

**CITY OF PARK RAPIDS  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
AUGUST 27, 2013, 6:00 PM  
Park Rapids Public Library-Lower Level  
Park Rapids, Minnesota**

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** The August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Regular Meeting of the Park Rapids City Council was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Acting Mayor Paul Utke, and everyone present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. ROLL CALL:** Present: Acting Mayor Paul Utke, Councilmembers Dave Konshok, Rod Nordberg, and Erika Randall. Absent: Mayor Pat Mikesh. Staff Present: Administrator John McKinney, Treasurer Angela Brumbaugh, Facilities Maintenance Superintendent Chris Fieldsend, Planner Dan Walker, Planning Intern Forrest Steinhoff, Police Chief Terry Eilers, and Clerk Margie Vik. Others Present: Dick Rutherford, Denise Jokela, and Anna Erickson from the Enterprise.

**3. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** A motion was made by Nordberg, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the agenda as presented.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

**4.1. City Council Regular Meeting Minutes-August 13, 2013:** A motion was made by Randall, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to approve the August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2013 City Council Regular Meeting minutes as presented.

**5. FINANCE:**

**5.1. Payables & Prepays:** A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Randall, and unanimously carried to approve the payables in the amount of \$38,400.88, and the prepays in the amount of \$259,463.08, for a total of \$297,863.96.

**6. CONSENT AGENDA:** A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to approve the following consent agenda items:

- 6.1. Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$6,176.03 for RKD Construction, Gary Nicklason, and Ackerman Plumbing for Services Associated with the Small Cities Development Program Grant.

- 6.2. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$5,634.55 for TKDA for Professional Services Associated with the Runway Design Part II for the Park Rapids Municipal Airport.**
- 6.3. **Approve Purchase Order in the Amount of \$4,174.59 for Replacement Tires on City Equipment from Girtz Tire and Implement.**
- 6.4. **Approve Credit in the Amount of \$519.10 for James T. Nelson at 410 Washington Avenue South for the Excess Sewer Charges for the 2013 First and Second Quarter Utility Billing.**
- 6.5. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$2,918.00 for Leggette, Brashears, & Graham for a Ground Water Study Pertaining to the Water Treatment Facility.**
- 6.6. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$22,026.43 for Ulteig Engineers for Professional Services for Various Projects in the City.**
- 6.7. **Approve Pay Request in the Amount of \$1,377.46 for Rosenbauer South Dakota LLC to Repair Damage to a Fire Truck.**
- 6.8. **Resolution #2013-135 Authorizing the Proper City Officials to Execute the Contract Addendum with Headwaters Regional Commission for the City of Park Rapids.**
- 6.9. **Resolution #2013-136 Approving Wage Adjustment and Step Increase for Park Rapids Police Officer Daniel Garner.**
- 6.10. **Resolution #2013-137 Approval of New On-Sale/Sunday Liquor License for Northern Renaissance LLC d.b.a. Necce's Ristorante in the City of Park Rapids.**

**END OF CONSENT AGENDA**

**7. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS:** Denese Jokela thanked the Council for approving her liquor license.

**8. PLANNING:**

**8.1. Parks Survey Presentation:** Forrest Steinhoff stated I worked as the planning intern this summer. I'm hoping to pursue a career in city planning in the near future. This will be my last year for my undergrad at the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Nordberg questioned any surprises in Park Rapids this summer for you? Steinhoff stated not too many. I live in Nevis. Before we moved here my grandparents have had a cabin up here for years. This has always been like a second home in the summer.

Steinhoff stated the in-person surveys were conducted from July 1<sup>st</sup> until the 31<sup>st</sup>. I stayed in each park for a minimum of thirty minutes each time. Sometimes I circled back around once I got done with all of the parks, and I'd hit the more popular ones again, like Depot and Red Bridge. For the on-line survey we used Esurveycreator.com. That one was opened August 1<sup>st</sup> and it will be open until the 31<sup>st</sup>. We used the Park Rapids Enterprise to inform the public about the on-line survey.

Steinhoff stated for the in-park survey we were able to survey seventy participants. It was mainly used for demographic information and statistics for park users. The questions included, what makes you want to visit a park, why specifically, how often, the time of day you come, where they are from, if they have children, what other parks they like to visit, what would enhance all of the parks, and open ended questions where people could say whatever they wanted. If they couldn't think of anything we had a prompt to help them along.

