

**Dublin City Council
Public Services Committee**

Wednesday, June 8, 2022

5:00 p.m.

5555 Perimeter Drive

Council Chamber

Meeting Minutes

Ms. Kramb called the June 8, 2022 Public Services Committee meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Vice Mayor De Rosa, Ms. Kramb (Chair), Mr. Reiner.

Staff present: Mr. Earman, Mr. Ranc, Ms. Golliver

Also present: Leon Younger, PROS Consulting

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Kramb moved to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2022 Public Services Committee meeting.

Vice Mayor De Rosa seconded the motion.

Vote on the motion: Ms. Kramb, yes; Mr. Reiner, yes; Vice Mayor De Rosa, yes.

Discussion Items:

Parks Master Plan Update – Stakeholder Engagement

Mr. Earman introduced Leon Younger, PROS Consulting. He shared that staff and the consultant are seeking the Committee's feedback this evening.

Mr. Younger provided a brief overview of this part of the process. Part of doing a master plan update is looking at all aspects of the parks system and that starts with public engagement. They are looking at comments from key leadership, staff, the school district, and the business community. They are also getting ready to put out two surveys: a statistically valid survey as well as a community survey. The content of each survey is the same. The survey is mailed out and can be returned via mail, online, or completed by phone. There are interpretation services available. PROS Consulting is doing some benchmarking around the country. They are beginning the park and facility review process as well as a program assessment to determine who is being served and who is not. There will also be a level of service study done based on compilation of metrics driven by population. That level of service is tied to what the community says. Those

numbers can be tested against community feedback, best practices and performance benchmarking from National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA). The City's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion approach will be considered. There will be information gathered on the operation and maintenance of the parks system. A natural resource assessment will be done. They will be looking at demographic and trends and the City's land acquisition strategy for the future. That will be mapped and the maps will tell a story of what is existing and what is recommended. A prioritization plan will be established for land, facilities, programs, facilities, and capital. They will look at available funding options. Finally, they will create a Vision, Mission, and Value Statements as well as a 10-year action plan. The action plan will be very specific for the first 5 years. There is a good group of staff involved as a team. OHM is a local firm helping with the plan. ETC Institute is doing all the survey work. Because both surveys are the same, comparisons will be able to be drawn between the two.

Ms. Kramb opened the discussion from the Committee about questions on the process.

Mr. Reiner stated that Dublin is looking for the most advanced park system. The goal is to have young professionals want to live in Dublin because of an exciting, outstanding park system. The climbing rock downtown is awesome. Mr. Younger stated that Recreation and Parks are driven by how much the City wants to invest in it. A point of consideration for the City is whether there is the desire for the parks and recreation system to be economically driven. Dublin has had really big moments like the opening of the Dublin Rec Center. They have been sharing ideas from across the country. Mr. Reiner asked when the Rec Center opened. Mr. Earman responded in 1996. Mr. Reiner stated that we are looking for the next leap forward. He asked if other departments are being involved like planning and zoning as it relates to the land seizure policy and the expense of mowing grass. Mr. Ranc stated that Jenny Rauch, Planning Director, is involved in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan update process. She is part of that core team.

Ms. Kramb directed the Committee discussion through questions provided.

1. What is the general perception of the parks, facilities, and recreation opportunities as they are now?

Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that they are extensive and some of them are feeling aged. Dublin is blessed with a plethora of opportunities. People constantly say that there is a need for more sports fields. It may not be possible to satisfy that demand, but we hear that a lot. Parks are used and appreciated. Dublin has a very traditional set of offerings. They are beautiful and need some maintenance. Ms. Kramb agreed that they are traditional and extensive.

Mr. Reiner stated that traditional is a great description. The City has a lot of pocket parks and big soccer fields. He would like to know what there is in the world that would set Dublin apart.

