

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS
Regular Meeting of the Parks & Recreation Commission
City Hall
2077 West Larpentour Avenue

MINUTES
December 4, 2023 at 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 P.M.

B. ROLL CALL:

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

COUNCIL LIAISON:

James Wassenberg X

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Nelson X Jack Linehan X

C. PRESENTATION:

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. November 6, 2023 - Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Brenton
motioned to approve the minutes;
Approved 6-0

E. AGENDA:

1. Draft of Proposed 2024 Parks and Recreation Budget

Staff Liaison Nelson points out that the event budget shows additional funds added to it for 2024 so the commission can add a fall event. And, \$5,000 was added so that the commission can discuss adding a feature or equipment at Curtiss Field in 2024.

2. Community Park Renovation Survey Discussion

The Commissioners review the proposed park layout options from WSB and discuss the pros and cons of each.

Lundell likes Concept 1 for having the splash pad and playground away from the parking lot.

Brenton likes that the restrooms are adjacent to the playground in Concept 2.

Wassenberg likes Concept 3 because it utilizes the existing parking lot's footprint. The commission discusses and recommends WSB adjust the amount of parking reflected in Concept 3 so that it does not encroach nearer Falcon Woods.

Bradbury asks if there is a need for additional parking.

Staff Liaison Nelson says that the survey included a question in regards to the public's current parking satisfaction. Events and large groups playing soccer / flag football create slight parking issues.

Yager likes Concept 3 without moving the basketball court.

The commission decides that Concept 3, with revisions, is their favorite park layout for the following reasons:

- The proximity of the playground to the restrooms and building. If the Community Room is rented for a birthday party, for example, adults can see the playground from the room.
- Concept 3 utilizes the existing parking lot footprint. The Commission does recommend WSB revise the concept to reduce the total number of parking stalls slightly so that parking does not encroach nearer the Falcon Woods neighborhood. The Commission discussed whether there is a need for more parking at this time, taking into consideration both the survey results to question #10 and how parking overflows during events. Ultimately, it doesn't add much more expense to add the additional parking now vs. deciding to add it later when it would cost more to do.
- The Commission appreciates that the playground is not immediately next to the parking lot and is in favor of fencing it in and/or offering an additional buffer (i.e. shrubs) to the parking lot.
- The Commission does not wish to add in a hard-court surface at this time, as shown on Concept 3. Bids will be obtained to resurface the basketball court, but the basketball court, whether refreshed or not, would likely remain in the same or very similar area.
- Concept 3 shows a splash pad. Bids will be obtained to determine whether a splash pad or other amenity can be added during Phase 1 or later phases of construction. An open area should be retained for future expansion / additions at this time.

The Commission then discusses the three architectural design styles for a future park building.

The Commission is in favor of a building that features prairie style architectural design elements. They do wish to provide feedback to HCM Architects to slant the rooflines a bit and to not have completely flat rooflines. This is both to avoid snow buildups and to allow for the possibility of solar panels.

The Commission also recommends that the overall height of the building and height of the interior ceilings be considered, as high ceilings would be harder to heat and cool.

The Commission would like HCM Architects to add in roof overhangs to extend outdoor space but to not develop the outdoor space during Phase 1 if affordability is a consideration. The servery overhang shown would be part of Phase 1.

The Parks and Recreation Commission begins discussing exterior amenities and proposed floor plans of a future building. They look over cost estimates provided by WSB just before the meeting to determine which amenities can fit into the budget.

City Administrator Linehan says that a call with WSB earlier in the day revealed estimated costs and the idea that the renovation may need to take place in phases.

Commissioners consider whether to reduce the proposed square footage of the building.

Mielke thinks the building should be scaled back in an effort to include more exterior amenities.

Lundell thinks a building is an important amenity. It can be used as a rental space, warming house, for City programming, etc.

Yager states that it's tougher to add onto the building as easily as adding a splash pad in later. He adds that we need to think through what amenities residents want and need.

Faust asks if commissioners think the Flex Room is important. They discuss whether the lobby can be utilized as a Warming House.

Bradbury, Brenton and Wassenberg all state that they favor Floor Plan 1.

Commissioners are in favor of keeping the Flex Room. However, they recommend reducing its overall size as well as trimming the overall size of the Community Room. This is preferred rather than solely eliminating the Flex Room altogether as a cost savings measure.

The Commission also prefers that Floor Plan 1 features a smaller lobby and reduces the square footage there.

Lundell feels that the play area is such a draw and a building and parking lot are also needed now.

Linehan estimates that the new playground would be similar in size to the existing playground. But, it would be more inclusive.

The Parks and Recreation concludes that it would like to see bids for items 1 through 9, as outlined on the Master Plan Cost Estimate Concept 3 handout WSB provided to staff before the meeting. At this time, the Commission understands that the renovation may have to be done in phases, dependent upon the final price of various amenities, the grants and funding received, etc. In Phase 1, that may include a new building, parking lot, playground and electrical services. But, dependent on the actual bids obtained, then the Commission, the Council and the public could make determinations regarding Bid Alternatives in terms of preference and timeline. Bid Alternatives are items that appear to currently exceed our known budget and include an outdoor shelter, splash pad, basketball court, etc.

The Commission is mindful of seeking green energy alternatives and wants to make sure there are dollars available.

The Commission prefers engaging the public again once bids are obtained.

F. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

Bradbury reminds the commission that they will not meet on January 1. So, the next meeting will be on February 5, 2024.

G. ADJOURNMENT: 9:09 PM

Commissioner Mielke motioned to
adjourn;
Approved 6-0