

Chaska Park Board
Meeting Minutes
March 9th, 2021
Zoom

1. Call to Order

The March 9th meeting of the Chaska Park Board was called to order by Chair David Downs at 7:00 pm via Zoom.

2. Roll Call

Attendance via Zoom: David Downs, Jason Branch, Elizabeth Wynveen, Georgiann Keyport, Zach Saueressig

Absent: Ernesto Ruiz Gutierrez, Jalen Destin, Mary Monteith

Staff: Marshall Grange, Mike Tudor-IS assistance

3. Adopt Agenda

Motion by Wynveen, second by Keyport to adopt the March 9th, 2021 meeting Agenda.

Roll Call for Approval

4. Visitor Presentation

Tim Vossberg-Update on Hawks Ridge Trails

Vossberg thanked everyone on the Park Board for helping to get the Hawks Ridge trails built. Here tonight to give an update on the trails.

Volunteers-Was a challenge last summer, obviously due to Covid. We had to cut the trails a few times and keep the weeds down on the steep side, was tough to get done. July through October is the mountain bike season, so was hard to recruit help. Now we know, and come May-June, we will recruit more.

We had a couple of snowshoers out on the course during the winter to help try and flatten the trail for the fat bike riders. The bike board may need to talk about hiring a part-time "groomer" to get things done during the various seasons.

Safety-We had a couple injuries on the course last year, nothing very serious. We put a short cut in the beginning of the trail so if an injury, one can get off the trail quicker.

Trail usage-Due to Covid, and people wanting to be outside, we had heavy usage. There was youth, adults, and various types of riders out there at any given time. Thinking ahead, we may offer some

classes. We would like to try adult one and maybe even a women's group. Covid restrictions could delay some of that happening though with protocols still out there.

Site improvements-Last October, an Eagle Scout installed 3 benches for us throughout the trails. We also planted about 10 trees that were donated. Volunteers also did some tree trimming.

Future Projects-Cut a walking path on the upper side throughout the trails for walker safety. Maybe try to add a couple more picnic tables.

We really appreciate our partnership in Chaska. We continue to focus on the safety of our riders, right now the trails are a mess with snow.

Wynveen asked if it is possible to have a QVC code on the sign out on the track to click and donate to Hawks Ridge Trails, or a schedule to sign up to help with the care of the trails? Maybe post the information for the public to get involved. Vossberg shared that Wednesday nights are the nights we are usually out there working on things. We also post when we are out doing trail maintenance, asking for helpers. Wynveen, excited for a women's class!

Downs shared that he has heard some great things on this project. Wynveen, it is exciting to see new things added out there and the interest grow.

Grange-Thank you for your hard work over the last couple years trying to get this done, and to the board and all the volunteers who helped to make this happen. All of the work that went into this project, a lot of obstacles, but it paid off. We also can help with getting the word out there as well, just let us know when.

5. Approve Previous Meeting Minutes

5A. Motion by Wynveen, second by Branch to approve the Chaska Park Board meeting minutes of February 9th, 2021.

Roll Call for Approval

6. Receive Council and Planning Meeting Minutes

6A. Council Minutes January 25th

6B. Council Minutes February 1st.

7. Action Items

7A. Recommend Consulting Firm to Develop Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan

Grange brought the board up to speed on progress made surrounding this project since the last meeting.

Tonight, we will need to make a recommendation to the Council on a consultant to move this forward. I am excited about this project, this is capable due to the partnership with Carver County, and funding available via the SHIP grant. That agreement was approved by Council a couple months ago. This RFQ proposal was sent out to four entities. We got back two good proposals.

One was from Community Design Group, Antonio Rosell, in partnership with WSB and the other one was from HKGi.

Grange shared his feedback on the proposals, he is recommending Community Design Group/WSB and explained why. They have a vast amount of experience, plus advantageous to bring on WSB for the engineering background. WSB is currently actively working with Carver County on their Regional Trails Master Plan. They also assisted us with our pilot project when we designed the Orange and Green lines on the trails. The fact that the 6 E's approach was addressed in their proposal was good as well. That is ultimately the direction we are going, so by utilizing this approach it aligns nicely.

