



## City of Lake Elmo

3800 Laverne Avenue North  
Lake Elmo, Minnesota 55042

(651) 777-5510 Fax: (651) 777-9615  
[www.LakeElmo.Org](http://www.LakeElmo.Org)

### NOTICE OF MEETING

The City of Lake Elmo

Parks Commission will conduct its regular meeting on

**Monday, April 21, 2008, at 7:00 p.m.**

### AGENDA

1. Agenda
2. Minutes
  - a. March 17, 2008 (Minutes handed out at meeting)
3. Follow-up to Washington County request to conduct deer harvest in Sunfish Lake Park.
4. Follow up to Development of a Comprehensive Signage System - - presentation of 3 conceptual designs.
5. Update to Lowes Partnership Program
6. Heights Park Neighborhood Meeting
7. Information Items
  - a. Trail improvement update
  - b. Park Partners Reports
8. Adjourn

The public is invited to attend.

Park Commission  
Date: 4/21/08  
REGULAR  
Item: 6

ITEM: Heights Neighborhood Park Planning Meeting

SUBMITTED BY: Carol Kriegler, Project Assistant

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SUMMARY:

A neighborhood park planning meeting is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, May 7 for the residents of Heights Park. The physical layout of this park is unique in that it's considered a "flag lot". The park has minimal road frontage and is surrounded by homes. This layout creates a particular challenge in balancing **neighborhood / public park access** verses **adjacent home owner's privacy and protection**.

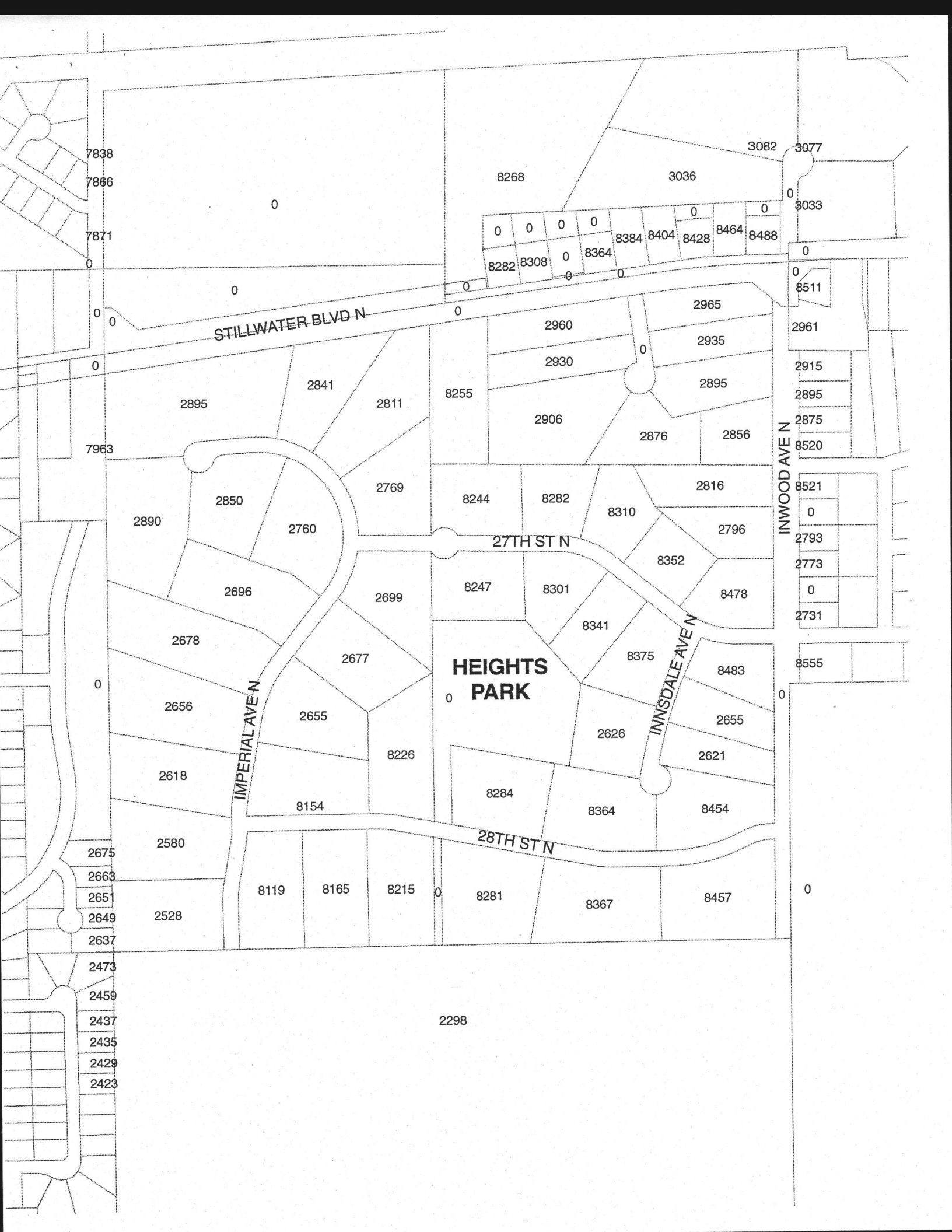
In August 2005 and December of 2006, the Parks Commission received park improvement surveys that were conducted by members of the neighborhood. The results of the surveys were somewhat conflicting and may reflect the need to balance the need for neighborhood park access with homeowner privacy and protection. Summaries of the two surveys are attached for review.

