

**CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS**

Joint Meeting

Parks & Recreation Commission  
Community Engagement Commission  
City Hall  
2077 West Larpentour Avenue

**MINUTES**

March 6, 2023 at 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:36 PM

B. ROLL CALL:

Jeff Yager  X  Mike Bradbury  X  Eric Brenton  X   
Paula Mielke  X  Tom Faust   Randi Lundell  X  Mike Tracy

Cooley-Kistler  X  LaDouceur  X   
Ebbesen  X  Locke  X  Lindstrom  X   
Stockford  X

COUNCIL LIAISON:

James Wassenberg  X   
Mayor Gustafson

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Nelson  X

C. PRESENTATION: N/A

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. February 6, 2023 - Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting

Yager motions to approve the Park minutes;  
approved 5-0

2. February 15, 2023 – Community Engagement Commission Regular Meeting

LaDouceur motions to  
approve the CEC minutes; approved 5-0  
(Cooley-Kistler not yet present)

E. AGENDA:

**1. 2023 Parks and Recreation Budget Overview**

Staff liaison, Nelson, shared the 2023 event budget with the commissioners; no action was requested. The 2023 event budget is \$7,000, which would be used for City events such as Spring Together, Ice Cream Social and Snowstravaganza (which did not take place in 2023). Stockford asked for clarification in regards to whether the CEC had its own event budget. This is a City budget, not commission-specific. Event budget was increased from \$4,000 in 2022 to \$7,000 in 2023.

LaDouceur asked what was spent on the 2022 Ice Cream Social event at Community Park but that information was not pulled for this meeting.

## 2. Spring Together 2023 Event

Mielke asked whether the objectives remained the same from the first event held in 2017 – connect renters with Northhome residents, which was affirmed by the commissioners.

The success of 2022 event was discussed: that the new City Administrator and Assistant to Administrator were both present. Plus, there was an ice cream truck, which also served as a helpful billboard for residents passing by the park. Approximately 220 ice cream treats were served at Spring Together 2022 but this was likely more than the number of actual attendees, as some enjoyed more than one treat. Commissioners discussed how to limit treats to 1 per attendee to help manage expenses.

Mielke suggested attendees earn a ticket by responding to a survey or quiz.

Yager suggested earning a ticket for signing up for the City's newsletter.

Bradbury suggested having a roll of tickets, giving attendees a ticket for one frozen treat and marking their hand.

LaDouceur suggested having a sandwich board by food truck to direct attendees to the welcome tent for their ticket.

Ebbesen suggested giving each attendee one ticket to be redeemed for one ice cream treat; attendees could purchase additional treats at their own expense, if desired.

Brenton asked if there could be a check in table, a prompt/easy question, and you put the answer in the bucket to receive an ice cream ticket.

Wassenberg suggested giving a ticket for just showing up.

Stockford suggested we ask for community input at every possible opportunity to help us shape Community Park. Stockford proposed commissioners wear name tags, have 3 prepared questions and engage with attendees.

Commissions then discussed coming up with a survey and working on the types of questions / prompts to ask attendees at Spring Together 2023.

Bradbury asked, "What do we want to know?"

Wassenberg suggested asking what attendees would like to see in Community Park.

LaDouceur recommended Parks and Rec ask about parks.

Stockford said much input will be needed for Community Park.

Wassenberg said placing Post-its under headings allows for passive engagement and we can use responses to build a survey.

Lindstrom suggested Post-it Notes plus QR Codes so that attendees could complete the survey from their phone; it could be multiple questions for adults, and/or a simple question about favorite color or animal to engage children. Discussed how to tie placing Post-Its on board(s) and/or questionnaire to getting ticket for ice cream treat.

Staff liaison, Nelson, proposed having a QR code that would connect people to the City webpage to sign up for the weekly newsletter and/or a QR code to the City's Facebook page so that residents would be more informed and receive time-sensitive notifications.

LaDouceur recommended keeping questions at Spring Together light, asking Community Park-specific questions at the Ice Cream Social. Yager agreed with that suggestion, since that event takes place at Community Park. Bradbury and Ebbeson will brainstorm 3 to 4 simple questions. Staff liaison, Nelson, expressed wanting to find ways to expand our reach so that all residents see our invitation and all feel invited; Nelson raised point of language barrier in some cases impedes reach. Nelson discussed how to promote Spring Together to both renters and homeowners. Staff distributed flyers to houses on nearby Hollywood Court last year. Attempts will be made to connect with rental property owners.

LaDouceur said that her impression of the residents in the apartment building nearest the park came because of commissioner Bradbury inviting them.

Commissioners discussed the translation of questions and event promotional materials. Stockford reminded the commissioners that the school district may be able to help us translate posters. Wassenberg suggested a postcard sent in multi-languages or with a QR code to scan for translation.

Bradbury summarized: Display/poster with QR codes for connecting to newsletter and Facebook, Parks and Rec promote summer programming.

