

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, XXX

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 6:30pm.

	Attendance	X=present; AB=absent
x	Gordon Strom	Chairperson
x	Tim Sandvik	Staff
x	Tim Pittman	Staff
AB	Sack Thongvanh	Staff
AB	Chuck Long	Council Liaison
x	Randy Gustafson	Council Member-Elect Liaison
AB	Mary Hannon Jacobson	Co-Secretary
x	Ron Eischen	Co-Secretary
x	Dave Thomas	
AB	Michael Breen	
x	Shawn Hubert	
x	Ben Reichelt	

2. Approval of December 14th 2015 meeting minutes

Minutes were reviewed and approved

3. Assign Chair, Secretary

Gordon motioned for Shawn to Chair, Dave Thomas Seconded. Shawn accepted.

Gordon motioned for Ron and Mary to Co-secretary, Ben Seconded the motion. Ron and Mary have accepted.

4. Adopt Standing Rules

Motion – Dave, Second Ron

Standing rules were adopted.

5. Discussion on changing Standing Meeting Day

Move to first Monday. The Commission has discussed moving the standing day over the past few months to allow for all commissioners

Ron motioned – Ben seconded

Standing meeting day will now be first Monday of the month at 6:30pm.

6. Further Discussion on Curtiss Field, Park Updates

Gordon asked about updating the parks master plan. In the parks improvement study, WSB mentioned items in individual items at individual parks, adding that a number of negative comments lead to recommendations for changes.

Shawn added that during the winter time, it (Curtiss Field) is a great park for skating. In the summer, more folks desired green space... These two uses are difficult as the ice makes maintaining green space difficult. Green space and skating areas are visible desires from the survey results.

Tim P noted that freezing everything when you put ice on the turf leads to clover throughout the field in the summer.

Ben mentioned 'greenspace' largely means 'open-space' in a field for general use, not necessarily grass or specific turf make-up.

Gordon and Tim P noted that there needs to be clarification on ADA requirements when connecting the sidewalk from Idaho Ave through Curtiss (on the east side of the pond).

Gordon noted a new park building/shelter was another high positive.

Shawn asked what the cost of the temporary warming house this year and Tim P replied the cost includes a month fee as well as electric charges for lights/heat. Tim P stated the monthly fee was around \$260. *This cost was prorated for the first month or rental, the monthly rental fee is \$333.90.

Residents stated that safety and maintenance should remain a priority. That might include things like a fence around the playground (much like a fence around the pond) Residents had the understanding that the old fence was to be replaced, but it was not. The park (Curtiss Field) is unique and there has been a fence there historically. The pond always had a fence too, but when that came down it was important to maintain that safety. It becomes easier to keep kids safe with a fence. A building is not always open to public. A porta-poty wasn't always down there, without that it doesn't automatically provide safety.

Both Shawn and Gordon agreed that the building would be largely seasonal (uses include summer programming, rentals, and as a warming house in the winter when rinks are open).

Neighbors stated that respondents on the surveys didn't appear to understand that having a building would not mean it will always be open to the public.

Gordon mentioned if capital improvements are made, we need to remember concerns of neighbors including placement of a building.

Tim S stated recommendations can be made a variety of ways – a recommendation of a building/warming house does not include an area where it would go.

Gordon – A recommendation could be to include all parks on safety, maintenance, etc... for all three parks.

Neighbors stated that if money is spent, some money should be spent on making sure Curtiss priorities are met. Adding it doesn't feel like there is a finished product at Curtiss.

Gordon – Wanting to further understand how we make recommendations.

Shawn, Ben and Gordon asked for further clarification on making recommendations – Are these recommendations meeting goals for all parks or are different parks getting priorities on different sets of priorities?

It was recognized by staff that current access to the park is not ADA compliant as there is no concrete from the lead up (parking lot) to ramp into playground.

Gordon noted the old parks plan included thoughts that were not desirable. The KaBOOM! implementation changed that so we are now updating the parks master plan.

Neighbor(s) said that basketball was strongly desired but also had strong negative responses adding that personally, they don't want a court next to their house.

Shawn noted that's a good point. The court did get some good ratings, but there were also some negatives.