In addition, staff will provide a history of the neighborhood development, and the history of plans for improvement.

ACTION REQUESTED:

None. The Park Commission is being briefed on the history of Heights Park in preparation for a neighborhood park planning meeting scheduled for Wednesday, May 7.





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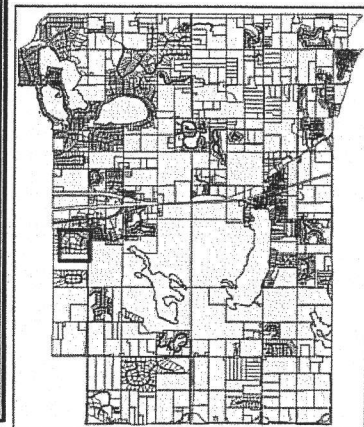
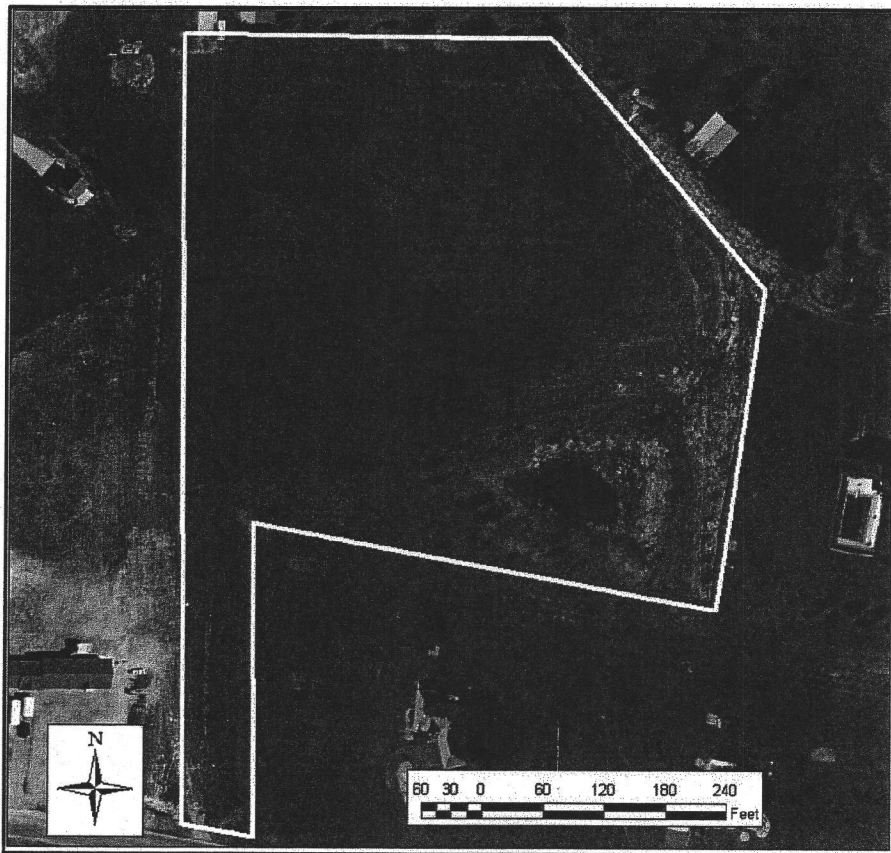
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Heights Park is an undeveloped park located in west-central Lake Elmo. The park features a grove of trees and a natural pond.



**Classification:** Neighborhood Park  
**Location:** 14th Street and Lake Elmo  
**Size:** 5 acres

Natural Features	Passive Uses	Active Uses	Other Facilities
lakes/pond natural resource area			



Parks Commissioner  
City of Lake Elmo  
3800 Laverne Ave N.  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

RECEIVED  
AUG 16 2005

August 15, 2005

Re: Lake Elmo Heights – Park Development

On behalf of the Lake Elmo Heights Third Addition located on 26<sup>th</sup> Avenue N. and Imperial Avenue N., I would like to formally request your consideration for development of the park area located between 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue(s) N. Attached is feedback received from our residents. Of the 27 families surveyed, 17 responses included desire for:

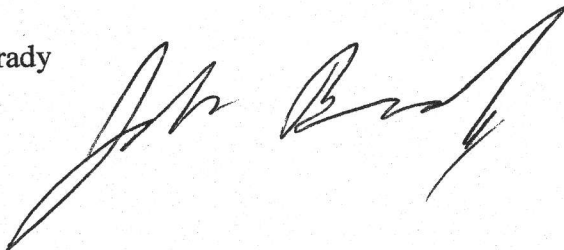
- |    |                            |  |
|----|----------------------------|--|
| 10 | families would like to see | <i>a picnic table</i>                    |
| 11 | families would like to see | <i>a walking path</i>                    |
| 10 | families would like to see | <i>a baseball diamond &amp; backstop</i> |
| 10 | families would like to see | <i>a playground structure</i>            |
| 7  | families would like to see | <i>a soccer field</i>                    |
| 4  | families would like to see | <i>an ice skating rink</i>               |

Only three of the seventeen responses did not want the parkland developed.

