

**ROSEVILLE PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES FOR  
SEPTEMBER 7, 2021 6:30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Carlson, Dahlstrom, Heikkila, Hoag,  
Lenhart, Ybarra  
**ABSENT:** Boulton  
**STAFF:** Brokke, Christensen, Johnson

**1) INTRODUCTIONS**

Chair Hoag introduced the meeting and noted that this month’s meeting was an in-person meeting with a virtual option. The public was still encouraged to participate in the meeting using the Zoom platform. Chair Hoag also relayed that as of August 5, all staff are required to wear facemasks at City Hall and all guests are encouraged to as well.

Commissioner Boulton previously alerted staff that he would not be in attendance at the September Parks and Recreation Commission meeting.

**2) ROLL CALL/PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Roll Call Commissioners:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Carlson, Dahlstrom, Heikkila, Lenhart, Ybarra and Hoag.

Chair Hoag called for public comment by members of the audience. No audience members indicated that they wanted to make a comment.

**3) APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 5, 2021 MEETING**

Commissioner Heikkila moved to approve the minutes. Commissioner Brown seconds.

**Roll Call**

**Ayes:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Heikkila, Hoag, and Ybarra.

**Nays:** None.

**Abstain:** Dahlstrom, Lenhart.

**4) COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION ON THE POCAHONTAS PARK NAME CONVERSATION**

Staff provided a summarization of the history of the Pocahontas Park name conversation as well as the thorough feedback and outreach that the Commission engaged in with the community. The outreach process that the Commission utilized was defined in the Engagement and Analysis Plan:

- Objective
  - To engage the impacted communities to assess the impact of the name on their feeling of being “welcomed, included and respected” in Roseville, including the:
    - Native American people who live in Roseville
    - Indigenous populations of Minnesota who have expertise
    - Neighbors of Pocahontas Park
    - Entire Roseville community

Staff also provided a list of individuals with similar expertise that provided formal feedback to the Commission:

- Shannon Geshick (Minnesota Indian Affairs Council/Roseville Resident)
- Wayne Ducheneaux (Native Governance Center)
- John Bobolink (St. Paul Public Schools Indian Education Program)
- Roseville Area Schools American Indian Parent Advisory Committee
- Metropolitan Urban Indian Directors Group
- Jerry Dearly (Lakota Elder, Teacher and Language Expert)

Common themes that were shared by the individuals with expertise included:

- Varying opinions about whether the name is “offensive”
- Concerns about the lack of Pocahontas ties to MN
- Concerns about generalization/stereotyping of Native Americans based on past imagery
- Concerns about distortion of Pocahontas’ image/story
- General feeling that the name should be changed
- Many felt that a new name with reference to Dakota or Native American people would be appropriate, but were hesitant to offer a suggestion

The Commission reviewed the additional resources that were shared, the one page informational flyer, articles from external media, and community engagement events that the Commission participated in.

Finally, feedback that was received from the community was summarized:

- Many informal conversations over the summer
- 44 written comments received
- 26 residents submitted written feedback
- 6 residents identified as Native American
- Several attended meetings to provide feedback

**S. McGiffin, 1579 Brooks Avenue, Roseville**

The resident relayed a story about how Pocahontas Park was possibly going to be named Rosebrook Park. However, due to a clerical mix-up, when the parks were being named, the names became interchanged. She noted she was unhappy with the name change at the time.

She also added her concern that Pocahontas Park did not get basketball courts, walkways or refinished benches during the most recent park updates. In addition, she stated that she has not received any Commission packets regarding the Pocahontas Park name discussion and she has had difficulty with viewing the televised Commission meetings, as she does not have cable. Recently, she was able to see the televised Commission meetings and she also acknowledged receiving the resident letter, alerting members of the Pocahontas neighborhood of the name conversation and inviting them to attend tonight's listening session. However, she believed that the neighborhood residents have potentially been shut out of the discussion.

In conclusion, she stated that the name of Pocahontas Park should be changed to reflect someone in the local tribal area.

**K. Vandry, 2450 Holton Street**

Ms. Vandry commended the work of the Commission in taking this discussion to the community at large as well as to those in the Pocahontas Park neighborhood. She relayed her original excitement of living so close to a park when she moved to her home in Roseville. However, she was perplexed and concerned with the name and she has chosen to not refer to the park as Pocahontas Park with her children. The energy around the discussion and potential name change is very exciting for her to see. She added that a name change in conjunction with additional park updates that could help reflect and educate the community on the Dakota people (native plantings, educational trail, natural playground, etc.) would be a welcome change to the park.

**K. Ramundt, 1161 Laure Road West**

Ms. Ramundt thanked the Commission for all of the work they have done with gathering information on the name change. She also expressed how happy she is that the city is making these types of decisions.

She stated that she does feel the name needs to be changed. She added that she is not aware of any other name utilized by the city that represents the Dakota people and she sees this as a potential opportunity to start conversations within the community. However, she would defer the actual naming to the Dakota people.