Dave added using only what the survey said, the yays outweighed the no's... Many of the results were mixed.

Gordon added that a part of the parks study showed people desire a variety of elements. If anything, there are other parks nearby that have hoops.

Neighbors said that as long as they have lived there, it has always been little kids in the playground and bigger kids in the open space. Adding in the 90s there was not enough space for larger kids stuff... It can't be everything to everybody. The open space provides opportunity for bigger kids... How do we want to market the park? Just because there is a new apartment building with bigger kids... do we want to cater to bigger kids?

Gordon added that there is limited space in Curtiss Field and 'packing to many amenities into the park' would be less desirable.

Neighbors noted it was nice when the fitness classes were going there, but the park was getting used without the building. People still use the park without a building. Even skating has changed how it is used over the past years as there appears to be a decline in skating.

Gordon stated the commission is feeling priorities are updating master plan to include results from survey including rink with temp boards (as is), leave green space in summer, building structure, (these updates are visual)

Council Member-elect Gustafson asked if implementing safety includes a fence?

Dave stated there may not be a need for a fence around the playground. There are already several barriers on both sides.

Neighbors noted the fence is more about kids falling.

Gordon continued by stating high priorities include looking at ADA guidelines, including safety and security, and ongoing maintenance by city staff.

Ben agreed safety should remain a priority but can be determined/defined down the road.

Gordon Added including/improving sidewalks/ needs to be considered

Council Member-elect Gustafson added the sidewalk on the Snelling side satisfies access, but the other side is where its problematic. He asked, could we use a different surface (other than concrete to avoid water-flow complications)? If we can't make that pathway compliant, would it meet the needs of neighbors utilizing the park?

Tim P stated that if restored that way, it would include access.

Gordon – suggested including a trail along the inside of the pond as a part of the recommendation.

Tim P acknowledged that it is important to remember when implementing sidewalks we want to consider cost of having to rebuild any sidewalks as future construction may upset new sidewalks and require them to be rebuilt after construction.

Neighbors asked about replacing the sidewalk that connects Iowa Ave to the park and noted when people are walking from Iowa Ave to the park, they walk straight through the parking lot. Additionally, the curbing was chewed up and never fixed. Will those curbs be updated?

Gordon suggested recommendation should include restoring it to where it was including curbs, and sidewalk to the park from Iowa Ave.

Shawn added landscaping and aesthetics remain a priority.

Gordon responded if it (landscaping) has to be maintained, a sponsor/volunteers would be desirable.

Tim P agreed that idea sounds great as long as we have people to maintain it.

Gordon concluded the conversation by asking neighbors if they had additional input, after they declined he added that staff will draft a letter of recommendations to be reviewed by the commission at the February 1st Parks and Recreation Commission; after review the commission will agree to send an updated letter to the City Council.

7. Updates to Commission

Tim Sandvik updated the commission that summer programming is in the planning stages. We will continue to work with our successful programming, continue updating programs and adding programming where appropriate. The goal is to have programs determined by the end of February so the parks insert can be included in the city-wide newsletter that goes out in early March.

Winterfest is January 31st from 1-4 at Community Park.

Ice Cream Social will be in late July and the city is considering combing the event with Movie in the Park. The commission will also be involved in utilizing 'Low-waste' practices for summer events.

Rinks are open including the warming house at Curtiss Field.

The February meeting will include agenda setting for the commission for 2016.

8. New Business

Neighbor asked when the temporary warming house will be removed. Staff responded that when the skating season finishes, it will be shortly thereafter.

Council Member-elect Gustafson noted he will bring items from this discussion to the council when they next meet.

9. Meeting Conclusion

Dave motioned to adjourn, Ben 2nd. Adjourned 7:45p

a. Summary of Decisions Made

- i. Shawn was nominated as Chair and accepted
- ii. Mary and Ron have been nominated as co-secretaries
- iii. Commission adopted standing rules
- iv. Parks and Rec Commission agreed to move the standing meeting day to the first Monday of each month at 6:30pm

b. Summary of Action Items

- i. Staff will compose a draft letter to be reviewed at the February meeting.

c. Next meeting date: Monday, February 1st, 6:30pm

d. Submitted By: Tim Sandvik – Staff Liaison