

MINUTES

City of Lake Elmo Park Commission June 15th, 2015

Members Present: Weis, Zeno, Hartley, Ames, Nelson, Frick

Members Absent: Hieptas, Steele, Silvernale

Others Present: Administrator Zuleger, Mayor Pearson, Rolf Larsen, DPW Mike Bouthilet, Jaime Colemer, Council Member Lundgren

The meeting was called to order by Chair Weis at 6:34 PM.

Approval of Agenda

M/S/P: Hartley/Ames: To approve the agenda with three additions – Item V.(C) – Status of Old Park Building, Item V. (D) Tartan Park, and Item VI. (B) – Sunfish Lake Nature Center Update.

Approval of May 18, 2015 Minutes

M/S/P: Ames/Zeno: Approved as amended 5-0 with Hartley abstaining.

Presentations

Central Greenway Regional Trail, Peter Mott, Washington County – Parks Commission Chairman Weis presented an overview of the Lake Elmo Regional Trail to refresh the Commission on previous work and planning completed. Peter Mott, Washington County Parks Department Planner, addressed the Park Commission on the County's intention to master plan a trail through Lake Elmo that will provide connections with the Lake Elmo Park Reserve and other areas like Oakdale, Stillwater, and other points of interest including trails on CSAH 15 and CSAH 17. Mott noted that with the County taking over Highway 5 that this was a good opportunity to begin planning this trail corridor.

Mott noted the process will take 6 months. The first month will be focused on the County working with the Parks Commission and City staff and he expressed that the Lake Elmo Park Commission is ahead of the curve with their previous planning. The County would entertain two to three concepts on trail alignment and then embark on a public engagement process – but he noted that the presentation made by Chairman Weis was consistent with current thoughts on alignment. Mott reminded the Commission that a “big picture” vision must be used that not only serves the community but reaches a broader regional audience that links regional parks to regional parks.

Commissioner Ames asked if trail planning would consider going over / under Highway 5 to Sunfish Lake Park. Mott answered absolutely. Mott also noted in response that now the County will be in control of Highway 5 there is more ability to look at connection options. Mott also noted that once the trail route was decided that state, federal and NGO grant possibilities would be examined. The community will need to be active in this process.

Commissioner Ames asked about trail connections to Gateway, Browns Creek and other regional trails. Mott noted that those are all items that will be considered in the alignment discussion. The community, through a series of open houses, would need to provide assistance on connectivity. However, with Manning Avenue improvements and the Lake Elmo downtown project there is good opportunity for connectivity.

Planning would begin in the end of October 2015 and will take six months. The County refers to this particular trail as the Central Greenway Regional Trail. The first three months will be staff to staff engagement that will include cost-benefit analysis. The next three months will be planning review and citizen engagement.

Commissioner Hartley noted that there was a need for an East –West trail though Lake Elmo. Mott noted that he recognizes that there is a lot of energy. Commissioner Zeno noted that he would like the regional trail to consider connections to the LERP, Sunfish Lake Park, two schools, and downtown. Mott noted that Oakdale would like a connecting path to the regional park, but drainage complicates trail development on Stillwater Avenue. Commissioner Ames noted that he would like potential barriers to be identified, like Highway 36, when the master plan is developed. Mott noted that he recognizes that there needs to be an integration of present public infrastructure during the analysis.

Old Business–City Council Action on Park Commission Recommendations

Administrator Zuleger noted that the Council has approved the Homestead Pollinator project and the Sunfish Lake Park hazardous tree removal funding. It was the Council's desire to wait for approval of the Sunfish Lake Park Master Plan until the Joint Council – Park Workshop. Mayor Pearson asked what kinds of issues should be included in the workshop agenda. Administrator Zuleger noted that items that should be discussed include the Park Capital Improvement Plan, Park Survey Results, and other items of policy. Chairman Weis noted that he would like to talk about the downtown baseball diamonds and their relationship to the Village Green. Commissioner Hartley would like a discussion on Sunfish Lake Park. She noted that she would like the hazardous trees taken care of first. DPW Bouthilet responded that the project is 50% complete.

Old Business – Tablyn Park Cost Estimates

Administrator Zuleger put forth a tentative cost estimation sheet for the items the Park Commission had determined were priorities for the Tablyn Park re-modeling effort. DPW Mike Bouthilet noted that the quality hockey dasher boards could cost up to \$55,000. The Park Commission then entertained the question of whether the ice sheet at Tablyn Park should be a recreational rink or a quality hockey rink. The consensus was that the hockey rink might be

better suited downtown. Commissioner Ames noted that there were lights downtown as well. Bouthilet noted that the Zamboni machine that the City is able to use is also downtown. Chairman Weis conducted a straw poll of whether the ice rink should be recreational or for hockey. The poll revealed that (5) Commissioners preferred recreational skating / pond hockey at Tablyn and (1) Commissioner preferred a formal hockey rink. The Park Commission then discussed the suitability of Pickle Ball at Tablyn Park. Bouthilet noted that there is still an active tennis community at Tablyn Park. The consensus of the Park Commission was to move Pickle Ball court installation to another park. The Park Commission decided that initial parking lot by the ice rink would be gravel to start. The Administrator noted that most of the approved work is infrastructure improvement needed to make the park more accessible. Commissioner Ames was concerned about not casting too much light in the neighborhood. Administrator Zuleger noted that we would be using dark sky lighting that will shine down on the park and ski hill.

M/S/P Weis/Hartley: To not exceed \$175,000 (eliminating Pickle Ball) in expenditures to rejuvenate Tablyn Park.