Lastly, the fee proposal, CDG came in lower. Both proposals initially came in overbudget. Grange asked both groups to reevaluate their proposals and to what degree that would impact their proposal. Hoisington would have needed to cut out a few items to bring their fees down. We do have to be mindful of the budget we have. So CDG was favored.

We are excited to embark on this project. Walkability and bikeability can provide a vibrance to our community. We already have a good start with the great trails we have. Therefore, Grange is recommending CDG. Grange opened meeting up for questions.

Keyport-Asked about the opportunity to inquire on additional funding opportunities via Carver County. Grange shared that Pat Stieg, from Carver County, mentioned that if additional funding needed is \$10,000 or more, they cannot help. But if the consultant can justify the \$5,000 difference, maybe Carver County could justify an increase. It was also suggested to work with the City to see if additional funds there.

Downs-Their approach to this is spot on. Their fees were on a not to exceed basis, so that is good, we do not want to jeopardize the quality of the plan. We want this done right. Maybe some of the staff can assist more than the contractor and save dollars.

Branch-I agree with you, his thoughts aligned. They have a lot of experience and being in the know with Carver County. \$10,000 is a lot of money, yes, but it is important to do this plan, to not get it done right would be a shame.

Wynveen-noticed with the "existing" review and analysis staff already has done, maybe they can utilize staff more for those other areas to help keep fees down. Grange, yes, as we get into this more, staff will help. Will see shifting hours, fees etc.

Downs-breakdown of hours in the categories, it is not a lot, so not really seeing any concern. If they can get down to \$45,000 seems doable.

Wynveen-With our goal of becoming a Bike Friendly city, this is going to help get us to meeting that criteria and goal. Also really like the focus on community engagement.

Grange-the recommendations that will have investments in the future also. Honing in on the engineering and the cost of infrastructure on-going and the prioritizing of that will be useful.

Motion by Saueressig, second by Keyport for Park Board to recommend to Council approval of Community Design Group/WSB as consultants for the Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan.

Roll Call, Branch, Keyport, Saueressig, Wynveen, Downs.

Grange will work to get this on the Council Agenda for next week. Then will work on finalizing the agreement with CDG. The April meeting will be with CDG as well as the Bike Friendly Steering committee. We will kick off the project and help to better understand the process and address any questions. Also, you will get to know the consultant from CDG, Antonio Rosell.

7B. Appoint Park Board Member to Serve on the Bicycle Friendly Community Committee

Liz Wynveen volunteered, Downs to backup. There will be monthly meetings with the existing committee members. There will also be the opportunity to get involved with the community engagement piece as well. You will be relied on to bring updates back to the board monthly.

8. Discussion Items

8A. Community Center Update

Grange shared recent updates:

He spoke to the recent recommendation from the Department of Health on the new variant. He got word of it this past Friday that there is confirmed cases here in Chaska, thus they are suggesting a two week pause on certain areas. He has spent a lot of time on this. He and Podhradsky had a meeting today with the schools and Carver County Public Health. He has gained some insight on where these outbreaks are occurring. The larger thing to share is that throughout the State thus far, there are 6 outbreaks. 5 of which are in Carver County. Of those, 4 of those 5 are in or at gyms or fitness centers, tied to the younger population. Which is why they are suggesting the pause on youth sports. It seems to be dominant in hockey and wrestling. Breakaway Academy as well as CCHA are impacted. This is the variant B117 from Europe. Where they have closed schools again and are in another lockdown. It is more severe as well as more contagious. It seems isolated to Carver County thus far, but the thought is it has spread already into other communities. A lot of our youth sports are traveling teams and playing in other communities. It is just a matter of time before it actively spreads.