Steinhoff stated the majority of the people visiting the parks are from Park Rapids. The parks also receive visitors from greater Minnesota. Out of the seventy participants we had forty-two that were from Park Rapids. The people that were from greater Minnesota come from all over to spend time in the lake country, and also spend time in the city parks. Some are coming for specific reasons such as the Heartland Trail. While others are just visiting for their children and some for relaxing. Nordberg questioned when you say from Park Rapids, were they really from within the city, or from Hubbard County or Nevis? Steinhoff stated most people when I asked said if they were from Menahga or Walker. Nordberg questioned and they show up on the survey as greater Minnesota? Steinhoff answered yes. They are under the zero to fifty mile category.

Steinhoff stated most of the under eighteen children were young and they were with their parents so I didn't interview them. Some were older and the only ones in the park, and some wanted to be interviewed with their parents. Eighteen to twenty-nine year olds are the least likely to visit the parks, as they may have moved for college or they are working one or more jobs to pay for school, rent, or other bills that they might have. The largest age range was thirty to forty, which suggests that those people are probably parents of young children and they are going to the parks specifically. The fifty and sixty and the sixty-plus year olds are taking their grandchildren out to the parks, or to sit in the shade and have lunch.

Steinhoff stated the biggest reason the people are visiting the parks is because of the equipment. Relaxation and the scenery came in as the second reason, suggesting that while the kids are out having fun the parents are sitting back and taking some time to relax. Most of the people that were visiting Dean Pointe Park were there because the lake is right there. A lot of people in that park said that their cabin was very close and they'd walk down there on a daily basis. Having lunch, picnicking, and fishing are another big feature. One thing that was curious to note, of all the people that said they were having lunch, none of them were using the picnic shelter. They were sitting on the benches or the picnic tables by the lake.

Steinhoff stated the biggest reason people visit Depot Park is for the equipment. The tennis courts are also a huge draw. Every day I was there, there were always two or

four people out playing. A few of the parents at Depot Park felt that the park was the most age appropriate for their children. They had found some drug paraphilia and alcohol containers at Heartland Park, and so they didn't want to bring their children there. They also mentioned that Lindquist Park had some inappropriate graffiti on some of the slides. So they were sticking mainly to Depot Park. Konshok questioned did that information get passed on? Walker stated this is the first that I've heard of it.

Konshok questioned your graph references a referral? What is that? Steinhoff stated there was an older couple that was visiting from Willmar. They had stopped into Hugo's to pick up some lunch. They had asked where a good park was to sit and relax. The clerk mentioned that Depot Park was close and that it was a nice, relaxing park.

Steinhoff stated I only visited Heartland Park once because it's a county park and not a city park. It was quiet in all the other parks and Heartland was hopping with people that day. One of the reasons that Heartland is so popular is that it's easy to walk to, which with the Heartland Trail going right through it. It's familiar to everyone because it's gotten a lot of publicity. The kids love the equipment there.

Steinhoff stated when visiting Lindquist Park there never were a lot of people there on the days that I visited. I was only able to interview three people. Each time I got something different from them.

Steinhoff stated in Red Bridge Park I got a whole lot of different reasons for the people to be there. The biggest one was the scenery. The conclusion I came to that the park is mostly for relaxation for older people who just want to eat lunch in the shade, or to read a book. The Heartland Trail runs right through it, and the extension that will continue through it was another big factor. The water fowl is a big draw for the parents with younger children because they can take bread and feed them.

Steinhoff stated I think Rice Park should be renamed to Fish Park. It's mostly a clean slate there. Konshok questioned that's because people are going to the DNR pier at the dam to fish? Steinhoff answered yes. Most people said they were content with the parks that they were visiting. 31% of them said they didn't visit any other. That number could be a little off because I did factor in the out of town and out of state people in there. Heartland Park is the clear favorite, following by Depot Park. Red Bridge Park was never mentioned as a park that anybody goes to. I was wondering if there was enough of a distinction between Heartland and Red Bridge.