Because 30 children under the age of 14 years reside in the 27 homes surveyed and the fact that there is no safe route to any local parks from 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> or Imperial Avenue(s) N, this park would be very well utilized. Please add the consideration of the development of this park land to your agenda for the next commission meeting scheduled for August 22. If you have any questions or comments regarding this request, I can be reached at (651) 779-8790. Your consideration is appreciated.

Sincerely,

John Brady



December 4, 2006

(See also  
individual  
surveys)

Incomplete  
RECEIVED

DEC 16 2006

RECEIVED

DEC 12 2006

Dear Lake Elmo Parks Commissioners and City Officials,

We are residents in the Lake Elmo Heights neighborhood and are writing to express our concerns over potential development of the park land in our neighborhood (Heights Park). Before you make any final decision to proceed with the development of this land, we request that you consider our request to leave the land as a passive use area. If necessary, we will participate in a public hearing to discuss this matter further.

We understand during the fall of 2005 you received some information from our neighbors, as gathered and presented by John and Dawn Brady, indicating that the neighborhood was in favor of developing Heights Park into an active use park with playground equipment and possibly a baseball diamond (or potentially other active, recreational use). This recommendation was based on a limited survey of homeowners on 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Imperial Avenue. Homeowners on 27<sup>th</sup> Street and Innsdale, including those who directly border the park, were not surveyed.

After learning about this first survey and submittal to the City, a group of us came together seeking to understand what a majority of the homeowners in this neighborhood want. In Sept. 2006 we distributed the attached survey to approximately 50 homes. A map of surveyed homes and responders is also attached. We received 29 responses. The results show that the majority of homeowners are in favor of leaving the park as passive use land (passive options including native/prairie plants, or natural, wild growth, or continued agriculture). A detailed listing of results and a summary analysis are included as attachments for your consideration.

It is our preference, and clearly the preference of a majority of our neighbors in Lake Elmo Heights, that Heights Park not be developed. In fact, on average, 71% of the survey respondents preferred a passive use of the park land, versus only 21% preferring some sort of active, recreational use. Based on comments included in the survey and our discussion with neighbors, a summary of our concerns is as follows:

- **Traffic and parking:** Based on observations of Ridge Park (located south/east on Inwood in the Lake Elmo Park Estates community), we believe during June and July we will experience issues with heavy traffic and on-street parking due to baseball league play. Increased traffic to our neighborhood may bring about potential accidents and speeding that could impact children riding their bikes, people walking/running and pets darting out from yards.
- **Privacy:** Because there is limited access to the park via a narrow pathway along the power lines from 26<sup>th</sup> Street, we believe neighbors adjacent to the park will have significant foot traffic through our private land in order for people to gain access to the park area.
- **Park use by people outside the neighborhood:** If developed, we rightfully cannot restrict the park for just this neighborhood's use. We are concerned that more people coming into the neighborhood will bring noise, litter, and trespassing, as well as security issues of increased potential for vandalism and theft, not only of the park but also of the homeowner's properties that border the park. Right now, theft and any vandalism is almost non-existent in our neighborhood. It would be very advantageous for all neighbors to help keep it this way.
- **Wild Life Preservation:** Eliminating our open spaces in Lake Elmo will have a tremendous and lasting impact on our local wildlife which includes not only the familiar sightings of deer, geese and



rabbits, but also fox, coyotes, ring-necked pheasants, ducks and unique birds such quails, owls, falcons, and an occasional egret and eagle.

- **City Funding:** Estimates to build an active park could be as much as \$50,000 with an additional yearly maintenance cost in excess of \$5,000. Sixteen families in this neighborhood already have play structures in their own yards. We believe a park play structure will not be used extensively by neighbors and therefore isn't a good use of our tax dollars. In 19 observations of Ridge Park during peak times in July, August and September, we saw little to no usage of that community park once the ball season was done.
- **Safety:** There is a deep pond in the park surrounded by thick brush. Children are naturally curious and we are concerned that the pond may represent a safety hazard for smaller children. You may recall news reports of drowning cases in other neighborhoods in early summer. Safety of all kids is important.
- **Law Enforcement:** According to the Washington County Sheriff's records, there were 13 complaints made about nearby Tablyn Park (31<sup>st</sup> and Stillwater Road) between July 2005-July 2006. Issues as follows:
  1. suspicious autos – sleeping in car, expired tabs
  2. in park after hours - includes inappropriate behavior
  3. litter/unlawful deposit of garbage - illegal dumping of sofa - (city contacted to pick up).
  4. property damage – fire set to outhouses, trash containers and signs, driving through grass and tearing it up

