Park & Recreation Commission Minutes of the Meeting
John P. Murzyn Hall – Senior Center
530 Mill Street NE
October 28, 2020
5:30 pm

Tom Greenhalgh called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and read the opening statement for remote meetings due to a health pandemic and declared emergency. He reported that the meeting could be conducted by a combination of in-person and electronic means.

Roll Call
Members present: Anne Carder, Sean Clerkin, Bruce Evans, Tom Greenhalgh, Becky Groseth, Rachel James, Marsha Stroik
Staff present: Kevin Hansen, Public Works Director; Keith Windschitl, Recreation Director; Deanna Saefke, Commission Secretary; Connie Buesgens, Council Representative

Approval Consent Agenda
Motion by Clerkin, second by Evans, to approve the consent agenda. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Letters and Requests
A. Letter of request from the Del Counts Band to rent December 31, 2020 for a dance with presold tickets for 175 people maximum.
Saefke reported there is no attachment for this request. The Del Counts have been a very popular band throughout northeast Minneapolis for many years and have rented Murzyn Hall for dances over the past few years and most recently in September for an anniversary dance. The group is requesting to hold a New Year's Eve dance following the COVID guidelines and capacity restrictions. Saefke indicated at the most recent dance the renters conducted temperature checks at the door, had guests sign waivers, and enforced mask requirements for all attendees. The group offers presale tickets to these events and is aware of the maximum capacity for attendance. The previous dance had approximately one hundred people. The Lions Club offers a cash bar at the dance. Clerkin confirmed the group used every precaution available to put on a safe event. He asked how staff felt renting out the hall on New Year's Eve. Windschitl replied typically this is not a holiday that is rented out and is stated in the Murzyn Hall Policy as one of the holidays that is closed. In the past there were events on that holiday with issues so the Commission decided to add it to the holiday list of closed dates. He feels this is a well-run event and any request to rent this date would be brought to the Commission for approval. Windschitl stated the only item to consider is having staff agree to work that evening. He believes we will have one or two people willing to work. Stroik added a staff person should be confirmed to work that holiday prior to the rental being offered.

Motion by Clerkin, second by Carder, to approve the rental of Murzyn Hall by the Del Counts Band on December 31, 2020 as long as staff is confirmed to work the event. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Old Business
A. Silver Lake Boat Landing update
Hansen reported the boat landing project at Silver Lake is about 90% complete. A five foot high fence has yet to

be installed on top of the twelve foot high retaining wall. The last layer of blacktop will be put down tomorrow. The project should be finished within a week or two. Hansen stated this was a big change for the area. The previous boat landing was in the water and almost unusable. This project is something that not only the Commission, but the City Council, and the neighborhood have been looking forward to. The area for vehicle turn around was expanded and parking stalls were added down by the boat landing and up on top.

Evans replied lives near the area and is glad the project is finishing up because there has been a lot of noise over the summer. He likes the idea of the fencing for protection around the hazardous area. Hansen replied there will be fencing and landscaping to keep people away and the fencing will have an overhang on the lower portion of the wall so it will be very difficult to climb on it. He indicated this project has really been two projects which in part made it take a little longer and impacted Stinson Boulevard. There was a large lift station that had to be replaced. The lift station has been operating for three weeks. James stated this project is great because it gives anyone who doesn't have lake property good access to the lake. Evans replied the concrete boat ramp is great and now there is a dock there. Hansen indicated people were surprised and very pleased to see the dock.

