

CITY OF FALCON HEIGHTS

Joint Meeting

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

MINUTES

March 18, 2024 at 6:30 P.M.

A. CALL TO ORDER: 6:33 PM

B. ROLL CALL:

Jeff Yager X Mike Bradbury X Eric Brenton X
Bob Haight X Tom Faust Randi Lundell X Erin Williams

Cooley-Kistler X Ebbesen X
Lindstrom Stockford X Wang X Leighton X

COUNCIL LIAISON:

James Wassenberg X
Melanie Leehy X

STAFF PRESENT:

Kelly Nelson X
Elke van der Werff X

C. PRESENTATION: N/A

D. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. December 4, 2023 - Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting
2. February 5, 2024 – Parks and Recreation Commission Regular Meeting

Haight motions to approve the Park minutes;
approved 4-0
(Yager arrived after roll call)

E. AGENDA:

1. Spring Together 2024 Event

City Staff, Nelson, shares that 272 pieces of ice cream were handed out in 2023 at a cost of just over \$1,200. The event was held from 4:00 to 6:00 PM last year. Commissioners discuss and then ultimately decide to hold this year’s event from 3:00 to 5:00 instead, with Commissioner Haight saying he thinks that is good.

Nelson would like to gather feedback from kids, in particular, about what amenity they would like to see added at Curtiss Field in the future.

Council Liaison, Leehy, suggests reaching out to the U of M and the MN State Fair to invite them to the event.

Bradbury asks if we still want to have name tags for attendees, which identify the neighborhood each live in, and have a map of the City at the event.

Nelson shares that they will reach out to St. Paul Fire, Ramsey County Sheriff and Big Bell Ice Cream. She adds that it was really helpful that Commissioners Stockford and Cooley-Kistler visited apartments in 2023 to help hand out flyers and invite residents to Spring Together.

Staff person van der Werff says that she took flyers to some of the businesses last year, including some at Falcon Crossing.

Bradbury asks if commissioners should bring yard games.

Nelson says she will update commissioners on what the City has available, but appreciates how Bradbury brought a four-square game last year, which was popular.

Yager thinks we should have a poster to display the renovation progress at Community Park at the event.

Commissioners discuss the tables we will need, including one for City commissions, one to check in and receive a ticket for ice cream at, and another to promote summer programming and gather feedback for a future Curtiss Field amenity.

Stockford thinks we should give the U of M a table for their use.

Commissioners discuss the shape that Spring Together has taken and Ebbeson shares that it used to be a smaller potluck event.

Bradbury likes what the event has become, says that perfect weather certainly helped in 2023, and wonders if we should also promote National Night Out at Spring Together.

Nelson reminds the commissioners that they discussed purchasing signage to help promote Spring Together similar to what is done for Ice Cream Social.

Leehy asks if we would have one sign at City Hall and another at Curtiss Field, similar to Ice Cream Social.

Stockford says it might be worthwhile to ask the Lions if they would have a display-board type of sign that they were willing to loan.

Ebbeson says that we could ask the Lions first if we could borrow a sign from them and then research places to purchase from as a backup option.

Lundell says that we could ask the U of M print shop on Como because they also provide print services for others.

Nelson asks if commissioners would like to have a second joint meeting to tie up any loose ends regarding Spring Together.

Commissioners vote to have separate Parks and Recreation and Community Engagement Commission meetings in April, if needed, and then have a joint meeting on Monday, May 6.

Haight feels free ice cream for all is the most important.

Stockford says the commissions should establish a cap for the ice cream total.

Ebbeson suggests a cap of \$1,500 for ice cream and then says the City Administrator can determine whether to increase it by a particular number of pieces or cost, depending on how much event time remains. Commissioners are in support of doing this.

Nelson says the City could also purchase individual bags of chips to hand out, along with bottles of water.

Ebbeson will research whether Old Dutch would be willing to sell to us at cost. If not, Staff will shop at Sam's Club or Costco.

Bradbury thinks it would be nice to add live music and asks what other commissioners think.

Haight thinks music would be very good.

Brenton and Yager will work on the live music component. Staff will create a sign-up form for all ages to sign up; music must be family-friendly and clean.

Nelson and van der Werff share that they discussed creating a sign-up sheet for commissioners. It would be four timeslots of one hour each. If someone wants to do more than one shift or they can't do one entire shift, that's okay, but it allows commissioners to enjoy the event as residents as well, and not have to volunteer the entire time.

Ebbeson says she's jumping ahead to the Ice Cream Social, but wonders about inviting the dancers. She volunteers to reach out to the dance studio so they have the date earlier than they did last year.

Commissioners discuss having the band take a break to help direct attention to the dance performance(s).

Bradbury wonders if having an emcee would help.

Cooley-Kistler thinks the Mayor would make a good emcee.

CEC Commissioner Cooley-Kistler motions to adjourn
the CEC from the remainder of the meeting at 8:09 PM.
Motion carried 5-0.

F. INFORMATION/ANNOUNCEMENT

1. Update on 2024 Summer Programming

Staff liaison, Nelson, shares that she's currently trying to hire summer rec staff. Summer programming had to be determined before the renovation timeline at Community Park was updated to reflect that demolition likely won't begin before August now. So, summer programming was moved to Curtiss Field this summer and will be an open gym concept in the park, where kids and families can come play various sports/games for free.

Bradbury says that if the City cannot hire anyone, maybe commissioners would be willing to volunteer.

Nelson says that she will be attending a meeting on Thursday of this week to learn more about a grant opportunity with The Good Neighbor Fund. Perhaps that would be an option to help pay staff, expand the free programming offered, and allow the City to purchase a volleyball net and soccer goals at Curtiss. She will update the commission at their next meeting.

2. Community Park Update

Nelson says she will have a meeting on Wednesday of this week with HCM Architects and will know at the end of the week whether a Parks and Recreation meeting will be needed in April, depending upon whether any time-sensitive decisions have to be made concerning Community Park. Nelson shares that the latest timeline shows demolition would likely begin in August, with construction starting just after Labor Day, but the timeline is fluid and could be delayed.

Haight asks how the renovation and Community Park will affect the community gardens.

Nelson thinks the disruption will be minimal. The parking lot won't be altered in any way until the very end, after the new building is in, sometime in 2025. And, the gardens are not moving. Likely, disruption will come towards the end of the season if water has to be turned off at any point. Staff says the City would look for another water source at that point.

G. ADJOURNMENT: 8:35 P.M.

Haight motions to adjourn
the meeting;
Approved 5-0