These incidents would be typical of the types of activities and issues that a developed park in our neighborhood would also face. Not only does this impact us as neighbors, but as taxpayers since there are costs associated with the Sheriff's office patrolling another park and the city expending additional funds for the malicious acts of individuals.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of the park land usage. We kindly request that you contact us to advise on your next steps for making a decision about Heights Park. A copy of the survey results have also been distributed to our Lake Elmo Heights neighbors.

Sincerely,

Monica and Rich Ross – 8284 26<sup>th</sup> St. N. – 651-773-3140

Email: [monicadahms@hotmail.com](mailto:monicadahms@hotmail.com)

Noreen and Tom Dillon – 8375 27<sup>th</sup> St. N – 651-773-5729

Email: [tdillon@pmlink.com](mailto:tdillon@pmlink.com)

Beth and Larry Mann – 8301 27<sup>th</sup> St. N. – 651-779-8160

Email: [lbrmann@comcast.net](mailto:lbrmann@comcast.net)

Jean and Bob Sluss – 8310 27<sup>th</sup> St. N. – 651-779-8696

Email: [jssluss@nac-hvac.com](mailto:jssluss@nac-hvac.com)

Mary and Scott Deutsch – 2699 Imperial Ave. – 651-770-8823

Email: [mdeutsch@travelers.com](mailto:mdeutsch@travelers.com)

Tricia and Garrett Gleason – 8364 26<sup>th</sup> St. N – 651-747-1433

Email: [glgskier@comcast.net](mailto:glgskier@comcast.net)

Attachments:

1. Lake Elmo Heights, Heights Park Survey Results and Analysis
2. Sept. 2006 Survey to Lake Elmo Heights Neighbors

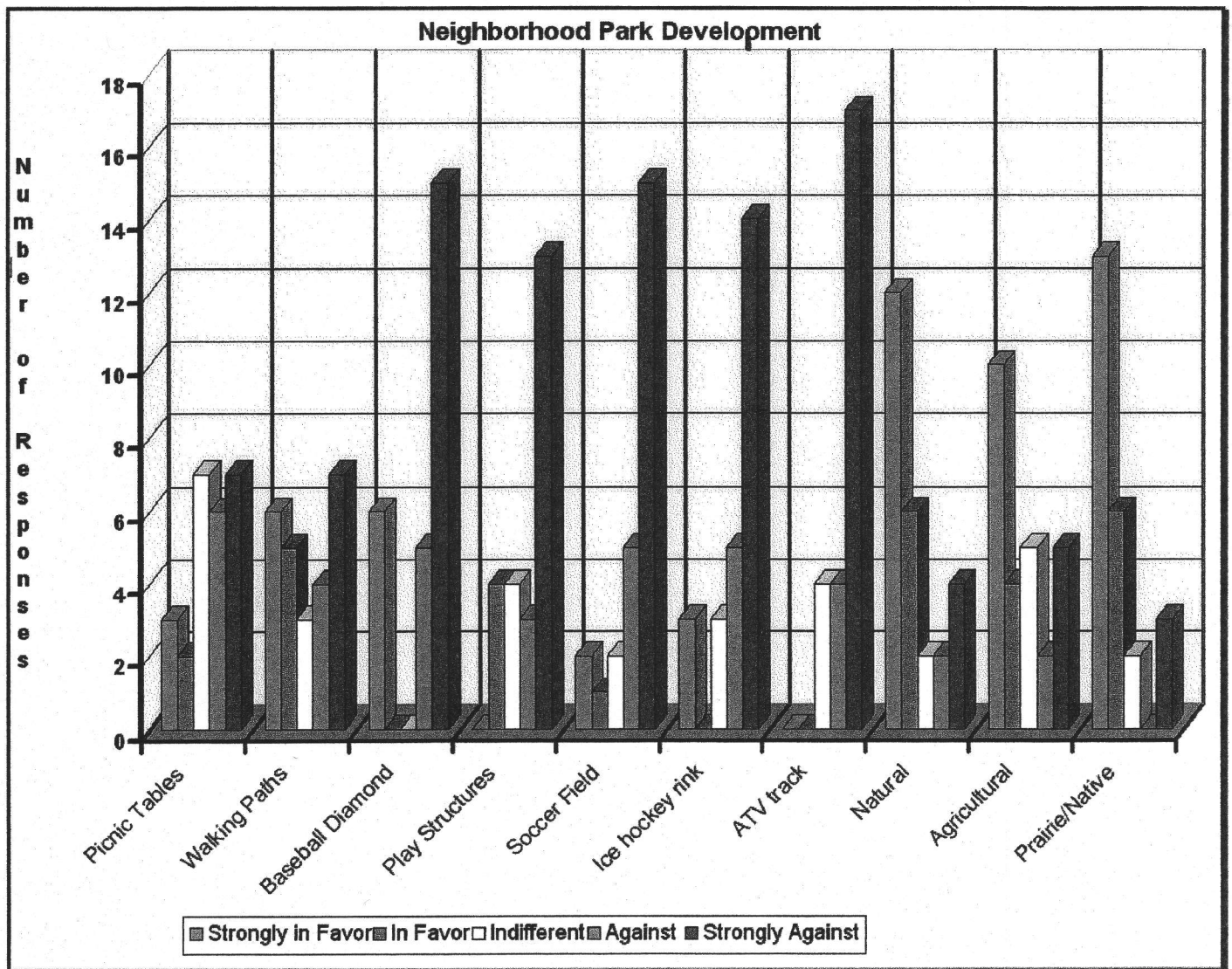
### Attachment 1: Lake Elmo Heights, Heights Park Survey Results

