

CITY OF ST. FRANCIS
PARKS COMMISSION AGENDA
Police & Public Works - 4058 St. Francis Blvd NW
February 8, 2024
7:00 p.m.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Parks Commission was called to order at 7:00 pm.

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present: Commission Member Greg Zutz, Commission Member and Chair Barb Anderson, Commission Member and Co-Chair Daria Shiffer, Commission Member Renee Wedan

Also Present: City Administrator Kate Thunstrom, Public Works Director Paul Carpenter, Streets/Parks Operator Tom Koep,

3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY: SHIFFER SECOND: ZUTZ APPROVING THE PARKS COMMISSION AGENDA

Ayes: Zutz, Anderson, Shiffer, and Wedan

Nays: None

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOTION BY: SHIFFER SECOND: ZUTZ TO APPROVE THE MEETING MINUTES FROM NOVEMBER 16, 2023.

Ayes: Anderson, Zutz, Shiffer, and Wedan

Nays: None

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Introduce Commission Member Renee Wedan

Commission Member Wedan introduced herself and reviewed her background with the Commission.

The rest of the Commission Members introduced themselves to Wedan.

B. History of Parks in St. Francis

Streets/Parks Operator Koep reviewed the history of parks and playgrounds in St. Francis. He shared that the budget for parks is around \$25,000 per year. He noted that parks have been a low priority in the past.

Wedan asked about Siwek Park and the park dedication fees that were collected for the new lots in this area. She asked if any of the \$25,000 from the annual budget went towards this park or if it was just from the park dedication. Public Works Director Carpenter explained that none of the \$25,000 went towards this park. He noted that the park dedication fees did pay for this. He added that the \$25,000 yearly budget is primarily for park maintenance. He noted that the City also applied for a grant through the DNR, which helped fund Siwek Park.

Wedan shared that she lives in this area and a lot of the other residents in the area were not happy with how long the process took for the park to be finished.

Shiffer asked Wedan if her neighbors are happy with the result of the park. Wedan said they are very happy with the park itself; however, they are not happy with the port-a-potty and they wish it were an actual toilet.

Carpenter explained that Siwek Park is an example of what they would like to do with all of the other parks in the City. He reviewed more of the history of the parks and why the Parks Commission has been re-banded.

C. Planning Strategies

Carpenter shared that the Council has decided that there will be a Parks Fund and there will be money dedicated every year for the parks. He presented six project ideas with the Commission for them to discuss what is the most important to them and give their input on the project ideas. He stated that the projects were turning the hockey rink at Community Park into something better than it is currently, a dog park at Community Park, replacing and upgrading Rum River Park, a bandshell at Community Park, a concession stand/Community Center in Community Park, and a splash pad in Community Park. He added that they are also going to be replanting over 100 trees in the parks.

Wedan noted one thing that the City is lacking is ADA parks. She said there is an ADA park in Linwood that would be perfect in St. Francis. She noted that people can have playground structures in their backyards; however, nowhere in the City has accessible parks.

Anderson noted that the population of the City is younger. She added that three people have told her that there is a need for community space in the City, as well as a need for programming. She shared that people have also asked her if there will be room for community spaces in the new City Hall Fire Station. Carpenter explained that one of the ideas is to have a Community Center and the idea would be to add it onto what they already have at Community Park and make it much better than it is currently.

Carpenter asked if they start with repairs or new projects. He asked the Commission to rank the six projects.

Shiffer shared concerns with a majority of the projects being for Community Park concerning the lack of available parking. Carpenter explained that there were two lots available for parking at Community Park.

Zutz noted that a Community Center seems to be outside of the realm of the Parks Commission and that it would fall more on the Council. He shared they needed to have a sense of focus on the parks.

Shiffer shared that she is looking at this from the realm of parks and recreation, not just parks. Wedan agreed.

Zutz asked about the bandshell idea. Carpenter shared this was brought up by a Councilmember and the idea behind it was that there could be movies or music in the park or other similar events.

The Commission discussed the project ideas and ranked the highest priority projects, starting with updating the hockey rink, then the dog park.

Anderson shared that she would be happy to bring these ideas to the Council so they can see and understand the needs in the parks.

6. MEMBER REPORTS

Anderson shared that she visited and walked around Smith Lake Park. She asked if Staff gets a plot layout if they will be bringing this to the Commission for comments. Carpenter said they will find this out.

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY: WEDAN SECOND: ZUTZ TO ADJOURN THE PARKS
COMMISSION MEETING.

Ayes: Anderson, Zutz, Shiffer, and Wedan
Nays: None

Chairwoman Anderson adjourned the meeting at 7:59 pm.

Jennifer Wida, City Clerk

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