

# Cambridge Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes

## Monday, April 8, 2024

Pursuant to due call and notice thereof, a regular meeting of the Cambridge Parks, Trails, and Recreation Commission was held at Cambridge City Hall, 300 3rd Avenue NE, Cambridge, Minnesota.

Members Present: Commissioners Jeff Andres (Chair), Jeff Soderquist (Vice Chair), Kriste Ericsson, Adam Schorer, Christina Thayer-Anderson (Community Education Representative), Eva Anderson (Youth Representative), and Susan Blom (Isanti County Parks Board Representative)

Members Absent: Bob Shogren (Council Representative)

Staff Present: Community Development Specialist Amy Norling

### **Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance**

Andres called the meeting to order at 7:01 pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Organizational Meeting**

Andres welcomed Eva Anderson as the Youth Representative for 2024, Susan Blom as Isanti County Parks Board Representative, Adam Schorer who was not present at that time, and Bob Shogren as Council Representative for 2024 who was also absent.

Jeff Andres was reappointed Chair by unanimous vote, and Jeff Soderquist was reappointed Vice Chair by unanimous vote. Kriste Ericsson was nominated for Vice Chair but declined.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Blom moved, seconded by Soderquist, to approve the agenda. All voted aye, no nays. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Blom moved, seconded by Ericsson, to approve the January 8, 2024 meeting minutes. All voted aye, no nays. Motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comment**

Peter Losch, 433 29<sup>th</sup> Court SE, addressed the Commission regarding the pickleball courts at Central Green. He presented a schedule that is posted at the courts for the Cambridge Area Pickleball Association (CAPA), who reserve the courts Monday through Saturday from 8 am to Noon, and Monday through Friday from 5 to 8 pm. Often there are no scheduled activities during these times. Losch wanted to know if they have the authority to ask non-members to leave. He had joined CAPA last summer and participated in their free lessons, but found no structure beyond that such as tournaments or scheduled play time. He does not want to have to pay for a membership to play pickleball. When he approached CAPA regarding this he stated he was ignored and ridiculed.

Norling replied the matter has been brought up with Assistant Public Works Director Milz and the parks department, the association has an agreement to reserve the times as stated that is negotiated at the start of each year.

Soderquist motioned, seconded by Ericsson, to have staff and City Council review the CAPA agreement at Central Green Courts. All voted aye, no nays, motion passed unanimously.

Michelle Losch was present for the incident and stated the confrontation felt threatening. If the courts are reserved there needs to be a neutral presence due to the aggressive nature of the association members. There are eight courts and none of them can be used unless you are a member of CAPA, which does not encourage growth and fellowship. Often times the courts are empty yet they are still told they cannot play during reserved times.

### **Organizational Meeting Continued**

Andres noted new member Adam Schorer was now present. Schorer introduced himself as a resident of Cambridge for 10 years, and lived in Isanti prior. He uses the parks often and is looking forward to learning and helping the system grow.

### **New Business**

#### **A 2024 Winter Fest Review**

Norling said the second annual Winter Fest was held in February this year instead of January, to allow more time for snowman competition entries. The snowman competition had 11 entries, most of which were very small snowmen due to the lack of snow. The Cambridge Ambassadors helped guide 175 people through the voting process. There were 4 winners, none of whom were present during Winter Fest, so they came to pick up their prize baskets the following week. City staff received a thank you card from one of the winners thanking us for hosting the event.

Norling continued, the event was held on Saturday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. It featured open skate, bonfires and warming houses, cornhole, a DJ, craft and food vendors, and a horse drawn wagon. Hot cocoa and s'mores were provided for free while supplies lasted. Attendance was approximately 400 people, which was an increase from last year. The team running the event felt that it was about an hour too long. The vendors started packing up an hour early, and that pretty much ended the event. Next year, we plan to shorten the event by one hour, so that it will go from noon-4 pm. Vendors will be instructed that they are not to pack up until the event ends.

Norling noted the dog sled could not run at the event due to the lack of snow, but they did attend with some of the sled dogs to interact and answer questions.