The city's Emergency Operations Command (EOC) has followed the CDC recommendations through this pandemic. So, we are putting a pause on the components here that provide access to youth sports as suggested. Primarily, the arena, open gym, and open skate for youth. We also

asked Breakaway to pause their phy ed classes for now and notified the dance group to pause as well. This also applies at the curling center with the youth curling activities.

We will continue discussion with Carver County PH as far as the continued course of action. Anticipating this two-week pause, then an update next week on moving forward.

Grange, we all have Covid fatigue...Things were looking positive and at same time the vaccine is rolling out. Somehow, we have to put a stop to the new variant with this pause. We are doing our part, but we end up in difficult discussions and decisions. We had 2 options, do what we did, and pause things, which upset our user groups. Or we could have done nothing and put it on the user groups to do the right thing on their own and pause. But that was not going to happen. Some said they would go to other facilities to continue playing. If we had stayed open for them, it would spread more and create more outbreaks, which would put us in a bad light as well. It is important we be consistent as we have all along with the CDC, PH, and the school district. We all have to work together on this. We are doing the best we can.

Downs-it is the right thing to do. No one should question things. Saueressig you guys are doing a great job. Grange, we have had financial hits already from this, now another pause, losing revenue again. It also is difficult to explain to others when it is the Dept. of Health's directive. It should have been a mandate. When it is a recommendation, it can be interpreted differently by others. With user groups going elsewhere to play that does not help either. From a community health perspective, it only works if all are a part of this.

We will see over the next couple weeks what happens. Saueressig, what is the public's feedback and perspective on this? Grange, our members appreciate us following the recommendations. The hockey groups were disappointed. Breakaway hockey is a lease tenant; they were not happy. By not offering a space for their phy ed class, it was a challenge for them. Phy Ed is different than a sport but both are activities, and both were part of the CDC's and PH recommendation.

Keyport-how do we come to the end of this recommendation? Team testing? Taking temps? How does it come to an end? Grange, great question. Additional testing sites were opened, recommending youth get tested frequently, weekly. But not sure on what the criteria is to stop the pause. Even though our members are supportive of us, we have had member cancellations again. So here we are again, do we refund or not...Downs, rather than refund, can you extend memberships? Yes, that is what we did last time. Wynveen, so no one can use these areas? Or are some still allowed? Adults can still be in these activities and classes are still running. It is just a pause for youth group activities and arena sports. They can still come in and do cardio and weights as equipment is spread out. It did also impact our group daily fitness classes. Our lease tenants, Breakaway Academy, Alphabet Junction, the Arts and Treks/Trails are all still operating. We will see what happens with recommendations next week.

On a happier note, the Community Center had their 30-year anniversary on Feb. 19th. We held a 30% off membership sale on annuals, 230 were sold. A great turnout and was very encouraging for staff to see! It was a hectic day, they sold almost 15 memberships per hour! Kudos to the staff, as were very busy that day. This was a good response; the message is people are feeling

ready to come back. We still have a long road to go but this was a big success. It really lifted the staff's spirits!

CCC Master Plan-still working on putting the RFP together. It will take some time. Behind the scenes we are working with Baker Tilly on establishing baselines for the true cost to operate the facility i.e., cost per square foot, allocation of costs, putting a definition to the various programming that occurs, which programs should be tied to the CCC budget and which should be tied to the recreation program budget, which is a general fund budget. The majority are currently funneling through the CCC budget which has been a burden, especially being an enterprise fund. Also having conversations on reallocating program costs and/or splitting costs. As shared before, currently on average we spend around \$30 per capita for recreation programs vs. other cities having more like a \$130 per capita. We will continue to work and move forward on this so when we hire the consultant some of this background data is done and in place for them to review to help them move this forward.

Arts-Work has been happening with the Arts Consortium behind the scenes to get financial pieces set up. System work for the financials and programming. We also set up spreadsheets for tracking expenses and financial costs to help determine the net and 50/50 split. Thanks also to the staff for their help with this, it took a lot of time.