Steinhoff stated the greatest wish from the users of the parks is more drinking fountains. However, if we lump water equipment and regular equipment together then it becomes the most desired. A lot of people said the beaches are okay, but that they'd like something that the kids can jump off of or slide into. With the fixed up and cleaner section there were a couple of people in Rice Park that wanted to see the weeds cleared out from under the dam. They also mentioned they wanted to see a little more fishing regulation going on over there. They witnessed some people breaking the regulations a couple of times. A couple of people said they saw kids racing cars around Heartland Park and they wished for lower speed limits. They were concerned for their kids. Each park has its own draw. Deane Park has its water access. Depot Park has its special theme which both parents and kids enjoy. Heartland Park has parent approval and with the Heartland Trail running by it makes it convenient to walk to. Lindquist Park has a great playground and it's shaded. Red Bridge is a great place for relaxation and feeding birds. Rice Park is a great

fishing spot. Water equipment, drinking fountains, tables and seating areas are in high demand.

Steinhoff stated regarding the on-line survey, as of today we had twenty-four participants with four days left. Not all of the participants have finished taking the survey. The survey is designed to gauge satisfaction as to what the park could use. The questions included, how would you rate the quality of all the parks in general and then each individual park, what amenities and beautification would you like to see added, are there enough recreational activities year round, what does the city do well, what keeps them from visiting the parks, and a few other demographic questions.

Steinhoff stated most people rated the park a 4 in overall satisfaction, on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being excellent. They rated the parks at 3.71 out of 5. For each individual park, Deane Park was 3.8, Depot 4.57, Lindquist 4.26, Pioneer 3.74, Red Bridge 3.61, Rice 3.52, and Wayside Rest at 4.35. The things that people were looking for, a lot of it was similar to the in person surveys, bathrooms and picnic shelters were top priorities. Electricity and water were a lot lower. Maybe it was because the water wasn't advertised as drinking fountains. Some people wanted more parking for some of the parks. People said the top answer to how to make the parks more beautiful was we need more trees and flowers, suggesting that people would like more shady areas as well as bringing in some additional color. To satisfy some of the trails maybe you could use things such as pavers that would go through a designated flower garden. Art and sculpture wasn't too high of an importance. But it could be used to give each park its own individual character.

Steinhoff stated the majority of the people surveyed did not know that the city has a Parks & Trails Master Plan. With recreation, they felt there weren't enough recreational opportunities around. But with recreational opportunities it could go many ways, whether it's summer, winter, or through sports that community members could participate in, or they want more fishing piers or snowmobile trails. People are being kept out of the parks just because of a lack of time. Aside from that, it's lacking equipment. They feel the parks are a little bit rundown, or there's not enough to do, or there's little interest in them. Depot Park has playgrounds, tennis and basketball courts, which many of the other city parks don't have, so maybe that's one of the reasons that Depot Park gets so many more people than any of the other parks. Heartland Park has many swimmers and some were jumping off the old train trestle. But Red Bridge Park didn't have any swimmers in it even though the lake and river are right there. A couple of the other reasons that people weren't visiting were limited number of parking spots. The city does well in keeping the lawns really well maintained, as well as building maintenance. But they felt that you could do better in recreational opportunities and for the 4% other, it was just keeping the parks clean and litter free.

Steinhoff stated the age of the participants took a little shift, from thirty to forty year olds being the biggest category being surveyed, to forty to fifty year olds being surveyed. We also saw another shift for the number of children. Most people doing the on line survey did not have children at home. For the ones that did they were consistent with 17% and 33% for the ages. Most people believe parks are a 3.71 out of a 5. Red Bridge and Rice Park were the only ones that fell above the average. Deane and Pioneer were just above that. The main concern would be more bathrooms. More vegetation such as trees and flowers would be appreciated. The city provides excellent maintenance in the parks but lacks recreation and sporting opportunities.

Steinhoff stated some of the comments from the people on line include, water activities such as driving platforms would be nice, better signage, more community access and use of ballpark, help for Rice Park or some other east side park, other than Heartland Park. Please consider a public restroom. We take our grandchildren to the parks with playground equipment. It's nice they enjoy what's available. They enjoy eating at the parks and reading a book. However they see a number of cars parked doing the exact same thing and they are always in their cars, never out in the parks. Sometimes it's due to limited seating. They suggested a fund where they could perhaps purchase a bench or a table in memory of a loved one. We also had a worker from an out-state parks and rec job think the city is doing a great job with them. In conclusion, overall people are satisfied with the parks. With a few additional updates like bathrooms, drinking fountains, seating, and water equipment would satisfy most. Others are looking for more beautification from trees and flowers. The parks have their own distinct identity to them. Ninety-four people were surveyed overall.

