

Minutes of the Minnetonka Park Board Meeting of December 4, 2019

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

Park Board members in attendance included James Durbin, Cindy Kist, Elena Imaretska, Ben Jacobs and Christopher Walick. Excused members included Nelson Evenrud and Chris Gabler. Staff members in attendance included Ann Davy, Mike Funk, Bonnie Hanna-Powers, Kathy Kline, Kelly O'Dea and Sara Woeste.

Vise chair Kist called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

2. Reports from Staff

Recreation Director, Kelly O'Dea reminded board members that there will not be a meeting in January due to the holiday. Kist started on the park board in February of 2012 and her term is completed at the end of January. O'Dea thanked Kist for her service. Kist responded that it has been an awesome experience. O'Dea told board members to let people know about the vacancy and how to apply for it. Around mid-January the council will add a study session to conduct interviews for boards and commissions.

3. Approval of Minutes

Walick moved, Durbin seconded a motion to approve the meeting Minutes of October 2, 2019 as submitted. All voted "yes." Motion carried.

4. Citizens wishing to discuss items not on the agenda

None

5. Business Items

A. Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

O'Dea reminded park board members that chair and vice chair are appointed annually. Evenrud emailed O'Dea saying that he is willing to continue being chair or would step down if somebody else is interested. With Kist terming out, a new vice chair is needed. If Gabler is nominated, O'Dea would need to confirm if he is interested.

Jacobs moved, Walick seconded a motion to appoint Nelson Evenrud as park board chair for a term beginning Feb. 1, 2020 and running through Jan. 31, 2021. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

Imaretska expressed interest in vice chair.

Walick moved and Jacobs seconded a motion to appoint Elena Imaretska as park board vice chair for a term beginning Feb. 1, 2020 and running through Jan. 31, 2021. All voted "yes". Motion carried.

B. Review of 2019 Farmers Market operations and staff recommendations for 2020

O'Dea gave the background of the report.

Farmers Market Manager, Bonnie Hanna-Powers presented a PowerPoint for the summary of the report.

Jacobs asked how successful the subsidized programs were this year and if it was the first year that they were offered.

Hanna-Powers responded that the Power of Produce club has been around about three years. The EBT program has been offered for at least five years. Participation in the EBT program is somewhat low and admits that more outreach could be done. Hanna-Powers explained that eligible people with the EBT or SNAP programs can charge up to \$10 on their card and we will match up to \$10, for a total of \$20 to spend at the market.

Jacobs thinks that is a great program. He suggested doing more outreach with some of the assisted living homes in the city and maybe they can coordinate transportation to the market. A lot of people in assisted living homes use those programs and don't know programs like this exists.

Hanna-Powers replied that she has reached out to some assisted living communities letting them know if they have scheduled transportation to outings that the farmers market is an option.

Jacobs responded that this is a really fun way to utilize some of that money.

Walick asked what strategy was used by the outside company to figure out attendance.

Hanna-Powers explained that people from the company came to the market twice during the season. She thought they counted every single person using a clicker device. Then they figured there were approximately that many people per hour and this many market hours per season and calculated the total.

O'Dea explained that taking attendance at special events can be hard. Traffic counters are often used, however, that counts per car and then engineering uses a standard to calculate the total.

Hanna-Powers added that she purchased a clicker and it will be used at the December 14 winter market. Someone will be stationed at the door to count everyone who enters.

Walick asked if total sales are tracked.

Hanna-Powers said she tracks the sales of tokens. However, vendors are not required to give us their total sales because that is private information.

Durbin does not recommend changing the counting method because all the previous data would mean nothing. As long as the counting method is consistent there will be a trend. Visually if there are a lot of people there and it is crowded, you know the event is successful. Durbin thinks it would be interesting to take pictures and use that to see how successful it was. He also suggested handing out tickets for door prizes to

everyone to indicate how many people attended. Durbin likes that Music in the Park is getting moved earlier because they are mixing two great events together.

Imaretska thanked Hanna-Powers. She loves the farmers market and is happy the winter markets are happening again this year. Imaretska asked Hanna-Powers to talk more about how she recruits vendors.

Hanna-Powers responded that she recruits in the following ways:

- Going to other events in-person.
- The Minnesota Grown website has a directory and she can search for specific products or who is nearby.
- The Minnesota Farmers Market Association has a member directory that shows if vendors are looking to sell at additional markets.
- On Instagram she looks up certain locally grown hashtags. She also reads through posts.

Imaretska asked if they could recommend vendors to her.

Hanna-Powers responded yes and that would be helpful.

Imaretska recommended a cooking demonstration or some sort of food preparation presentation as an activity. A celebrity chef could do a demonstration with something like squash. It could be kind of a fun thing that people might show up for.

Durbin said his work has their facility chef demonstrate how to prepare food. It would be a fun activity for both adults and kids to be able to participate in every once and a while.

Imaretska said the chef could be a local celebrity. She likes that we have non-profits, community organizations and the police involved. Imaretska asked if a park board member, council member or the mayor could be included. It is a relaxed setting so it presents the opportunity for conversation.

Hanna-Powers replied that it was requested in customer feedback.

O'Dea added that the request is in progress and has been sent to the city manager.

Hanna-Powers asked Imaretska if she is volunteering and Imaretska said she is.

Imaretska is curious about the local grower's stories and wonders if we can elevate that through the newsletter or social media. It would be nice to know things such as where their farm is or where their food came from. As a customer it would be neat to hear and it would also benefit the vendor's business.