#### Respondents' Information:

- 29 families responded (3 in confidence – did not want their names disclosed)
- 28% of the responses came from families on 26<sup>th</sup> St; 31% from families of 27<sup>th</sup> St; 24% from families on Imperial Ave; and 17% from families on Innsdale Ave.
- 51% of the respondents are families with children

#### Overall Results (graphical and tabular):

Each bar on the diagram below shows the number of families who indicated their preference for each park-use option. In total, the graph illustrates a majority of the responding families are against or strongly against an active use of the park area and a vast majority are in favor or strongly in favor of a passive use. The data table for these results is given below the graph.

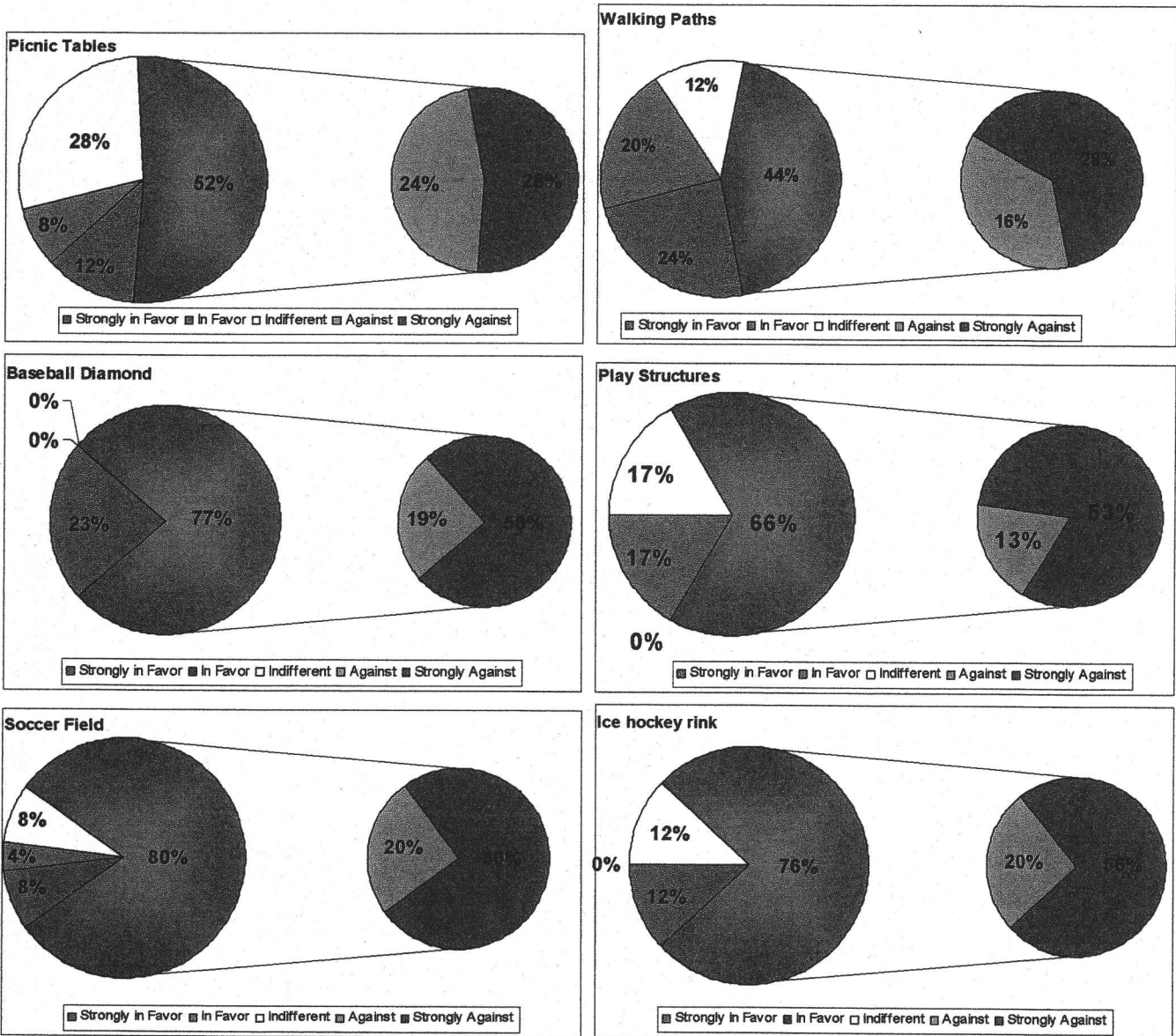


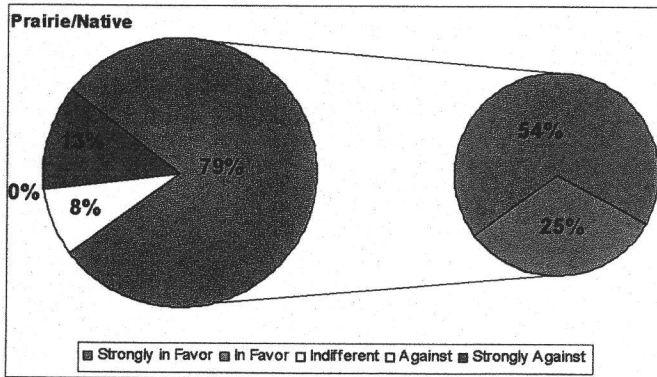
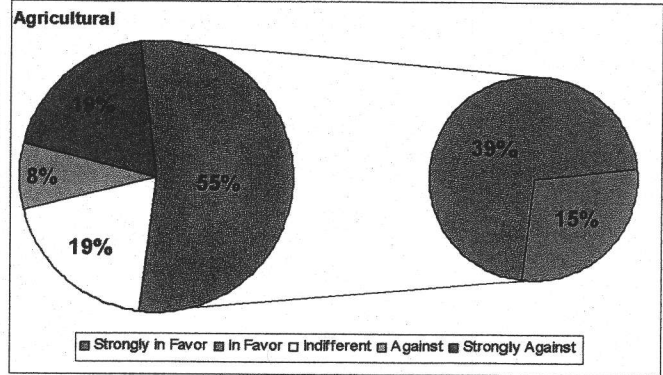
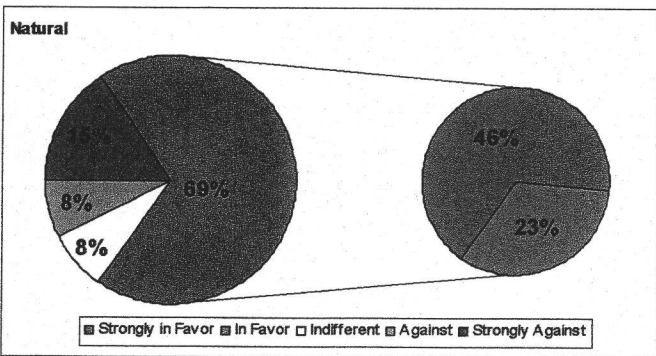