Nelson showed a previous example of a social media post and flyer design. Mielke suggested simplifying language, LaDouceur proposed doing a less floral and more playful design and information stated in bullet points rather than paragraphs. Nelson will share a revised flyer at the next joint meeting.

Nelson said we may have to rent a tent for event. Stockford has been in touch with Lion's Club who may purchase new tents and be willing to loan them to the City.

Bradbury asked about additional food trucks. Stockford suggested Lions provide/serve a snack. Stockford said that the Lion's Club might have access to equipment such as a popcorn machine. Stockford will attend a meeting on March 13<sup>th</sup> and get more information to share at the commissions' next joint meeting on April 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Nelson asked about entertainment. Bradbury suggested yard games like ones used in 2022. Ebbeson recommended having bubbles and chalk again this year.

CEC Commissioner LaDouceur motioned to adjourn the  
CEC from the remainder of the meeting at 7:47 PM.  
Motion carried 6-0.

### **3. The 2023 Goals of the Parks and Recreation Commission**

The Parks and Recreation Commission was presented with a list of potential goals that Staff liaison, Nelson, had been compiling at previous commission meetings. Using that as a starting point, the PARC established 10 final goals for 2023, as follows:

1. To have the basketball court painted at Curtiss Field
2. Develop a fall event
3. Draft and implement a weather and discipline policy for summer/fall programming.
4. Develop marketing strategies to expand the areas and people we currently reach to promote City events, news and programming to.
5. To have regular meetings of the Park and Recreation Commission, having quorum at least every quarter.
6. To create an events calendar
7. To visit/revisit area park buildings to gain knowledge in order to improve our own building at Community Park.
8. To establish an annual park audio assessment, completing park audits annually so that a list of recommendations can be provided.
9. To do an annual assessment of programming and ice rink usage, looking for ways to improve.
10. To develop a commission agenda calendar

#### **4. An update on 2023 Summer Programming and marketing it**

Nelson shared 2023 program offerings and materials. Summer programming will be the same as in 2022, minus Blast Ball. Nelson reported that classes would again be offered for the Commonwealth Terrace Cooperative residents but that the CTC wants to keep their programs separate.

Commissioner Yager said it was great to see the summer programming posted earlier this year. Attendance was down in 2022. Hope to see a post Covid comeback in 2023!

#### **5. Parks and Recreation Weather Cancellation Policy and Discipline Policy**

Nelson shared a draft of the weather cancellation policy. Commissioners recommended some minor changes, which included reducing the temperature at which classes and/or the warming house would be canceled/closed. For summer programming, classes may be canceled when the heat index reaches 100 degrees (previously, 105). For the warming house at Curtiss Field, that may be closed when the actual temperature is 0 degrees and/or the windchill is -10 degrees. Commissioners discussed how to alert parents to cancellations. The City currently doesn't have push text capabilities. Cancellation announcements are currently communicated on the City website, on Facebook and via a recorded message on the City weather line. Commissioner Yager stated it would be nice to send out information rather than parents have to seek it. Some options will be explored. Agreed that best option for 2023 is for Nelson to check weather forecasts in morning and post and record a cancellation announcement at least thirty minutes prior to class time. The final version of the Parks and Recreation Weather Cancellation Policy can be viewed online: [www.falconheights.org.docx](http://www.falconheights.org.docx) (live.com)

Discussed draft of discipline policy. Commissioners proposed minor tweaks. The final Rules of Conduct and Discipline Policy can be viewed here: [www.falconheights.org.docx](http://www.falconheights.org.docx) (live.com)

#### **6. 2023 Ice Rinks and Warming House Usage**

Roughly 180 people used the rink at Curtiss Field during the 2023 season, down from 260 last year. This year's season was also a couple of weeks shorter. Commissioners discussed whether ice rink condition was a factor. Should more money be invested in creating and maintaining a better rink at Curtiss Field and have just a picnic table to put skates on at rather than renting and staffing a warming house? If we do have a warming house, could that be placed on basketball court so it's nearer the ice rink and does not require walking up/down a hill in skates? Bradbury wondered if a liner could be placed over the basketball court to protect the pavement and to make for more level ice and reduce melting. It was also suggested that the rink be flooded and snow cleared more often. Bradbury suggested reaching out to the broomball league that has used Curtiss Field rink in past, get their feedback on why no longer using rink, and encourage them to use it again. The rink at Grove Park was used very little.

#### **F. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT**

Staff liaison, Nelson, said that all 2023 Community Garden plots had been assigned. Staff had a fairly significant waiting list and not enough plots to fill those requests. The job posting for a Summer Program Coordinator has also been posted to various college job boards as well as the City's website.

Commissioner Wassenberg updated the commissioners on Community Park and said that the University of Minnesota approved the sale of it to the City for \$1.1 million.

Proposed March Agenda Items:

- Spring Together 2023: Establish the information to be gathered and the method for gathering it from attendees ; task list.
- Begin Planning Ice Cream Social 2023

G. ADJOURNMENT: 9:06 P.M.

Brenton motions to adjourn  
the meeting;  
Approved 5-0