Durbin added that there could be a spotlight on any vendor and that it may bring in more business for them. Regarding the monthly print newsletter, it often gets tossed in the recycling bin so he requested a QR code that someone can scan to receive the newsletter on their phone.

Hanna-Powers commented that it is a good idea to have it digitized.

Imaretska circled back to the texting piece and said that the technology for that is so easy right now. All you have to do is text to receive information.

Durbin asked if the farmers market is on GovDelivery.

Hanna-Powers responded that it is. However, the communications department decided they wanted to move more towards social media instead of the text and email notifications.

Imaretska asked if people commented that they missed the email and text notifications in the feedback survey.

Hanna-Powers replied that it was mentioned.

Durbin requested highlighting the farmers market on the city's Facebook page. If people subscribe to the city's Facebook page, they will get updated on different things the city has to offer.

Imaretska thought the sandwich boards with the events listed at the Williston Fitness Center was helpful.

Kist thanked Hanna-Powers for a precise and thorough report.

6. Park Board Member Reports

Imaretska complimented the Burwell Spooktacular event. She attended it with her son and they thought it was unique, fun and a cool use of the Burwell House.

O'Dea commented that Assistant Recreation Director, Sara Woeste manages special events and Recreation Administrative Coordinator, Kathy Kline manages the Burwell House. That event was very weather dependent and it turned out to be a nice fall day. Approximately 1500 people attended, which was more than the whole tour season. Staff is planning on doing that event again.

Imaretska thought the s'mores station and the person working it were amazing.

Kist thanked staff for coordinating the volunteer recognition event. She was able to talk to some people about the mountain biking project there. Kist recently was at Lone Lake Park and noticed that a lot of the interpretive signs along the trail were looking really sad. She asked if upgrading the interpretive signs could happen in conjunction to the mountain bike project. Kist also asked if some information about the Rusty Patch Bumblebee could be posted to educate the public.

Woeste said there have been internal discussions about wanting to do that. It is not in this project budget but is something staff would like done and is on their radar.

7. Information Items

Mountain Biking

Woeste reported that the final report on the Archeological survey came back and no materials were found in the park. She suggested signing up for the project page. Staff is waiting for the outcome of the Hennepin County Youth Sports Grant they applied for. Carol HejlStone, Parks and Trails Planner and Jesse Izquierdo, Recreation Program Manager have been out field siting. They have one more planned visit this week and then will wait until spring to continue. Staff will select the design build trail company this winter.

Winter-Spring Brochure

Woeste announced that registration began yesterday and 919 people registered on the first day. It's almost half online and half in-person or over the phone. There was a big crowd waiting to register in the senior center lobby. Yoga is a very popular class for Senior Services. Popular classes for youth are swimming and tennis. A little over a year ago, staff implemented priority registration for swimming and tennis because they are progressive classes. There are still openings come registration day but those lessons fill quickly. There were over 1300 registrations in the first week between priority registration and open general public registration. Currently staff is working on summer programs because information is due soon for marketing reasons.

Durbin added that having the information ready early is really important to parents because they plan their kid's summer activities in February. All that hard work is really appreciated.

Outdoor Rinks Update

O'Dea said there are seven parks in Minnetonka and we also operate six parks in Hopkins. Public Works staff has been out monitoring the rink locations and have been able to remove snow on some of them. It really depends on how soft the ground is and if it is cold enough to put water down. Rinks are planned to open on December 14, however, that is weather dependent.

Brian Kirk New Council Member

O'Dea introduced Brian Kirk, one of three new council members in 2020. Kirk has been on the planning commission for seven years and chair for the last three or four years.

8. Upcoming Park Board Agenda Items

Imaretska asked if they could attend the Robinwood meeting.

O'Dea responded that if somebody is interested to contact him because we would not want more than three park board members at an open meeting.

Durbin asked when the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) will be reviewed. He wonders when new trails are built, how does staff make sure those are maintained. Is there a way to get some kind of assessment to see if we are funding enough for that? He worries about building a new mountain bike trail or pickleball courts and not having enough money to maintain it after they are built. Durbin requested a presentation on what is done behind the scenes once a park is built. That would include things like how the park is maintained and a timeline of when things get updated or fixed. He thinks it would be a valuable discussion this coming year for park board.

O'Dea responded that the Public Works department included a new full time Park Maintenance position starting around July 1, 2020. He believes another new position will be added in 2023. When the franchise fees were approved, staff was aware of the trail system projects so they approved two new positions to help maintain them. O'Dea thought park maintenance would be a good topic for Darin Ellingson, Public Works Operations Manager to talk about at a meeting sometime.

Durbin thinks that would be a great discussion.

Imaretska asked how the park board is doing in terms of their goals on the strategic plan.

O'Dea thought maybe that is something they should look at mid-year.

Imaretska said the park board could review them in February and then check-in mid-year.

O'Dea replied that typically the review in February is a two month process. Park board will see it in February and give feedback; then staff will bring it back for approval of the changes.

O'Dea reminded the park board that if they ever have something they want to discuss at a meeting to either contact him or bring it up at a meeting.

Kist thanked everyone for the opportunity to be on the park board the last eight years. It has been awesome. The staff is great and she has gotten to know some really wonderful people.

9. Adjournment

Walick motioned to adjourn, seconded by Jacobs. Kist adjourned the meeting at 7:47 p.m.