Nordberg stated this was very valuable information. Will the Park Board see this information? Walker stated we'll present the information to the Board, unfortunately Steinhoff won't be able to present it as he will be back in college. They do already have access to the information.

Konshok questioned which wayside rest area were you referring to? Walker stated the one on Highway 71 North, the DNR wayside. McKinney questioned there's not much discussion about Pioneer Park, was that included in your survey? Steinhoff stated not in the original one. We did include it on the on-line survey to see what people are thinking about it. Nordberg questioned what about the ball park, isn't that city owned? Steinhoff stated we left that out. We felt that they were updated enough not too long ago. They are fine the way they are. Walker stated the Softball Association takes the lead on the recreation out there. We had done a survey out there and most of the stuff was up to date, also most of the things that have been identified have been completed. It's one of the things that we'd like to see from the Softball Association, if they have requests they would work with the city on them.

Dick Rutherford stated the Lions Club has a drinking fountain that was taken out of the Riverside Park. They'd like to put that in Pioneer Park. What would be wrong with that? Would there be any objection to it? Utke stated I wouldn't think so. That would go to the Parks Board to start that process. Konshok agreed. He added the only issue would be getting the water to it. If you want to pass that on to them. It was removed because of the Highway 34 Project. By all means, bring it back, if not in Pioneer Park we could find a spot for it. Nordberg questioned is there anything left in that park (Riverside)? Rutherford stated there's nothing in there now. Fieldsend stated it's only used for docking/beaching boats.

Utke thanked Steinhoff for working with us this summer and good luck with your final year of college. Steinhoff stated it's been a fun summer.

**8.2. Resolution Approving the Purchase of Real Property in Park Rapids, Minnesota, and Dispensing with Review of the Purchase by the Park Rapids Planning Commission:** McKinney stated this is routine and consistent with what we've talked about before regarding the acquisition of right of way (for the Heartland Trail Extension). Randall questioned is this where the tree has already been removed? Utke answered yes. **A motion was made by Nordberg, seconded by Konshok, to approve**

**Resolution #2013-138 Approving the Purchase of Real Property in Park Rapids, Minnesota, and Dispensing with Review of the Purchase by the Park Rapids Planning Commission.**

**Discussion:** Konshok questioned were there any changes to what was presented previously? \$8,000.00 is the easement price, and any other conditions? Walker stated it's all in the purchase agreement agreed upon by the association.

Dick Rutherford questioned what would happen if that didn't go through? We're jogging around the beach house, couldn't we have gone someplace else instead of cutting down a two-hundred year old tree? Nobody knew about this ahead of time until it was already cut down. Why is this kept such a secret?

Utke stated actually it isn't. Dan Walker put together the history of this. Walker stated this goes back to when we were initially talking about the utility project. We talked about the need for removing the tree because of the root intrusion into the trunk sewer line. That was part of it. Also during the discussion of the realignment of the trail, because of the spacing that the DNR needs, they needed the additional right of way. We're dealing with a really tight corridor. This was the option that was accepted by the public in the meetings that we had, and also it was accepted by the condo association who actually owned half of the tree. It was their preference that the tree be removed, obviously for liability issues. This isn't new. This has been discussed from the very beginning.

Utke stated I'm looking here and it talks about the public meetings. I didn't attend those but that topic was brought up a number of times in those meetings? Walker stated absolutely. It was one of the issues that the tree was going to be removed. We felt there was going to be some public concerns about it. Throughout the entire process, through environmental assessments, through the public meetings, it was brought out that this was such an important piece. Everybody understands that this is a big deal. Utke stated I didn't attend them (the meetings), but I learned today that it was brought out throughout a number of these public meetings. I've had people stop me and say "what went on". This was discussed at the meetings.