DPW Bouthilet will finalize the costs and begin working on the park remodeling plan.

New Business – Volley Ball Courts

Commission Zeno re-engaged the Park Commission about the construction of additional volleyball courts in Lake Elmo. He presented statistics noting that Lake Elmo is well below the service level for volleyball needs. DPW Bouthilet noted that with the current downtown sewer project that adding courts at Lions Park is now possible. Commissioner Zeno asked if there would be enough room to add 10 feet in between courts. DPW Bouthilet said yes. After discussion, it was suggested that volleyball courts could be installed in Lions Park and Pebble Park. DPW Bouthilet noted that Pickle Ball could be added in Pebble as well.

M/s/P Ames/Frick: To approve additional, regulation volleyball court in Lions Park contingent on storm sewer work completed and the cost shall not exceed \$25,000.

Bouthilet noted that the ball field will be graded as part of this process as well.

New Business – Reid Park Modifications

The Park Commission engaged in preliminary discussion about improving Reid Park in light of the additional land dedication. Administrator Zuleger detailed the particular dedications given by Gonyea and Easton Village that would expand Reid Park. Commissioner Ames noted the policy issues of land dedication vs, cash and suggested that the future the staff provide an analysis on the cash total vs. land dedication. Commissioner Frick noted that Commissioner Steele still believes that “more land” for these new parks needs to be requested.

The Commission came up with a list of items to add to Reid Park that included: Restroom, Picnic Shelter, improved and expanded trail system, disc golf, mountain bike trail on the north side where the topography changes, and perhaps a big destination play structure up near the

parking. It was determined to eliminate the basketball court. Chairman Weis suggested that the Park Commission meet at Reid Park at 6:00 PM on July 20th to take a tour of the park prior to the Commission meeting.

Commissioner Zeno would like to continue on the theming of parks and suggested that this would / could be a trail park. Administrator Zuleger noted that a remnant of an exercise trail exists in the park already. Commissioner Nelson noted that there are a lot of access points to the park from different areas and this could be an asset to the trail theme. Chairman Weis noted that we could advertise via Fresh or the facebook page that the Park Commission will tour the Park looking for suggestions. Mayor Pearson reminded the Commission that the plan was to open up the Park by grubbing out some of the shrubs along 30th Street.

New Business – Legends of Lake Elmo Concept Plan Discussion

Administrator Zuleger presented the concept plan for the Legends of Lake Elmo development. The development has an extensive trail system and has donated 5 acres of land adjacent to Sanctuary Park. The land that they have dedicated is on a slope and is part of the bigger master plan that would include additional parkland if / when the Bergman's property would be developed. DPW Bouthilet noted that easement / wetlands are not included in the parkland dedication calculation. The Commission engaged in a substantial discussion on the size, and utility of the park – including topography, parking, centrality of location and overall size. Commissioner Hartley felt the park should be twice the size. Commissioner Frick noted that she would parkland funds in lieu of open land that was not useable. Planning Commissioner Liaison noted that on lots the size proposed in thlis developed residents will put their own swings sets in. Mayor Pearson said he was looking forward to the discussion of cash vs. land to be had at the Joint Workshop. The Park Commission will be more detailed in its view when the preliminary plat is presented.

New Business – Park Building / Tartan Park

Administrator Zuleger stated that there was some interest by the Council to sell the Old Park Building and use the money for streetscape costs in the Old Village. Ames asked where we would put things like the Zamboni. Administrator Zuleger will keep them posted.

Zuleger stated that the 3 M Foundation had decided to divest its self from Tartan Park and was looking to have discussions with interested parties. Zuleger noted that the City was not in position to purchase the land and now that sewer and water was there it could be a prime development site. Commissioner Frick wanted to remind the Commission that there was almost 50 acres lost due to the landfill issue at Sunfish Lake Park and perhaps we should ask 3M to use some of Tartan Park to reimburse for the land loss.

Staff Reports & Commission Updates

Sanctuary Park Update – DPW Bouthilet/J. Colemer reported that the bench had been installed as well as tether ball. Land is being graded for gaga ball and six trees will be planted to screen the park. Bouthilet noted that the trail will be configured (a hump reduced) to provide a landing for the sledding hill. On another note, he has purchased a \$400 manure spreader that

has been really effective in spreading woodchips in Sun Fish Lake Park. The Commission instructed DPW Bouthilet to build the Gazebo at Pebble Park.

Sun Fish Lake Nature Center - Administrator Zuleger noted that Mr. Anthony Manzara had made his presentation to the Planning Commission and it was approved to move forward to the Council for their July 7th meeting. Commissioner Ames reported that he had done some research (including staffing) on six surrounding nature facilities in the area and that it appeared to him that there was not an issue with access / availability of the these facilities. Specifically, Mr. Ames found the following:

- Carpenter had 2 naturalists
- Belwin had 5 naturalists and a program with the St. Paul Public Schools
- Warner had volunteer naturalists and partnered with schools
- Afton had a part time naturalist
- William Obrien did not have any school programs
- Lake Elmo Park Reserve has no naturalist program

Commissioner Frick noted that there was a YMCA summer day camp that utilized the Lake Elmo Park Reserve. Ames asked the Commission to consider just what kind of facility we wanted this generous offer to be. Commission Frick noted the center would be nicely located for children of the community to be able to access. Administrator Zuleger noted that in many cases facilities of this type evolve into community centers and can be used for weddings, graduation parties and other events for residents. Commissioner Ames, expressing support, once again asked his fellow Commissioners to think about what we really want this center to be for our community.

Meeting adjourned at 9:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,

**Dean A. Zuleger
City Administrator**