New Business

A. Rental rates for John P. Murzyn Hall in 2022

Windschitl stated the rates for 2021 have previously been established so we are discussing the rental rates for 2022. In the last few years there has been an increase to the rates. In 2019 and 2020 there was a higher increase than in the past. For a Saturday rental the rate increased by 6% in 2019, another 5% in 2020, and in 2021 a 2% increase. For a Sunday through Friday rental the rate increased by 3% in 2019, 2% in 2020, and 5% in 2021. In 2020 it has been a much slower year due to the pandemic and closed for three to four months. Greenhalgh asked how many less rentals are there for this year as compared to previous years. Windschitl replied the number of rentals is down by a lot. There haven't been any major events since the middle of March and there were no events for April, May, June, and July. Saefke replied the first rental after being allowed to open was in August. Many of the booked rentals were unable to fit within the requirements of 175 guests or less, wearing masks, and some of them were concerned with people getting sick. In most cases staff worked with the renter to reschedule to another date in 2020 or 2021. It is very difficult to compare this year to previous years. Groseth asked if renters are changing from a 2020 date to a 2021 date are they being charged the rate from this year or next year. Saefke replied those moving to a 2021 date will be charged the higher rate but it only increased by 3% to 2021 so it is minimal. Windschitl indicated no one was charged a penalty for moving and most were not charged a fee for cancelations wither. Saefke reported if a renter chose to cancel after the facility was opened in August she worked to re-rent the date and would then refund $400 of the $500 down payment back to them. To answer another question, at this time in 2021 all of the Saturdays are rented from the middle of February into October. There are a lot of people that moved from 2020 to 2021 and new renters who want Saturdays.

Clerkin indicated the rental rate has increased pretty much every year since he has been on the Commission and asked if we need to increase the rate for the next year or maintain the fee as is. Groseth asked if there is an additional cost or time needed for cleaning or sanitizing for the pandemic conditions. Saefke replied that has been incorporated into the regular cleaning schedule for the most part. Windschitl stated there haven't been a lot of additional costs. A few items were purchased through the CARES money like hand sanitizers, chemicals, and things to sanitize the facility. Staff is going through the building twice per day sanitizing commonly touched surfaces. There haven't been a lot of extra costs involved in the COVID cleaning procedures beyond what is typically done. Greenhalgh asked if staff feels the rate should increase. Windschitl replied in light of the current situation he would be inclined to leave the rates as they are for one more year. With the amount of people that were moved to new dates and the uncertainty of even having events in 2021 he doesn't want to place an additional burden on existing clients. Groseth feels it sends a good message saying that with everything going on

and many events needing to be rescheduled the Commission decided to maintain the price for an additional year and not have any increases.

Motion by Clerkin, second by Evans, to maintain the same rental rates from 2021 to 2022 for John P Murzyn Hall rentals. Upon vote: All ayes. **Motion Carried.**

Reports

A. Recreation Director

Windschitl reported the recreation summer programs ran for the most part as it had in the past. The adult softball league started a little late this year because of the Governor's mandates. A full summer league occurred for both Men's and Co-Ed adult softball but there wasn't a fall league for either league. The youth summer programs were very successful and attendance numbers were higher than expected. Extra staff was at each program to offer social distancing within programs, extra sanitizing occurred, and activities were planned to keep everyone as healthy as we could. Fortunately we didn't have anyone out sick with COVID-19. We were able to use a good portion of the grant that we are currently operating under along with the school district. The library also used some of our grant funding with their youth programs. Windschitl reported a three year extension of the grant funding was recently approved. This grant is focused on arts and enrichment programming for youth.

Windschitl indicated there will be a few items on the expense reports to be aware of. One item is the Murzyn Hall HVAC controls and there have been a lot of issues. When the HVAC project was done a number of years ago the City had a contract with Honeywell and the controls were proprietary to them as well. Since ending that contract with Honeywell it has become very difficult trying to get another company to manipulate and adjust the system. The solution is to install new controls that any company will be able to work on. The other item within the budget is van replacement for one of the Ford Econoline vans used to transport youth sports and summer programs. One of the vans was acquired in 1998 or 1999 will be replaced. This replacement was in the budget last year. The van is on order right now.

Windschitl reported there are a lot of activities being offered in the current city newsletter. The Chalk Art Walk will have drawings along the walking path at Huset Park West. Truck or Treat is taking place tomorrow night and is a drive thru event. The CH Athletic Boosters will have hot dogs for sale. Staff is doing the best they can to offer activities without as much physical contact. Other departments are involved in the event such as Police, Fire, and Public Works. Recreation staff filled 1000 bags of candy to hand out at the end of the drive thru event.

