: Are the gardens between Fairview and Lindig public land? Tim Pittman replied that the City does not own that land: it is resident owned and their private gardens.

## **7. New Business**

Resident Deb Wiswell asked what the plans are for planting more trees in the city. Gordon Strom and Tim Pittman said that would be a discussion with Andy Hovland, the city forester, about his master plan and the budget behind it. The Commission will also query Andy about any upcoming grants that may be available for tree planting. Gordon and Tim agreed that the Commission would ask Andy to attend an upcoming Park & Rec meeting.

Another resident recommended that a rain garden be considered in Curtiss Field where the water tends to collect.

Another resident asked about a proposed fire lane around Curtiss Field and what its status was. Tim Pittman said the new playground is being built where this fire lane would have been, so there will be no new fire lane at Curtiss Field.

## **8. Meeting Conclusion**

Meeting adjourned at approximately 7:35pm.

### **a. Summary of Decisions Made**

- i. The Commission will seek a proposal from WSB Consultants to update the Curtiss Field plan and outline a process for community input for the remaining portion of the park. After the consultant scope and fee is reviewed, a recommendation to engage WSB will be made to the City Council.

### **b. Summary of Action Items**

- i. The Commission will seek a proposal from WSB Consultants to update the Curtiss Field plan and outline a process for community input for the remaining portion of the park. After the consultant scope and fee is reviewed, a recommendation to engage WSB will be made to the City Council.
- ii. The commission will ask Andy Hovland (City Forester) to an upcoming meeting to discuss the Forestry Master Plan for the city and the budget behind it along with any upcoming opportunities for grant applications.
- iii. The commission will ask the city to increase communication re: grant applications the city makes.

**c. Next meeting date:** Monday, May 11, 2015

**d. Submitted By:** Mary Hannon Jacobson