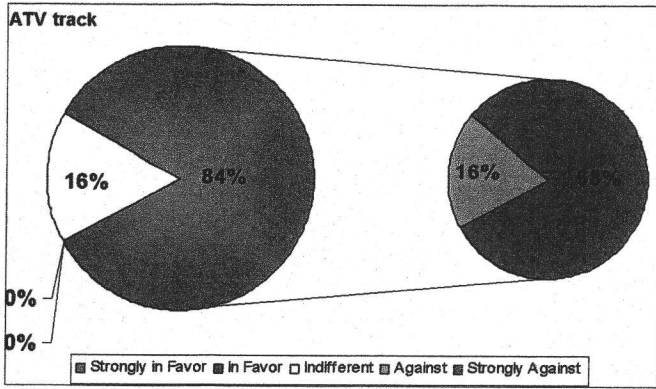


	Strongly in Favor	In Favor	Indifferent	Against	Strongly Against
Picnic Tables	3	2	7	6	7
Walking Paths	6	5	3	4	7
Baseball Diamond	6	0	0	5	15
Play Structures	0	4	4	3	13
Soccer Field	2	1	2	5	15
Ice hockey rink	3	0	3	5	14
ATV track	0	0	4	4	17
Natural	12	6	2	2	4
Agricultural	10	4	5	2	5
Prairie/Native	13	6	2	0	3

**Detailed Results, by option (graphical):**

The illustrations below depict the percentage of respondents in favor and against each use option. The majority category for each option is then further divided to illustrate the percentage of “strongly” or “preferred” within that majority.







**Responding Families:**

The families listed below responded to the survey. Three families who wished to keep their input anonymous have been excluded from this list. Information as to which families responded in which ways to each option can be obtained by contacting Garrett Gleason, 651-747-1433.