No further meeting attendees acknowledged that they would like to speak. Chair Hoag closed the public listening session.

5) **DETERMINE NEXT STEPS ON POCAHONTAS NAME CONVERSATION**

Chair Hoag posed the question to the Commission of if the name of Pocahontas Park should be changed.

Commissioner Brown asked if it would potentially make sense to change Pocahontas Park's name to Rosebrook and then change the name of the current Rosebrook Park.

Staff relayed that the switching of the names has been a community discussion over the years. However, there is not an official record of the names being changed. In addition, staff added that any change to the current Rosebrook Park's name would require a community engagement process.

Commissioner Baggenstoss thanked the community members who participated and provided feedback throughout the process. He relayed that he feels the name should be changed. Further, he believes that utilizing a (potentially paid) Native American led group to rename the park would be the best next step as suggested by the Metropolitan Urban Indian Group.

Commissioner Lenhart agreed with Commissioner Baggenstoss that the name of Pocahontas Park absolutely should be changed.

Commissioners Brown and Arneson both stated that they believe it is appropriate to change the name based on the feedback the Commission has received.

Chair Hoag relayed that he has been indifferent to changing the name throughout the process. But ultimately, he does believe that the name should be changed. However, he has concerns that only 35-40 people spoke about the potential name change.

Commissioner Arneson challenged the idea that there has been limited community feedback. He was present at the Discover Your Parks (DYP) event at Pocahontas Park (along with other community events this summer) and received feedback from many attendees that they felt the name should be changed, but they did not have any ideas or suggestions for a new name.

Commissioner Baggenstoss reminded the Commission that they are appointed by the City Council to be Commission members and leaders of the community. He challenged the Commission to be leaders and make the right decision regarding the name of Pocahontas Park and to trust the work the group has put into the name change process.

Commissioner Lenhart motioned to recommend to the City Council that the name of Pocahontas Park should be changed. Commissioner Heikkila seconds.

### **Roll Call**

**Ayes:** Arneson, Baggenstoss, Brown, Dahlstrom, Heikkila, Hoag, Lenhart and Ybarra.

**Nays:** None.

**Abstain:** None.

The Commission discussed bringing the recommendation to the City Council at an upcoming meeting.

Commissioner Lenhart stated that she agrees with Commissioner Baggenstoss on potentially paying Native Americans for their work in helping to come up with a new name. Also, she provided name recommendations that she has received from community members:

- Name the park “Prairie Rose” in the Dakota language
- Friendship Park (name provided by an 8-9 year old girl who lives in the Pocahontas Park neighborhood to honor all of the friendships she has made at the park)

Staff recommended that specifics regarding the recommendation to the City Council be discussed at the next Commission meeting. Additionally, staff noted that paying participants to rename a park would be different than the traditional park naming process.

The Commission discussed potential items that could be included in the recommendation to the City Council.

Commissioner Ybarra added that it needs to be considered how community members could feel if money was spent on paying participants to rename the park, instead of on the park itself.

Commissioner Baggenstoss warned the Commission of the potential detriment of not having a Native American group leading the new name discussion. He feels that continuing to sideline the voices that have been sidelined for centuries could be scarring for groups who continue to be marginalized.

The Commission discussed ways to engage the Native voices in the community and the potential makeup of a naming committee.

### **S. McGiffin, 1579 Brooks Avenue, Roseville**

The meeting attendee who was present at City Hall addressed the Commission again. She noted that there are many different nationalities represented in the Pocahontas Park neighborhood, including

Native Americans, and she feels that it is a disservice to not engage with them. In addition, she relayed that she liked the name recommendation of “Friendship Park” in the Dakota language as it could mean friendship for all people.

**6) STAFF REPORT**

**a) NEW OR RELEVANT COMMUNICATIONS AND UPDATE ITEMS**

- The Commission has received an e-mail from Thomas Brooks, Roseville’s new Equity and Inclusion Manager, requesting demographic information.
- The event celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month will again be hosted by the city in 2022. A planning committee will be created with community members, staff and potentially a Parks and Recreation Commission member. Staff asked that if any member is interested in participating on the planning committee to let staff know.
- Wild Rice Festival at Harriet Alexander Nature Center on September 18, 2021 from 10:00am-4pm. Features will include music, storytelling, food trucks and apple pressing.
- Citywide Garage Sale on September 9-11. Fifty garage sales have registered to participate.
- Friends of Roseville Parks (FOR Parks) Tapped and Uncorked fundraising event on September 24, 2021 at the Roseville Skating Center OVAL.
- Roseville Parks and Recreation is currently hiring for the following positions:
  - Park Building Supervisor
  - Golf Course Clerk
  - Golf Course Grounds Crew
  - Dance Instructor
  - Gymnastics Instructor
  - Gymnasium Supervisor
- The Parks and Recreation brochure for August 2021-January 2022 has been delivered to homes. Check it out as there is something for everyone!

**7) OTHER**

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Danielle Christensen, Department Assistant