City of Birmingham
Parks And Recreation Board Meeting Minutes
April 1, 2025, 6:30 p.m.
851 South Eton - Conference Room

I. Call To Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Roll Call

Present: Chair Heather Carmona, Vice Chair Pam Graham; Board Members Susan Collins, Anne Lipp, Steve Sweeney; Alternate Board Member Joseph Wrobel; Student Board Member Abigail Murphy

Absent: Board Members Jessica Einstein, Sarah Kupczyk; Alternate Board Member Narlu Castellano; Student Board Member Jack Bassett

Staff: Department of Public Services Director Zielinski; City Planner Blizinski (arrived 6:52 p.m.), Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent Folk, Parks and Recreation Manager Laird, Parks and Recreation Foreman McNab

Guests: Jill Kahler

III. Announcements, Introductions Of Guests & Chairperson Comments

1. **Congratulations to Birmingham Varsity Figure Skating "A" Team**
2. **Ad Hoc Senior/Recreation Center Committee (SCC) - Update**

VC Graham and staff provided the update and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- It would be beneficial if visitors to St. James Park would have access to the bathrooms inside 400 E. Lincoln. This would mean the Parks Department would not have to pay to install bathrooms in St. James Park.
- The planned pickleball courts and community hours at 400 E. Lincoln will be welcome community benefits.
- If some of the parking for 400 E. Lincoln encroaches into St. James Park, it might be possible to request that St. James Park and 400 E. Lincoln share improvements to both sites' stormwater infrastructure.
- The summer camp area might also be able to have a covered pavilion.
- VC Graham and the SCC have been doing a great job.
- The potential changes at 400 E. Lincoln and St. James Park largely align with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.
- Since 400 E. Lincoln and St. James Park may come to form a sort of community 'hub', it may be appropriate for the Board to consider St. James Park a community park rather than a neighborhood park and to plan updates accordingly.
- The Board should evaluate the best potential uses for St. James Park.
- Next will be bringing its outdoor fitness equipment to 400 E. Lincoln.
- An outdoor walking path that could be accessed by visitors to 400 E. Lincoln and the community at large would be beneficial.
- Allowing the parking for 400 E. Lincoln to encroach 42 feet into St. James Park seemed worthwhile if the outcome would be the creation of a community asset at 400 E. Lincoln.

- Allowing this would also likely encourage increased programming and use of St. James Park.
- If St. James Park had originally been missing the proposed encroachment, the Board would still likely have been able to find productive uses for the park.
- It is appropriate that the Board is considering how it can best promote the interests of the community at St. James Park and through collaboration with the project at 400 E. Lincoln.
- The YMCA intends to require all visitors to 400 E. Lincoln to show identification before entry. If the bathrooms within 400 E. Lincoln are located beyond the front desk, then visitors to St. James Park seeking access to the bathrooms at 400 E. Lincoln would also have to show identification for entry to the building.
- There should be smaller restrooms near the entryway to 400 E. Lincoln which are separate from the locker room facilities.
- While the preservation of green space is a high priority, allowing the parking to encroach the proposed amount into St. James Park would be worthwhile if visitors to St. James Park would gain access to easily accessible bathrooms within 400 E. Lincoln and to the outdoor walking trail.
- It would also be easier to justify allowing the parking to encroach into St. James Park if there were a green roof for the facility at 400 E. Lincoln.
- The bathrooms should accommodate St. James Park visitors' wide range of ages and abilities.

IV. Open To The Public For Items Not On The Agenda

V. Approval Of The Minutes - March 4, 2025

Motion by Lipp
Seconded by Collins to approve the minutes as submitted in our packet.

Motion carried, 6-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Sweeney, Wrobel, Collins, Carmona, Graham, Lipp
Nays: None

VI. Unfinished Business

1. Playground Design Services Recommendation

Staff presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- The proposed playground equipment supplier offered aesthetic variety with interchangeable technical aspects. This would allow neighborhood parks to personalize the 'feel' of each park while allowing for easier repairs and maintenance across the park system.
- Some other amenities that could be considered are benches, shade, and landscaping for playground visitors.

Motion by Lipp
Seconded by Collins to support City staff's recommendation to secure playground services with Penchura, LLC.

Board members raised the following points during discussion on the motion:

- Penchura, LLC is a local company that operates with good lead times, and offers good costs, warranties, and scope of services.
- Landscaping and some other potential amenities could be bid out separately from this agreement.

Motion carried, 6-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Sweeney, Wrobel, Collins, Carmona, Graham, Lipp
Nays: None

2. Playground Planning Dates

Staff presented the flyers informing residents about the upcoming dates. Board members reported enthusiasm from residents about the process.

3. Birmingham Well Sites Designations As Parks

The Chair introduced the item and staff answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following point during discussion:

- When the playground planning meetings occur for particular well sites, the prospect of renaming those well sites could be discussed at those meetings as well.

Public Comment
Ms. Kahler commented regarding changing Derby Well Site from a well site to a park.

VII. New Business

1. Adams Park Playground Surfacing

Staff presented the item and answered informational questions from the Board.

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- The rubber surface offers maintenance costs savings over wood chips. The presentation to the Commission should emphasize the fiscal responsibility of these proposed changes in addition to the accessibility improvements.
- It would also be a draw that children playing at parks with these surfaces would become less muddy or dirty than they do when visiting parks with woodchip and soil surfaces.
- The surface is also safer in terms of physical impact.
- One of the lighter colors would trap heat less and should be used.

Motion by Lipp
Seconded by Graham to request City staff seek approval for the purchase of a pour-in-place rubber surface over a concrete base by Michigan Recreational Construction, with the specific beige color to be at staff discretion.

Board members raised the following points during discussion on the motion:

- If a concrete foundation will enhance the longevity of the rubber surface, concrete foundations should be used in this case and beneath other rubber surfaces in City parks in the future.

Motion carried, 6-0.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Sweeney, Wrobel, Collins, Carmona, Graham, Lipp
Nays: None

2. **Proposed Change to Parks and Recreation Board Meeting**

Board members raised the following points during discussion:

- Moving the meetings to 6 p.m. could affect whether those who work during business hours could serve on the Board or attend to give public comment.
- It may also impact vendors' availability.
- Staff's attendance at the meetings is appreciated.
- It might be useful to change the timing of the meetings occasionally.
- This item should be tabled until more Board members are present, since the Board members who raised it were absent.
- It may not be necessary to table this item, since the Board members who requested the change were aware it was on the agenda and did not request the postponement of the item.

Motion by Lipp
Seconded by Wrobel to table it.

Motion carried, 5-1.

ROLL CALL VOTE
Yeas: Sweeney, Wrobel, Carmona, Graham, Lipp
Nays: Collins

VIII. Miscellaneous Communications

Communications can be found in the evening's agenda packet.

IX. Reports From Staff

Staff noted the reports.

1. **GEPS (Groundwater Energy Passive System) Update**
2. **Parks and Recreation Guide**

X. Items For Next Meeting

XI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Connie Folk, Ice Arena and Facilities Superintendent

Laura Eichenhorn, City Transcriptionist