

Clayton Parks & Recreation Commission Meeting
Monday, August 5, 2024

Commission Members Present: Ben Beinfeld, Karen Berry-Elbert, Susan Buse, Paul Courter, Jim Craig, Matt Durham, Leo Human, Betsy Meyland Smith, Adam Weygandt, Jeff Yorg

Staff Present: Valerie Egel, Doris Patzius, Toni Siering, Justin Whipple

Meeting called to Order at 7:00 pm.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the June meeting were approved as written.

Addresses from the Audience:

No comments from the audience.

Urban Night Sky Places:

Deb Grossman, Chair of the Sustainability Committee for the City of Clayton, and Cate Young, Washington University intern, provided a presentation on the Urban Night Sky Place Certification for Oak Knoll Park and Shaw Park.

DarkSky International is a global authority on light pollution with a mission to restore the nighttime environment and protect communities and wildlife. They carry out this mission through four different project areas, one of these project areas is International DarkSky Places, which recognizes parks. DarkSky International certifies International Dark Sky Places as protected areas and communities that meet strict criteria for protecting the night sky and reducing light pollution.

Through the International DarkSky Places program, parks are recognized for their efforts to educate the public about light pollution and take steps to mitigate it. Light pollution has significantly worsened in recent decades, leading to detrimental effects on migration patterns of wildlife and contributing to the decline in insect populations. Addressing light pollution not only has environmental benefits but also saves energy and money, with an estimated \$2.2 billion wasted from streetlights alone.

The DarkSky designation aims to make our parks safer by setting parameters for our lights to reduce glare and be useful, targeted, and at a low level. It's important to control the lights with motion sensors or timers, use warm-colored lights, and shield them to promote better sleep quality and overall health.

The Sustainability Committee is planning to create Urban Night Sky Places - urban sites that promote authentic nighttime experiences despite having large amounts of artificial light. Shaw Park and Oak Knoll Park in Clayton are being considered for approval as Urban Night Sky places.

The Committee aims to complete the pre-application process for the Night Sky certification and submit the full application with letters of support. The pre-application process is completed and awaiting approval, while work on the full application is in progress. The full application process includes letters of support, maps of area, evidence of eligibility, a public access policy, a lighting inventory, a lighting management plan, sky quality measurements, and public outreach and education.

A motion to support the application for Shaw Park and Oak Knoll Park as Urban Night Sky Places was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

Director's Report:

Lifeguard Update: Toni Siering, Director of Parks and Recreation stated that according to MPM, the current number of lifeguards is in the 60s, which is half of what they would consider fully staffed. There were reports of some algae in the Shaw Park Aquatic Center pool. MPM did address the issue, and it has almost disappeared.

Capital Project Update: Ms. Siering stated that the renovations of the North shelter, South shelter, and Oak Knoll Park rest rooms are now complete. These areas have new partitions, toilets, soap dispensers, flooring, and fresh paint. Additionally, Shaw Park Aquatic Center has a new HVAC system.

Livable Communities Master Plan Update: Ms. Siering stated that consultants are currently working on the Livable Communities Master Plan to finalize the plan and develop some recommendations. They will be presenting their final draft to the Board of Aldermen on August 27th. The recommendations will also be shared with the Parks and Recreation Commission regarding the ice rink space.

The contractor has commenced work on the waterproofing project at #1 Oak Knoll Park and is expected to finish in a couple of weeks.

The Shaw Park Fields 1 and 2 project will start after Labor Day and should be completed by next spring.

The construction of Remembrance Park is back on track and the irrigation work is close to completion.

Ms. Siering stated that we received a Municipal Park Planning Grant in the amount of \$10,000 to help offset the cost of lighting study for Shaw Park Tennis Center, Oak Knoll Park, and Shaw Park.

Ms. Siering stated that an end of season report for Shaw Park Aquatic Center will be presented to the Commission after the season has ended.

Ms. Siering stated that the Board of Aldermen has appointed Jim Craig as the new chairperson of the Parks and Recreation Commission. We also have three new commission members: Paul Courter, Leo Human, and Betsy Mayland-Smith.

The next Parks and Recreation Commission meeting will be September 9, 2024.

Old Business / New Business:

Nothing to report.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted By: Doris Patzius