Last Name	First Name	Address	Phone	# of Children	Ages
Anderson	Mark & Brenda	8483 27th St N	407-0430	3	15,13,10
Bernardy	Sharon	8352 27th St N	779-6467	3	26,22,15
Brady	Dawn & John	8165 26th St N	779-8790	2	12, 10
Dillion	Noreen & Toni	8375 27th St N.	773-5729	0	
Duetsch	Scott & Mary	2699 Imperial Ave N	770-8823	0	
Fagley	Terry and Nancy	2656 Imperial Ave N	748-9105	2	13,10
Foster	Brenda & Kevin	2655 Imperial Ave N	773-0356	grandchildren	
Franzwa	Terri	8367 26th St N	773-1982	2	16,18
Gleason	Garrett & Tricia	8364 26th St N	747-1433	2	9,7
Greengasd	James & Paulette	2677 Imperial Ave N	748-8684	0	
Gurney	Steve	8281 26 St N	770-6434	0	
Heller	Darin & Heather	2850 Imperial Ave N	777-1232	2	6,9
Helwig	Bob	8247 27th St N	770-7884	0	
Henry	Bill & Sue	2960 Innsdale Ave N	773-5662	0	
Herzog	Jody & Jim	2841 Imperial Ave N	704-9537	4	11,10,8,7
Horton (Radziwill)	Tom (Pattie)	2626 Innsdale Ave N	773-8198	2	16,11
Lai	Jack & Maria	2895 Innsdale Ave N	779-7176	0	
Mann	Larry & Beth	8301 27th St N	779-8160	0	
Mears	Leanne & Robert	8341 27th St N	779-8411	2	21,19
Ross	Monica & Rich	8284 26th St N	773-3140	1	2
Roth	Anne & Don	8154 26th St N	777-6720	2	13,9
Sluss	Bob & Jean	8310 27th St N	779-8696	0	
Sugler	Dennis & Donna	8244 27th St N	773-9322	0	
Valente	Jack & LuAnn	2930 Innsdale Ave N	779-6032	0	
Vejtruba	John & Wendy	8457 26th St N	748-1690	1	8
Yarusso	John & Rochele	8282 27th St N	773-0948	4	15,13,10,8

**Written Comments (from within the survey):**

The table below gives the written comments that were included with the survey responses. Information as to which families made which comments can be obtained by contacting Garrett Gleason, 651-747-1433.

We enjoy the quietness of this neighborhood. We fell there are plenty of walking the streets. My son uses our backyard as his baseball field and other sports. The natural setting is preferred to us.
Strongly against any other uses; strongly in favor of planting trees
Strongly in favor of trees. It is very dangerous to walk your pet, let alone a baby stroller on Inwood. If we had a walking path, the need to go onto Inwood would be eliminated.
Our family would prefer an "active park" over a "passive park."
I have concerns that my yard would be used to get to the park by children and adults. Sporting events would be bad. Our taxes are high enough now and in two years we will have the "opportunity" to pay for water. Have we no say-so in this community any more?
This area is not readily visible from the road & we potentially open our neighborhood up to having safety issues if this is used as a hang-out by older kids or individuals with no regard for the rights of people or property.
We agree with some concerns of developing this park. We prefer not to develop this piece of land because we want a quiet neighborhood, less traffic, less future concerns and preservation of open land & privacy.
(Also, in strongly in favor of garbage can) Please contact me next time you see an eagle or falcon in this space! I would also prefer to NOT have coyotes in the neighborhood. (letter to Parks Commission was attached)
No agricultural crops; no cutting -- not on public land
This is supposed to be "open space." Let's not use this property for a city dump ground.
For all of the reasons on page before this one, we don't want any of the items in 1st box; have lived by park described, a lot of the things mentioned happened.
We moved here for the rural setting; we want to keep it this way -- quiet, low traffic, natural
(Reason against natural -- no weed control)
If picnic table and walking paths, do not want parking lot -- traffic, etc. Leave it the way it is!
This area was negotiated to be a passive park in order to allow the development of the third addition. I think we need to stick to that agreement!
Thank you fore your efforts in this matter. I am grateful for your work.
We would love to have an area to play baseball with all the children & possibly the parents (for a fun game) A small backstop would also be great! It seems like most of our children love to play baseball together (great memories).
I'm in favor of minor development, like a walking path and maybe a picnic area for the community to have a small gathering place in a nice setting.



## Attachment 2: Lake Elmo Heights, Heights Park Survey

Dear Lake Elmo Heights Neighbors,

September 2006

Over the course of the summer, many of us have wondered what may be planned for the park land that is located in the middle of our neighborhood. You and your family may be wondering the same. As you may know now, this area is temporarily being used as a depository during the water construction project. The City of Lake Elmo is very open and interested in understanding what we would envision for this park land in the future after the water construction project is complete.

### **Purpose of this letter:**

As a community and neighbors of Lake Elmo Heights we would like to come together and gather everyone's opinions and thoughts around what would be our vision for this park land. We would also like to provide you with some background information that we thought might be helpful to know, as well as survey responses from a selected group of neighbors previously conducted.