It was asked why the event was switched to February, Norling said to allow for more time for the snowman competition in hopes to get more entries. Though this year the lack of snow affected entries as well. The event occurred on the same day as Cambridge-Isanti High School's Snow Days Dance, students that purchased a ticket to the dance received a free choice of mini donuts, cotton candy, or kettle corn.

Andres suggested charging vendors a fee that was refundable if they stay until the end of the event. Norling said the event is difficult to find vendors for since it is outdoors in the winter. This year there was an indoor craft event on the same day and so Winter Fest only had ten vendors in attendance. She worried there would be fewer vendors if there were additional fees charged. Commissioners felt that shortening the event might help, and the lack of snow may have had negative impacts. Norling said the wind was very strong and vendors were struggling to keep their merchandise in their booths.

#### B 2024 Summer Parks Programming Update

Norling said in 2024 there will be 12 events: Winter Fest; three Downtown Music, Food and Fun Events; three kids' events; three concerts in the park; and the annual Art Fair.

Good for Gary will play a variety of cover songs at the first Downtown Music, Food and Fun event. The first kids' event will feature a petting zoo and Snake Discovery. A hand washing station has been rented. And the first concert in the park will feature Girls Night Out, a women in country tribute band.

5 Minute Major will play a variety of cover songs the second Downtown Music, Food and Fun event. At the second kids' event, Bob the Beachcomber will perform popular hits for kids. And the second concert in the park will be A Hard Day's Night, a Beatle's tribute band.

The third Downtown Music, Food and Fun will be a bluegrass band, The High 48's. On Saturday, August 17 the city will host the Annual Arts & Crafts Fair. The last concert in park is a Queen tribute band, The Crown Jewels. And the last kids' event will be bounce houses in the park with five bounce houses rented.

Noling said she has been working with staff from the Anoka Ramsey Community College who want to become involved in the city events. They will bring small water bottles with their logo on them, which is greatly needed since vandals destroyed the water fountains last year.

Norling said the concerts in the park have been scheduled for an hour earlier than the previous years in hopes of attracting the parents that take their kids to the park after work. This will hopefully increase the attendance, which has been on average around 100 people. The bad weather backup location has yet to be determined.

#### C Parks update from Public Works Director, Todd Schwab

Norling read Public Works Director Schwab's report. Work on the City Park shelter replacement will be starting soon. The department is seeking grant opportunities for buckthorn removal in Brown Park. They have finished clearing trees so the trail can be extended north from Parkwood Park, ultimately to 2nd Avenue SE. And they are working on preparations for the spring ball season at Sandquist Park, staff installed lights in the NW parking lot.

Norling gave an update on the Cambridge Bike-Walk trail. Isanti Township needs to sign a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA), and plans are to pave Central Drive with the 2024 Street Project.

Commissioners reported Purple Loosestrife growing in Cambridge City Park along the river, which is invasive and can spread quickly. Once it blooms the seeds are airborne, so removal before it blooms is important. Norling said she would inform Public Works.

D Potential Munkberg Property Acquisition

Norling stated this project is contingent on finding a developer interested in the land around the proposed park. Administration is working with developers, the City has until November to make a decision to buy the property, or it can be extended for 6 months for further research. The vision is a larger park, to be the 'jewel of the city,' with walking trails, a playground, a beach off Lake Fannie, and potentially an amphitheater.

Other Business/Miscellaneous

A City Council Update

No update was given due to Council Representative Shogren absence.

B Commissioner Updates and/or Concerns

A Commissioner questioned the tree removal at Parkwood Park, Norling noted that was for the trail expansion as noted in Schwab's update earlier in the meeting.

Adjournment of Council Meeting

Being no further business before the Commission, Ericsson moved, seconded by Soderquist, to adjourn the regular meeting at 7:52 pm. Upon roll call, all voted aye, no nays. Motion carried unanimously.



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Jeff Andres, Chair

ATTEST:



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Amy Norling  
Community Development Specialist