Mr. Younger stated that they have several different concepts people have done around the country. It is important to learn community desires and to match Council's vision with theirs. The river will continue to be an important component for bringing people downtown. Mr. Reiner stated that he is not a fan of surveys. He believes in leadership. They are elected to lead. He reflected on the challenge of opening the Rec Center. He loves that kind of innovation in government. Mr. Younger stated that he believes Council will like a lot of the ideas that will be brought forward.

Vice Mayor De Rosa referenced the Rapid 5 project on the Scioto River. There is a lot of momentum and dollars being generated to fund that. We want to make sure to connect with that project because it can help programmatically and economically. There is so much energy in parks currently.

2. What amenities, facilities, or activities does the Committee think are most needed?

Mr. Reiner stated that the river basin is really exciting. He would like to see night lighting of the cliff banks and graphics or something projected on buildings. The climbing rock in downtown Columbus is very impressive. It is a fun thing to do and has received great publicity. He loves adventure. He wants to have that sense of adventure and place in Dublin and for it to be a place where it's really fun to live. Mr. Younger asked the Committee to consider economics with regard to sports tourism or arts tourism.

Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that Dublin does not currently have year-round facilities. The ideas of live, work, and play are no longer separate categories. How does a park satisfy live, work, and play? For work, are parks WiFi enabled; are there places to work in the park; how do we make them destinations rather than activity based? The health connection between parks and health and well-being is important. She would like to see more non-traditional offerings and more effort to match demographics.

Ms. Kramb stated that she does not think the City should be in the business of year-round sports programming. She would like to see Dublin partner with private companies with incentives for some type of year-round indoor field facility. There does need to be some type of indoor recreation, perhaps in a sports complex. We need to engage the river by programming kayaking, paddle-boarding, canoeing, etc. with places from which to launch them as well as places to park them and lock them, and walk-up to a restaurant. There are not a whole lot of options for teens and young adults in the City. There are existing parks meant for families to take kids to a playground or soccer field. She would like to see some type of adventure course and more basketball courts. Fields are

generally used by soccer leagues, so kids are not permitted to just use the fields. Mr. Younger noted that Dublin serves a larger population on the fields and not necessarily just residents. Ms. Kramb stated that there needs to be a place for kids to play a pick-up football game. Ms. Kramb stated some of these ideas might require partnerships because some of them will require equipment/staff. Mr. Younger noted there are a lot of good adventure companies. Vice Mayor De Rosa asked if there are public-private partnerships with this. Mr. Younger stated that they are exploring that a little. Adventure companies lease property and they do the programming. It comes down to the type of experience, the level of difficulty, and whether it can be used for competition or recreation. Mr. Earman stated that one small example is the ice rink that Dublin put downtown this year. That didn't cost anything beyond the utilities to run it.

Mr. Reiner stated that Dublin is looking for blue zone community status.

Mr. Younger stated that there are fitness hubs that are under a shelter that set a nice framework.

Mr. Reiner asked about teenager engagement. Mr. Younger stated that the sports of biggest interest for teens are futsal and esports. Westerville put in an esports facility in their updated community center. Mr. Reiner stated that he is thinking of blending the Dublin Arts Council with the Parks Department using the river boxes. There are 16 river boxes and some are down steps. He is interested in how to make that competitive by combining arts with physical development. Ms. Kramb stated that could be a programming idea.

Mr. Younger stated that people put pumps in the river and set it up for people who want to have different experiences. The pumps run at different times of the day. That requires a willingness to put money into the river to make that happen.

Ms. Kramb stated that there need to be mile markers on the walking paths. Mr. Earman stated that staff has solicited Requests for Proposals for community wellness programs to create heart healthy trails. That will be part of this plan.

3. What are the key outcomes the Committee would like to see come from this Master Plan?

Ms. Kramb stated that she wants to see action. The most important thing is naming one or two big ideas and identify a plan to implement them. She does not want to see a survey of a bunch of ideas that sits on a shelf. Mr. Younger stated that they did a plan for Fair Park in Dallas, Texas. He stated that they wanted something in the daytime where people would come out and just visit. They hired the people who created the Bellagio fountains to install fountains in Fair Park and this one amenity changed how people viewed the park.