We are also starting to see some programming come out. Currently they are offering a free empowerment program aimed at bringing the community together and getting to know each other. Take a look at it online. Their new exhibit just went up as well, so come in and check it out!

8B. Curling and Event Center Update

Curling leagues are going strong, currently are finishing up Winter 2 leagues. Playoffs start April 5th. The Curling Center recently hosted a big fundraising event, was exciting to see that gathering occur. Krista is also starting to see more interest in Event Center rentals, as well as more interest in Corporate Events. They are calling, so hoping to see more movement there as well as in the Crooked Pint.

8C. Recreation Program Update

You will start to see some activities happening in the Lodge. We are hoping with most of the senior's getting vaccinated and the recent message out from the CDC that seniors who are fully vaccinated can come together without masks (?). We will hear more from the Governor on that. Will be good to see folks gathering in there, it has been closed since the beginning of all this. The socialization and resuming of activities for them is huge.

Fire and Ice-This typically occurs in July, however, this year we are moving it to Oct. 15-17th. This is one of the last available dates in the Event Center, we feel good about it that it will be further out and still hopefully have good weather. We had a kickoff meeting last week, a highlight for

this year, we will partner with the fire department as they are celebrating their 150th anniversary this year. More to come!

Recreation program staff are working hard on putting summer programming together. Also wanted to mention that the full-time staff are all still working the front desk of the CCC, this is to help minimize the hit to the CCC budget. Not many of our part-time staff have been recalled yet. There are lots of shifts up there to cover. As we grow membership moving forward, conversations on how we decide to call back the part time staff will occur.

8D. Capital Improvement Project Update

Saueressig, shared that he noticed lots of work happening at Lake Grace on brush and tree removal. The size of the big tree that was removed, was incredible. Jung shared with Grange that they had to go old school with removal, they climbed up the tree and cut off bit by bit. There are a few more areas to do additional removal. The bridge is currently being built off site. With road restrictions in place, we will see when that is lifted to move forward. Still targeting a June completion.

Cortina Woods Neighborhood Park

As shared last month, we will be working on a park renovation there this year. We submitted an informational letter and survey to the neighborhood. It was also posted on-line. We got a good response, 56 households. The deadline was yesterday, Grange shared some of the initial data. In general, 54% of those responding use the park 2 times a month, the other 50% use it weekly to some degree. The interesting thing I was surprised by, the 17.8% that never use the park, that they even responded. A lot to think about with that response.

Some common themes: get rid of the pea rock and provide shade as well as additional picnic tables. We also gave them some examples of what we typically put in parks, along with some new ideas, i.e., concrete back toss, concrete ping pong. We are trying to aim at increasing adult/senior usage in the park as well, so asking what they would like to see. We will be following up with Public Works on the responses soon and moving forward with a consultant to design a couple drawings. We are anticipating a public meeting at the park in May, then come to some conclusions and build out in September.

Keyport-suggested the idea of community gardens to bring youth and adults together. Discussions pursued on water sources. Sometimes communities can gather and bring water, rainwater collection, or set up a feeder to the swamp. More discussion would need to come on that.

8E. Park Board Applicants

We did receive 3 more applications; Council will interview next week. They should be able to interview and appoint them that same night. We could have 3 new members come on next month. We will keep you posted on this.

9. Other Business

9A. Board Reports

Wynveen-Question on timeline for the spring/summer activities program mailer. Grange explained that staff are still working on it. Up to this point, we have been programming month to month. Now we are going out a bit further with a summer package. We also are shifting how we will be doing the activity guide; in the past we have hired it out. This has been a significant cost to do, including the cost to mail. Covid presented an opportunity to bring in house, a couple staff who have a passion for this kind of thing are willing to take it on. We intend to print them but will not mail them, we will have designated locations throughout the community to pick one up. We may send out a simple post card sharing that they are out and where to find them. Another one of our cost reduction strategies. Most of the programming should be out end of March/Early April.

10. Adjourn

Motion by Saueressig, 2nd by Branch

Roll Call by Downs