Lastly Windschitl indicated the recreation software program that is currently being used for registration processing hasn't been the best fit but we have made work arounds. This current program is switching to a new format and the price is increasing significantly. Staff is researching alternate software programs to find a better fit for our needs and a better price.

Greenhalgh asked what the status is for the Hylander Center. Windschitl replied the gym has remained closed. However, the youth soccer program used it last Saturday to finish their small group program. The gym will also be used for elections this year to offer more space. The open gym program is not open as of yet because we do not have the ability to social distance during a typical open gym offering.

Windschitl reported the senior citizen program has been running programs with small numbers of attendees. The city manager just received a very nice compliment from a woman attending an art class today. The senior coordinator is running programs such as Bingo, painting classes, showing movies, and a few trips with a small

number of people in the mini bus.

B. Public Works Director/City Engineer

Hansen reported with the melting snow staff will be able to continue and finish the leaf pickup and parks cleanup. The Public Works budget will be presented to the City Council on Monday evening. There is a 3% increase in the budget from 2020 to 2021. Hansen indicated the City has closed on the future city hall site. The builder will break ground next week and official building construction within two weeks after that. The existing building and parking ramp are completely demolished.

Stroik asked if street cleanup will resume. Hansen replied yes, there cannot be any ice or snow I the curb line so once that is gone they will get back out.

C. Commission Members

James asked about the adopt a park program and if it is still being run through the city. Hansen replied yes, all of the parks are currently hosted by either individual volunteers or community groups. Every spring the volunteers are contacted to verify participation in the program. Every group is expected to clean up twice per year at a minimum. James indicated she volunteers with the church group at Ostrander Park and they clean three times per year. She will share with residents that all of the parks are adopted and they do not need to be an official adoptee to clean up the park. Hansen replied if she speaks with groups that are interested in cleaning they should call Public Works in February as some of the groups or people drop out of the program and others are added at that time.

Buesgens asked if there was ever a discussion regarding an evaluation of the Murzyn Hall building. Stroik added we know it is in bad shape. Hansen replied yes, it is on the list in the aspect of coming back to the city council with remaining funds from the city hall project. After the update on the city hall final costs staff can discuss the needs for Murzyn Hall with the city council. This will not happen until after the first of the year most likely. The idea would be to approach the city council for renovation of Murzyn Hall and the renovation or replacement of the Public Works facility.

Buesgens informed the Commission the city council voted on a limit on the tax increase for the upcoming budget and also included dedicated funds to our park capital improvements from one or two TIF districts that were decertified and the total will be $100,000 per year. It can be used in several different ways. All five council members voted in favor of that in the preliminary vote. The final vote will be in December. Clerkin replied that is awesome. He asked if that money could be used for bonding. Buesgens replied yes it is an option to use that money to pay for the bond and not increase taxes. The Commission was very happy.

Stroik reported 40th and Arthur has huge divots in the street on both sides from the unfinished construction. One resident is still unable to get in his driveway. There is a four to six inch drop between the street and where the company was working. Stroik mentioned there are many road closed signs still throughout the area. Groseth replied crews are working right now. Hansen replied the site is being prepared for paving tomorrow. The second and final layer of paving will occur on Saturday. Door hangers were distributed on Monday to the residents in the area. The project was delayed due to the weather conditions and to have paving installed it needs to be above 32 degrees. Stroik said the road signs need to be removed and some of the streets are not even being worked on. Hansen replied correct, but the crews need the signs for tomorrow when trucks are coming in and out of the area. After the paving is complete on Saturday the signs will be removed.

Clerkin thanked the Public Works and Recreation Departments. He understands it has been a trying time to get things accomplished over the last six months. They have been doing a great job in all places. Groseth agreed and said great job keeping everyone safe from COVID.

Greenhalgh adjourned the meeting at 6:13 pm.
Deanna Saefke, Recreation Secretary