Mr. Reiner stated that we could have a fabulous waterfall. We could light the old bridge. We have not developed visual amenities with this great bridge. Mr.

Younger stated that uplifting changes what people feel about anything in a

park. The ideas shared this evening are good ideas on how to activate existing park spaces.

Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that she would like to see 2 or 3 things started right now, as well as a long-term vision of what the next marker might look like. She is happy that there will be a maintenance component. She read the quote, "Today's passion is tomorrow's burden." In this plan, there has to be a realistic expectation of required maintenance dollars to manage what is desired. She would like continual feedback. This is the age of the QR code, so there is no reason that there can't be a QR code to take someone to the survey. There is no reason to not get continual feedback. She would like to see some way to get the community consistently involved in offering feedback as well.

Mr. Younger stated that he hears that this Committee wants to ensure everyone that nobody is missed by the parks and recreation system, and then determine how to activate it, fund it, and maintain it.

Mr. Reiner asked about the water feature with the rabbits. Mr. Earman stated that the City has put over \$1M into it over the years. It was not built as it currently functions.

Mr. Earman stated that this plan will describe the critical needs. It could be maintenance, renovation, capital needs, next steps and highest aspirations. Recommendations will be tiered and will help establish priorities.

Ms. Kramb suggested bathrooms in all parks. A small percentage of parks have bathrooms. Mr. Younger stated that they are built as neighborhood parks. Mr. Earman stated that a question about how much time people spend in parks could be added to the survey. Mr. Younger stated that once someone spends over an hour in a park, they start to complain about not having bathrooms. Mr. Earman stated that the City then gets into maintenance concerns. Ms. Kramb stated because she does not live in a neighborhood, every time she visits a park, she has to drive there. The lack of restrooms was noticeable with young children. She understands the neighborhood park concept, but there are some larger parks that do not have restrooms.

Vice Mayor De Rosa stated that for someone who bikes a lot, Dublin does not have a lot of places to lock up a bike and have a picnic. Mr. Reiner suggested spreading artistic bike racks throughout the community.

Mr. Reiner stated that his goal is to encourage people to want to live in Dublin because it is the coolest city. Vice Mayor De Rosa agreed. Mr. Younger stated that an important thing to have is a mix of parks and music/entertainment, and it all has to be connected. Many times entertainment gets left out. Mr. Reiner stated that we built a greenway along Bridge Street, and each weekend we could bring in festivals like Milwaukee does.

Vice Mayor De Rosa asked what the most innovative park is that Mr. Younger has seen. Mr. Younger responded with Epic Central Park in Grand Prairie, Texas. They have a huge indoor water park, an incredible community center, a major amphitheater complex, all different types of outdoor adventures, and an activated lake. They used creative financing and several different funding sources.

Ms. Kramb asked for an estimated time for a draft Master Plan. Mr. Younger responded by stating that, ideally, they will have a draft by the end of the year. The Master Plan was built around a 9-month schedule. They are getting ready to launch the survey, which is a 10-week process. Mr. Earman stated that the draft will be presented to Council prior to the final draft. Along the way, there will be a website set up. Vice Mayor De Rosa suggested putting QR codes in the park. Mr. Reiner spoke about pickleball. Mr. Younger stated that pickleball will be in the Olympics in 2024. Mr. Earman stated that Dublin has a very adventurous group organizing their own activities and they provide lesson opportunities. Mr. Younger stated that they are working with agencies building a pickleball facility with restaurants around it. Mr. Earman suggested the Committee read about the pickleball club going in on Polaris. It will have social rooms, locker rooms, etc.

Ms. Kramb welcomed Leah Dotson and Mitchell Ament, management interns in attendance this evening.

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Chair, Public Services Committee

Deputy Clerk of Council