

CITIZENS LEAGUE REPORT

No. 92

**Minneapolis Park System  
Procedures for Park Superintendent  
search**

**October 1958**

October 3, 1958

TO: Members of the Minneapolis Park Board

FROM Citizens League of Minneapolis and Hennepin County

SUBJECT: Recommendations adopted unanimously by the Board of Directors at its October 1st meeting offering assistance to the Minneapolis Park Board in implementing its declared objective of making an extensive search to find the most qualified successor to Park Superintendent Charles E. Doell.

**BACKGROUND:**

Charles E. Doell, Superintendent of the Minneapolis Park System, will reach retirement age in May, 1959. The superintendent is selected by the Park Board for an annual term and is not under civil service. Mr. Doell presently receives as compensation a salary of \$18,300 per year, plus such additional benefits as a residence and an official car.

The Park Board is about to begin the process of finding a successor to Mr. Doell. At its September 17 meeting, the Board passed unanimously a resolution declaring its intention to make an extensive search to find the most qualified replacement it is possible to interest in the position. The resolution also expressed a desire to find a replacement in advance of Mr. Doell's retirement date, in order to provide an overlap period in acquainting the new man with the job. In addition, the resolution recommended that procedures be established to facilitate communicating with and interviewing prospective candidates.

We submit to the members of the Park Board the following general procedural recommendations. We hope they will be considered appropriate and helpful and, to the extent feasible, will be utilized.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. We agree wholeheartedly with the Park Board in its expressed desire to undertake an extensive search to find the most qualified individual it is possible to interest in the position. This procedure is sound, not only to assure a good park system, but also to improve the standing of the man finally selected.

2. While we agree with the Board that it would be advantageous to hire the new superintendent to provide a period of overlap, the more important consideration lies in securing the best possible individual for the job and, if these two general principles come into conflict, we urge that the latter prevail.

3. We urge the Park Board to establish promptly the procedural steps which are to be taken in communicating with and interviewing candidates for the position. We likewise consider it important to establish a general set of guiding principles as to the more important qualifications needed to adequately perform the duties of Park Superintendent.

4. It would seem at least difficult for the entire membership of the Park Board to participate in the procedural steps of interviewing candidates, processing applications, etc. We therefore suggest that a committee of less than the full Park Board membership be established to draft the procedures which are to be followed and bring these recommendations to the Park Board for its consideration at the earliest practicable date. This committee would then follow through on the processing of the applications.

4. We also urge that members of the Park Board begin consideration of the major qualifications which should be looked for in a park superintendent. Among those we consider to be most significant are the following:

- a. Demonstrated administrative ability as indicated by managerial experience in a park system.
- b. A keen knowledge of the requirements of an up-to-date park system.
- c. Vision and imagination for planning and operating a park and recreation system to meet changing needs.
- d. Ability to communicate with the public and to interpret to them the requirements and the needs for a good park and recreation system.
- e. The prospect that he will offer a relatively extended period of service as Park Superintendent.