Walker stated we discussed a number of alternatives too. But there was a very tight corridor that we were trying to fit through. If it was my preference the tree would still be there. But it was part of the cause/benefit to the entire project. Nordberg stated then you would have had to shut down Beach Road. Walker stated that's right. That was discussed with all of the adjacent property owners. Their preference was that there would be two-way traffic on the roadway.

Randall stated I too got asked about this tree. There was a rumor that the governor got involved and made a call. Is there any truth to that? Walker stated I didn't get any calls.

Konshok stated we'll probably see the same thing when the Red Bridge itself is moved. We've done our due diligence, in fact we've gone above and beyond to inform the public. But when the actual act happens, when the tree comes down, or when the bridge gets moved, we're still going to have a lot of people express surprise despite our best efforts. We identified early on the areas of concern were the tree, the beach house, and the Red Bridge. Those are public interest items. We've looked at it six ways, or there really isn't an option on this. It's a very tight corridor, plus the tree is causing damage to the utility systems not to mention the effect it's having on the beach house foundation.

**The vote was called. The motion carried unanimously.**

**9. CITY ADMINISTRATOR UPDATE:** McKinney stated on the 5<sup>th</sup> of September the Personnel Committee will meet for the first time with the negotiators for the Teamsters Union. The budget has to be approved by the 15<sup>th</sup> of September. The CIP will be presented at the second meeting in September. If you have any CIP items that you haven't turned in, please do so. Utke questioned will the budget discussion be during the regular meeting? McKinney stated we'll schedule a workshop at 5:00 p.m.

**10. DEPARTMENT HEAD UPDATES:** Walker thanked Steinhoff for his work this summer. We appreciate what he did and wish him well.

Eilers stated the bidding will close at 4:30 p.m. tomorrow for the used cars. There are twenty-two vehicles up for bids.

Fieldsend stated they started removing the trees from the airport property for the new runway. We have had some complaints about watering the trees. We have been watering the trees for about two weeks. The young trees first, and now everything on the boulevard has been done.

**11. MINUTES/REPORTS/INFORMATION:** There were no comments.

**12. COMMENTS FROM COUNCIL:** Konshok thanked Steinhoff for interning this summer. He did an outstanding job. He fit right in. Hopefully can we get something in writing to him for his portfolio. I think he has a bright future as a city planner. I want to thank him for the help in the parks. I'd like to encourage Walker to get this every summer. There's always stuff in the parks that we're interested in doing. We have a lot of active interest but it's a matter of time available. Walker is over tasked. It would be a good thing to keep it going with some interns.

Konshok questioned there was a special Park Board meeting last night? Walker stated we discussed capital improvements for Red Bridge Park for next year. We'll put placeholders for the out years. Then we'll work on getting more specific. There's a lot of work to be done there. We're trying to keep the meetings short to keep people's attention rather than trying to chew it all down at once. We have a lot of catching up to do. They are energetic about the process.

Konshok questioned do we have any updates on the airport? McKinney stated we have a meeting tomorrow on the hanger leases. We haven't heard anything from TKDA on the construction project.

Nordberg stated I want to thank the staff that dealt with the complaints from citizens regarding the tree watering. Thanks to the Enterprise for helping us get out the word that citizens are responsible for the boulevard trees. People don't realize their responsibilities and we can do a better job of letting them know somehow, possibly by putting it on the water bill.

Nordberg stated on September 18<sup>th</sup> there will be a bus tour of twenty-one state representatives coming to Park Rapids to see if we're eligible for inclusion in the state bonding bill in 2014 for the armory. There's a group working with it, one of the development commissions, to make the legislators feel welcome and see a need. They have thirty minutes to get off the bus and get back on. Everyone is invited. It's not a private event. There will be arts organizations that would be involved with the armory.

Nordberg stated if things go as planned for me I'll miss the next City Council meeting. Utke stated we watched the SDG project progress and it will open for business soon. It's a great addition to our town. The open house is on Thursday.

McKinney stated for the Council's information, at the last meeting, Dave Wilkins came in to talk about his water and sewer bill. He met with Scott Burlingame. They worked out a solution. Wilkins paid his bill. He was grateful for the help that he received. The issue has been resolved.

**13. ADJOURNMENT: A motion was made by Konshok, seconded by Nordberg, and unanimously carried to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.**

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Acting Mayor Paul Utke

ATTEST:

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Margie M. Vik  
City Clerk