Please take a moment to read through this letter and respond to the survey enclosed. It is important and valuable for our future to make decisions as a "community and neighbors" of Lake Elmo that will affect us all, both in the short and long-term. This is a great opportunity to think through *all* the issues behind the decisions we make and propose, as we consider the future use of this land.

### **Background and Information:**

As some of you may or may not know, the City defined this area as an "passive park" or "open space" ten years ago when the park was initially created during the development of Lake Elmo Heights 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. The intent was to help maintain rural and open space for Lake Elmo 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> editions as well the future development of the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. This 9 acre area includes of a pond, trees and harvested hay to help maintain control of unwanted weeds such as thistle

Last summer a petition was circulated to homeowners on 26<sup>th</sup> and Imperial, soliciting opinions on what kind of "active use" park would be preferred. Homeowners on 27<sup>th</sup> St. and Innsdale were not included in the survey. The results of that survey indicated that 14 families are in favor of some sort of active use park, with a diverse set of responses on what type of facilities would be preferred, including possibly a baseball diamond, hockey rink, hiking trails, ATV trail, picnic tables, and play structures. Two families did not want the land developed. The overall survey results were returned to the City along with a request to begin development. As of September 2006, the City has not made a decision to move forward with the development.

However, after learning about this request to the City not all of us in the neighborhood are in favor of developing the land. In fact, based on discussions we have had, we believe a majority of the homeowners whose land is adjacent to the park land would prefer that it stay undeveloped.

Therefore, we are writing to get a current view on what *all* homeowners in the Lake Elmo Heights want for that park land. Our first objective is to get a more complete survey of the neighborhood, so your view and response is very important to us. Please take a moment to complete this survey. We appreciate your time out of your busy schedule.

Secondly, as you complete this survey, we also ask that you consider some other points that you may or may not have already thought about, including:

- **City Funding:** Per City estimates, an active use park could cost as much as \$50,000 to build and another \$5,000-10,000 per year to maintain. Sixteen families already have play structures in their own yards.. We believe that a park play structure will not be used extensively by neighbors and therefore isn't a good use of our tax dollars. Secondly, though the City has not yet suggested this, they could introduce a homeowner assessment to help offset the construction and ongoing maintenance costs of a park.
- **Safety:** There is a deep pond in the park surrounded by thick brush. Children are naturally curious and we are concerned that the pond may represent a safety hazard for smaller children. You may recall news reports of drowning cases in other neighborhoods in early summer. Safety of all kids is important.
- **Park use by people outside the neighborhood:** If developed, we rightfully cannot restrict the park for just this neighborhood's use. We are concerned that more people coming into the neighborhood will bring noise, litter, and trespassing, as well as security issues of increased potential for vandalism and theft, not only of the park but also of the homeowner's properties that border the park. Right now, theft and any vandalism is almost non-existent in our neighborhood. It would be very advantageous for all neighbors to help keep it this way.
- **Traffic and parking:** Through observations of Ridge Park (located south/east on Inwood in the Lake Elmo Park Estates community), we believe during June and July with baseball league play we will experience issues with heavy traffic and on-street parking. Increased traffic to our neighborhood will bring about potential accidents and speeding to where children ride their bikes, people walk/run, and pets are in yards.
- **Privacy:** Because there is limited access to the park via a narrow pathway along the power lines from 26<sup>th</sup> Street, we believe neighbors adjacent to the park will have significant foot traffic through our private land in order for people to gain access to the park area.
- **Wild Life Preservation:** Eliminating our open spaces in Lake Elmo will have a tremendous and lasting impact on our local wildlife which includes not only the familiar sightings of deer, geese and rabbits, but also fox, coyotes, ring-necked pheasants, ducks and unique birds such quails, owls, falcons, and an occasional egret and eagle. We all enjoy the luxury of and serenity of our natural setting. We should consider the preservation of open space land even though this area may seem small in comparison to the Preserve Park. Learning from the hard lessons of our neighbors in Woodbury and Oakdale will help us keep in mind how critical and valuable it is to preserve open space land - one of the key attributes of Lake Elmo that has attracted many people here.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of the park land usage.

Sincerely,

Monica and Rich Ross – Noreen and Tom Dillon – Beth and Larry Mann –  
Jean and Bob Sluss – Mary and Scott Deutsch – Tricia and Garrett Gleason

December 10, 2006

RECEIVED

DEC 12 2006

City of Lake Elmo  
3800 Laverne Ave  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042  
Attention: Kim, Parks Commission

Regarding: Development of Heights Park

Dear Kim,

Per our phone conversation earlier this week, attached please find a map of the three additions in the Lake Elmo Heights neighborhood. We have marked which houses responded to the September 2006 survey about the development of Heights Park.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,

Monica Ross  
8284 26<sup>th</sup> St. N.  
Lake Elmo  
651-773-3140